

Sixty second summary

Get your academic hats on – LGPS pension training moves into the digital age



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Speak with almost every senior LGPS officer and it's soon clear that they see the future of administration being driven by digital online technology. However, when it comes to Committee, Board and Officer training, all too often the only option available is the traditional and lengthy 'sit and listen' session. At least that was the case until now. Welcome to the [LGPS Online Training Academy](#).

Why did this option need to be created?

The simple answer is that LGPS funds have been demanding this option. Committees, Boards and Officers have been frustrated with the lack of development in the LGPS training area. And they are all too aware of the ever-expanding training expectations placed on them.

Funds have been challenged to match the demands of The Pensions Regulator on the requisite knowledge and skill expected of their decision making and oversight groups. But in order to truly meet that expectation, some simple truths must be acknowledged:

- the large pension 'curriculum' expected to be understood by the Committee/Board
- the limited time available for the Committee and Board members to devote to training
- the fact that being at a certain location or being online at a certain time can be challenging
- different people learn in different ways and training plans are not a 'one size fits all' approach
- Committee and Board members are not expected to be subject matter experts

Acknowledging these 'simple truths' made the option of an online LGPS training academy an essential requirement rather than just a nice-to-have.

Where's the evidence?

These simple truths don't come from a few funds. Two-thirds of the LGPS took part in our 2018 National Confidence Assessment and 2020 National Knowledge Assessment. These exercises uncovered some key issues.

Engagement - one big issue that was continually highlighted was low engagement when it comes to training.

Set days - we heard often that one of the big challenges for funds was scheduling their already stretched Committee and Board members onto designated training days – both at internal and external events.

Length of training session - they also mentioned that these training sessions were often very technical, lengthy and at times far too detailed for the level of knowledge expected of the Committee and Board.

Lack of MI - Officers would highlight that the administrative recording of training was challenging. Confirming who took part and – importantly – what they had learned was difficult. It was hard for Officers to glean the necessary information to update and (if required) adjust their training plans.

From leading both of these assessments and seeking Committee, Board and Officer views, a clearer picture on what works and doesn't work for pension training emerged.

Why do funds need to prioritise training?

Expectation and requirement are the two main reasons why all LGPS funds – and pension schemes in general – should ensure that those tasked with running, overseeing and making fund decisions have the requisite knowledge and skills to fulfil that role.

“Although the fiduciary duty owed by decision makers in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is an issue we and others are still wrestling with, we can take from this case (Roberts vs Hopwood) the clear requirement for decisions to be made with care, skill and caution. It is difficult to envisage this being possible if those responsible for taking such decisions do not themselves possess, or have access to, the necessary knowledge of the environment in which they operate.” Councillor Roger Phillips (Chair of the Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales)) - NKA 2020 National Report

In the simplest terms, we all want those responsible for managing in excess of £300bn of assets in the interests of around 6m members across the UK to be properly trained and confident in their knowledge.

In summary

The [LGPS Online Learning Academy](#) is not a 'Hymans idea'. It is truly borne and produced from all LGPS funds. It is designed to answer the challenges of:

Engagement – flexible online learning, jargon busters and short quizzes available on multiple devices.

Set days – online learning as and when you want.

Length of training session – bite-sized training videos ranging from 3 to 22 minutes.

Lack of MI – monthly reports and detailed user tracking.

If you would like to discuss the online training platform for your Fund, please get in touch with [Andrew McKerns](#).