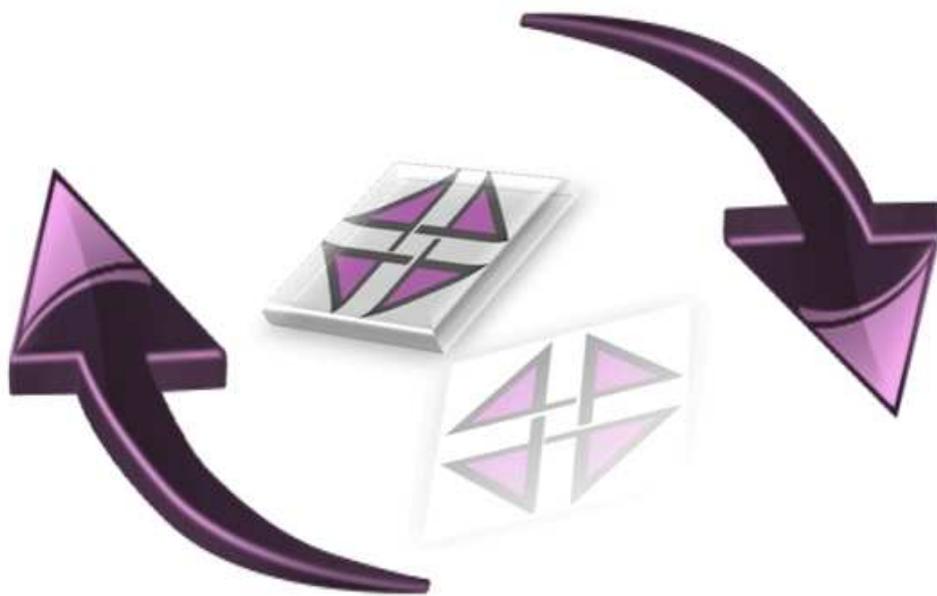


South Yorkshire Pensions Authority



Member Learning and Development Strategy

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Foreword from the Chair South Yorkshire Pensions Authority

As Pensions Authority Members, our overriding responsibility is to act in the best interests of the present and future beneficiaries of the South Yorkshire Pension Scheme.

Members need to ensure the fund is managed in the most effective and efficient way so as to minimise the call on the public purse.

Members are not expected to be professional experts in investment matters. However, although we can delegate investment decisions and rely on investment advice, members still define the framework and objectives. For that reason we need to ensure that we are familiar enough with the issues concerned and understand what is being proposed by the advisers and officers, in order to discharge our duties with due care, skill and prudence.

In order to perform our role successfully we need to build on the skills we already have as elected Members, and the learning and development we receive from our own District Councils. We then need to enhance those skills by expanding our knowledge and understanding about the role of the Authority, keep up to date with industry developments and best practice, and listen to and act on professional advice so that we are able to carry out our governance role effectively. I believe there is much for us to learn.

This Strategy provides a framework for identifying the learning and development that Pension Authority Members need to carry out their role. It is flexible to allow for the fact that individual Members have different skills, experience and knowledge and can be tailored to suit Member needs and capacity.

I hope that you will embrace the learning and development programme to help the Pensions Authority to meet its objective of providing effective and transparent governance.

Martin Lawton

Chair SY Pensions Authority



1. Introduction

South Yorkshire Pensions Authority is committed to continuous improvement, innovation and value-for-money in the services it provides. The Joint Secretariat provides independent support, advice and guidance to Elected Members of the Pensions Authority to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to fulfil their role.

The purpose of the Learning and Development Strategy is to provide a framework for Members to access the support they need and enables the Authority to manage the risk of failing to meet its objectives if Members are not adequately trained and kept up to date on Pensions and Investment matters.

2. Reviewing the Strategy

It was felt timely to introduce the Strategy at the Annual General Meeting, to better reflect the approach to Member development which focuses on providing learning and development rather than formal training. The Strategy will be reviewed annually to keep pace with national and local change.

Significant changes for the LGPS will take effect from April 2014, and Members will need to be informed and kept up to date with the changes in advance of the implementation of the new scheme.

3. Corporate Strategy

The Member Learning and Development Strategy will be central to achieving the vision, values and strategic objectives. The full Corporate Strategy can be found on the SYJS website [here](#): ctrl and click to follow this link, or at: www.southyorks.gov.uk

4. Aims and Objectives

The overall **aim** of the Strategy is to provide clear direction and purpose in respect of learning and development in order to achieve:

- Well-equipped Members who are confident and able to carry out their roles effectively
- A consistent approach to Member learning and development
- Equality of opportunity

The **objectives** of the Strategy are given below. These will be delivered through a range of activities including improvements to the Member Induction process, courses, workshops, briefings, bulletins, mentoring etc.

- To establish an environment where Member learning and development is seen as an integral part of the governance role of Pensions Authority Members.
- To equip Members with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver a high quality service that meets the six strategic objectives.
- To ensure all Members are provided with a level of learning and development appropriate to their roles and responsibilities on the Pensions Authority;
- To ensure learning and development is available to all Members irrespective of seniority, length of service and political affiliation;
- To enable Members to have a clearer understanding of their personal responsibility for continuous development and to facilitate this process.
- To provide learning and development in line with the commitment to equal opportunities.
- To improve the Authority in line with best practice for Member Learning and Development and contribute to the vision to be a Joint Authority which effectively demonstrates a commitment to excellence in everything it does.

5. Learning and Development

Member Induction

All new Members will be given a structured – and mandatory – induction programme to support them in developing their role and become an effective Member of the Pensions Authority. In the first six weeks following appointment Members will be provided with a thorough briefing on the following topics:

- Pension Investments
- LGPS Administration
- Corporate Governance Issues including anti-fraud & corruption & whistleblowing

Existing Members

An annual development discussion will be provided for Members on a one-to-one basis to identify requirements or to 'refresh' existing knowledge. Outcomes and benefits will be identified during this discussion and personal learning and

development records will be kept for all Members detailing courses, conferences and learning undertaken.

It is envisaged the development discussions will take place as soon after the AGM as possible to ensure any new Members are included in the process. Any knowledge, support or skills identified by existing Members in their previous 'one-to-one' will be re-prioritised to take account of the existing budget. Additional requirements will also inform the forecast for the following year.

Learning and development will fall into two categories – **Authority needs** (where more than one Member has identified the same requirement or where legislation or new initiatives necessitate a workshop session) and **individual needs**, e.g. role specific, personal or 'one-off' requirements.

Pension Advisory Panel Members will be invited to take part in all learning and development sessions that are delivered internally. For external training such as the 3 day LGPS fundamentals training, it is proposed that the Authority funds one place per year for an Advisory Panel Member to attend.

Criteria for categorising learning and development:

- Does the learning support our Strategic Objectives?
- Does it represent value for money in terms of the benefits and outcomes?
- Will the learning increase the capacity of Members to carry out specific roles e.g. chairing skills or leadership programmes?
- Can the learning and development be delivered internally e.g. one to one sessions, bulletins, fact sheets?

6. Delivery

Members' commitments and personal circumstances will be taken into account to provide equality of opportunity where possible.

A range of approaches will be deployed to deliver learning and developments listed below. Any external requirements will be commissioned by the Joint Secretariat.

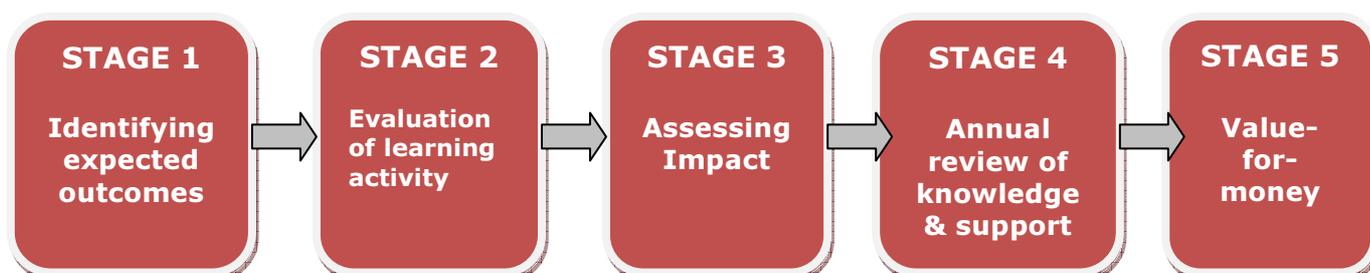
- Traditional – courses delivered by internal / external trainers
- Workshops
- Knowledge @lert concept – bulletins, briefings, newsletters, website.
- CDs / DVDs – a wide range are already available via Member Services at the Joint Secretariat.
- On-line Library.
- External conferences – through the normal process of selection.
- Informal mentoring / 'coaching' via an established Member of SYPA.

Wherever possible, and appropriate, SYPA will work in partnership with other joint authorities and local authorities to share learning and development and any associated costs.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

A five-stage evaluation process is proposed to monitor the success of the Member learning and development Strategy. This process is intended to measure the benefits to:

- Elected Members.
- SYPA in meeting its priorities.
- SYPA Stakeholders



Stage 1 – Identifying expected outcomes

- Establish expected outcomes – what do Members want to achieve from taking part in courses, workshops? e.g. gain a new skill, improve knowledge on a particular subject.

Stage 2 – Evaluation of learning activity

- Immediate response to learning activity.
- How relevant was the learning activity to agreed outcomes?

Stage 3 – Assessing Impact

- Check whether outcomes been met via the annual Development Discussion.
- Feedback from others – trainers, other participants.
- Assess how attitude, knowledge or skill has improved and how this will be used / applied in the context of the SYPA.

Stage 4 – Annual review of learning and development

- Review learning and development activity and identify new requirements, e.g. Member request, new legislation, new expectations, roles etc.

Stage 5 – Value-for-money

- Assess money spent against learning outcomes and performance measures to demonstrate value-for-money.

8. Resourcing the Strategy

We realise that funding is extremely limited, as is Members' time. The learning and development Strategy is not about spending additional money; it's about improving the effectiveness of what we do. Any additional costs over and above that budgeted for will need to be justified. Our aim is to find ways of informing

Members and providing them with the necessary learning and development for minimal cost without compromising quality.

We will, therefore, ensure that all learning and development provided is targeted and carefully managed to maximise the benefits to both the Members and to the Authority.

9. Role of the Lead Member

The Lead Member role is a new concept that is being introduced as part of the revised Learning and Development Strategy.

The Lead Member role description has been developed and for completeness this is given below:

Lead Members should:

- Take the lead on behalf of the Authority for a particular subject area recognising that, on occasion, they should have the freedom to act in a scrutiny or questioning capacity.
- Be the initial point of contact for the Service or others wishing to discuss
- issues informally or sound out views.
- Be the spokesperson at Authority in respect of their particular area.
- Contribute to policy development locally and nationally as appropriate.
- Attend national or local meetings, seminars etc. in their area.
- Promote or represent the views and/or policies of the Authority in the public domain even if these are not their own views.
- Keep abreast of key developments and issues in their area.
- Receive briefings / information on their area as required from officers of the Service and/or Joint Secretariat.

Lead Members do not:-

- Have the power to commit the Authority to a course of action, or make a decision on its behalf.
- Have total accountability for their assigned area.

10. Further information

Further information on the Member Learning & Development Strategy can be obtained from:

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Tel:01226 772851

E-mail: rbywater@syjs.gov.uk

Or on the Pensions Authority website via: www.southyorks.gov.uk