

Subject	Consultation, Communications and Engagement Strategy	Status	For Publication
Report to	Pensions Authority	Date	5 June 2025
Report of	Director		
Equality Impact Assessment	Not Required	Attached	No
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1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To secure approval by the Authority of the updated Consultation, Communications and Engagement Strategy which supports the Corporate Strategy.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are recommended to:
- a. Make any comments and approve the revised Consultation, Communications and Engagement Strategy.**

3 Link to Corporate Objectives

- 3.1 This strategy links to the delivery of some of the corporate objectives, the key ones being Customer focus and Listening to our Stakeholders, because the Consultation, Communications and Engagement Strategy is focussed on detailing the range of ways and reasons why we consult, communicate and engage with our customers and stakeholders as well as highlighting any risks that would affect us in meeting any of the objectives listed below.

Customer Focus

To design our services around the needs of our customers (whether scheme members or employers).

Listening to our stakeholders

To ensure that stakeholders' views are heard within our decision making processes.

Valuing and engaging our Employees

To ensure that all our employees are able to develop a career with SYPA and are actively engaged in improving our services.

4 Implications for the Corporate Risk Register

- 4.1 The actions outlined in this strategy address the landscape around how the Authority will consult, communicate and engage with customers and stakeholders and how we will know if this has been a success. As a result, maintenance of the strategy (which is a statutory requirement) addresses risks around regulatory compliance and failure to follow due process when considering new policies.

5 Background and Options

- 5.1. The Authority currently reviews the Consultation, Communications and Engagement Strategy every two years, with any smaller changes being made on an ad hoc basis throughout that time. We would like to propose extending the review period to every three years, with ad hoc amends as and when needed during that period going forward to bring this in line with other corporate strategies that operate on this basis and to allow us the time to implement actions from the Digital Communications survey results.
- 5.2. This review included a large number of revisions to the document including the following amendments:
- a. Generic text changes to fit our corporate style, and corrections of grammar and punctuation.
 - b. A new landscape design to bring the document in line with our Annual Report, Corporate Strategy and other strategy documents for a cohesive brand and to make future edits much easier by bringing the design back into a Word document format.
 - c. The inclusion of an infographic with the top-level Digital Communications Survey results from December 2024 and a table detailing our action plan of how we will seek to improve our digital communication with members over the next three years.
 - d. The inclusion of new engagement activities such as the annual Employer Forum, new consultation activities including the Responsible Investment Survey and Digital Communications Surveys to members and changes to communications activities such as the removal of the AGM and replacement with the SYPA In Focus video.
- 5.3. Following the initial rewrite of the strategy, the draft document was then sent out to members of our Focus Group for consultation in March 2025. Nine people replied and a summary of their comments can be found below:
- a. Overall, the feedback on the strategy document was highly positive, with multiple focus group members commending its clarity, comprehensiveness, and effectiveness in setting out SYPA's communication and engagement approach. However, several minor amendments have been suggested to improve clarity, readability, and consistency.
 - b. **Clarity & Simplicity** – Some sections, particularly the principles on page 4, could be made more concise and focused to improve readability. Members suggested streamlining descriptions and changing some of the titles.
 - c. **Terminology & Formatting** – Requests to clarify abbreviations (e.g., ABS) and improve grammatical consistency.

- d. **Risk Section Improvements** – Suggestions to enhance the key risks section (page 29) by explicitly addressing IT security risks, GDPR compliance, and potential misinformation risks. Reviewers also highlighted the need to address low survey response rates among active members and people risks will be managed.
 - e. **Engagement & Accessibility** – A recommendation to extend consultation response deadlines to increase participation, particularly among active members, and to leverage local authority channels for engagement.
- 5.4. All the amendments suggested above by Focus Group Members have now been actioned within the document. We will look to extend the review period in 2028 when this is next updated to give more time for active members who are still working to review effectively but we won't be taking forward the request to share the document with local authorities for them to review.
- 5.5. At its meeting on 24th April 2025, the Local Pension Board was asked to review the Consultations, Communications and Engagement Strategy and to consider whether any significant areas are not captured. The Board were complimentary of the report and felt that it was a clear, easy to read document that covered all elements. The only questions asked were around our wider communications work with plain English and alternative formats which the Communications Business Partner and Customer Services Manager responded to at the meeting. We offer a range of alternative formats on request, including large print, audio CD and braille upon request, to ensure accessibility for all. In addition, we plan to introduce a process for reviewing our key communications against Plain English standards during the period covered by this strategy.
- 5.6. The revised strategy aims to make best use of the professional communications resources that are now available within the Authority to support the overall delivery of our services.

6 **Implications**

- 6.1 The proposals outlined in this report have the following implications:

Financial	None directly from this report. Specific new initiatives may have financial implications which will be dealt with as part of the budget process as necessary. It is intended to identify a specific budget for communications activity within the existing budget and reflect this in the Strategy in future.
Human Resources	None directly from this report
ICT	None directly from this report
Legal	None directly from this report.
Procurement	None directly from this report.

Georg Graham

Director

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection