



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

16 March 2021

Local Government Association (LGA) Subscription

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide details of the LGA subscription for 2021/22 and to seek a decision about continued membership.

Background

2. A letter from Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive of the LGA, setting out the role provided by the LGA and associated subscription rate for 2021/22 was received in February 2021. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix A.

LGA Services Provided

3. The LGA lobbies on behalf of local authorities on many issues that affect the sector as a whole and works with councils and fire authorities to develop new approaches to improvement and innovation. The attached letter sets out the recent work of the LGA.
4. A significant amount of work has been undertaken by the LGA and in particular the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) to make a case for sustainable funding for the sector. This role, alongside that of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), is extremely helpful in presenting a joined-up and consistent voice for the fire and rescue service to government. Increasingly the LGA and the NFCC are working more closely together.

5. The LGA have also taken the lead with providing legal support for fire and rescue authorities on issues that impact on the entire sector. This reduces duplication of effort and significantly reduces costs for the Authority. These examples show some of the value that the Authority receives from the membership fees.

Subscription Rate

8. Subscriptions are now made via Direct Debit and the LGA Board have agreed a 2% increase in subscriptions for 2021/22. There is a 2.5% Direct Debit discount, which replaces the previous early payment discount and a 2.5% loyalty discount for fire and rescue authorities not on notice to withdraw from LGA Membership.
9. The overall membership fee for 2021/22 is therefore £7,053.

Recommendation

10. Members are requested to **agree** the LGA subscription for 2021/22.

CFO Stuart Errington

Tel: 0191 375 5553



February 2021

Dear Stuart

LGA SUBSCRIPTIONS 2021/22

When I wrote 12 months ago with confirmation of your fire and rescue service's 2020/21 subscription, little did I know the huge challenges ahead for our sector.

This has been an extraordinary year but one which, more than any other, has demonstrated the critical importance of local government being able to come together and speak with one voice. With you, we have worked tirelessly to press the major issues facing our sector as you work with your communities and partners through this immensely challenging public health crisis.

At the start of the pandemic we pushed for fire and rescue authorities to be included within the Coronavirus Bill to ensure that they could continue their work during the pandemic. We continued to work with the sector to identify their needs and respond to issues. We were pleased we were able to host Lord Greenhalgh at our Fire Commission when he was newly appointed as Fire Minister. We have continued to represent the sector in a number of reviews and inspections, including the Government's Police and Crime Commissioner review and HMICFRS's COVID-19 inspection.

Finance has been, and will remain, at the top of everyone's agenda. Whilst COVID-19 has dominated the discussions, keeping all services running in the face of huge reductions in income and increases in cost pressures remains critical. Through the year, we secured £4.7 billion across four tranches of general COVID-19 funding as well as billions in other specific funds. We also continued our work with the NFCC, to ensure that fire had a strong voice within the Home Office and to inform their work on the Spending Review. Whilst the Spending Review was better than hoped and our work with the NFCC was well received, it was still not the long-term settlement that the sector needs to plan through these incredibly difficult financial times. We will continue to work with the NFCC looking to the next Spending Round in 2021.

In the past year the LGA has worked with the Home Office and the NFCC to establish and monitor the Building Risk Review that is being conducted under the Fire Protection Board, on which we sit. We have been very closely involved in work to amend the Fire Safety Bill to ensure it is deliverable. This work is ongoing, as we sit on the group drafting guidance to accompany the commencement of the Bill.

We have also responded to the Fire Safety Consultation arising from Phase One of the Grenfell Inquiry. We have lobbied for greater awareness of fire safety in relation to permitted development, with some success. We have participated in the Joint Regulators Group and

other discussions around the development of the new building safety regime and gave evidence to the HCLG select committee's pre-legislative scrutiny of the Building Safety Bill. We have worked with MHCLG on remediation of dangerous cladding, including through our joint sponsorship of the Joint Inspection Team and have made submissions to the HCLG and Public Accounts Select committees' inquiries into remediation.

Though we are not able to meet in person we have worked hard to ensure that we are still able to provide support to the sector through moving our improvement work online. We have produced a range of video resources for the sector that are freely available on our website covering a range of topics including governance, and, from our Inclusion and Diversity Champions Network, information on positive action and staff networks. We will be hosting our first virtual Fire Conference in March, which will be free for all members of the LGA.

We provide detailed support for authorities on industrial relations and pension issues. This year that has included collectively representing fire and rescue authorities' interests in relation to the various ongoing Sargeant related pension legal cases and re-emergence of the Part-Time Workers case. We also provide support and guidance in respect of issues arising from the Matzak legal case.

As the secretariat for the National Employers for both the fire and local government sectors, we secured agreements with the relevant trade unions on pay for grey and green book staff and Brigade Managers for 2020-1. Support on workforce issues relating to COVID has taken a number of forms including producing relevant guidance and achieving UK-wide agreements to extend the role of firefighters to support the COVID response throughout 2020.

These are just some of the examples of the strength of us all working together for the benefit of our residents. We will, of course, continue to work on your behalf and in the best interests of our communities as we engage with the new Government in the coming year.

We know the financial challenges facing fire and rescue authorities and we are committed to keeping costs as low as possible. To help us do this, we have been working hard to increase external income into the LGA and putting that money back into a range of new and existing member benefits.

I am very grateful for your continued support and membership of the LGA and we remain committed to keeping our costs as low as possible. We continue to work hard to increase external income into the LGA to keep subscriptions low. The LGA Board has agreed a modest 2 per cent increase in subscriptions for 2021/22. But once again, we will partly offset this with a 2.5 per cent discount for members not on notice and a further 2.5 per cent for those on the Direct Debit scheme.

Your subscription for 2021/22 will be **£7,053**, including discounts (plus vat).

As you have already joined the scheme there is nothing further to do

Finally, we have published our updated business plan, which sets out our priorities to 2022, based on the key issues our members have highlighted. You can find a copy of the plan at [LGA Business Plan 2019 - 2022 | Local Government Association](#).

I look forward to continuing to work with you and your colleagues over the coming year.

With very best wishes

Mark

Mark Lloyd