



**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Combined Fire Authority**

**28 March 2022**

## **Local Government Association (LGA) Subscription**

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### **Report of the Chief Fire Officer**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide details of the LGA subscription for 2023/24 and to seek a decision about continued membership.

#### **Background**

2. A letter from Mark Lloyd CBE, Chief Executive of the LGA, setting out the role provided by the LGA and associated subscription rate for 2023/24 was received on 17 January 2023. 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. One of the LGA's key priorities has been maintaining close partnerships with other organisations to drive their work forwards. They have continued to work closely with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), the Home Office, Fire Standards Board, the Fire Protection Board, the Health and Safety Executive, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and the National Employers. This is extremely helpful in presenting a joined-up and consistent voice for the fire and rescue service to government.

5. A significant amount of work has also been undertaken by the LGA and the NFCC to make a case for sustainable funding for the sector.

### **Subscription Rate**

6. Subscriptions are now made via Direct Debit and the LGA Board have agreed a 2% increase in subscriptions for 2023/24. There is a 2.5% Direct Debit 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 2023/24 is therefore £7,337 (plus VAT).

### **Recommendation**

10. Members are requested to **agree** the LGA subscription for 2023/24.

CFO Steve Helps

Tel: 0191 375 5553

January 2023

**LGA Subscriptions 2023/24**

Over the past 12 months local public services have once again clearly demonstrated their clarity of purpose and unstoppable determination to lead and serve local residents. The LGA has worked to be the strong national voice to promote, support and improve the wider local government family as you've led your fire and rescue service and community through yet another challenging year.

We continue to lobby Government on the importance of local decision making and local determination of governance and made this a key focus of the LGA's response to Government's 'Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service' White Paper. Our response welcomed the Government's ambition to improve the fire and rescue service and the reform agenda, but was clear that it should be for local areas to decide on how they are governed and that there should be no forced transfers of governance.

To support the sector in its governance role we have continued to provide sector support offers through the development of new publications including a governance checklist for fire and rescue authorities and continuing the Fire Leadership Essentials Programme and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network.

The Fire Services Management Committee and Fire Commission continue to set our direction and establish our key priorities and work areas for the year. One of our key priorities has been maintaining our close partnerships with other organisations to drive our work forwards. We have continued to work closely with partners like the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), the Home Office, Fire Standards Board, the Fire Protection Board, the Health and Safety Executive, HMICFRS, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and National Employers on a range of topics to ensure that the voice of our members continues to be heard.

The LGA worked with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) to draft the Core Code of Ethics which was published in May 2021, alongside the accompanying standard from the Fire Standards Board which we also contributed to. Since publication, as partners, we have continued to work together running workshops for FRSs, encouraging adoption of the Core Code and supporting implementation of its principles across FRSs. The LGA continues to be involved in the wider work of the Fire Standards Board and sits on it alongside the NFCC, the APCC and the Home Office.

Working with the NFCC and National Employers (England), we have produced an updated 'Fit for the Future', which sets out a joint ambition for how fire and rescue services should operate in the years to come. It contains 12 improvement objectives covering service delivery, leadership, people and culture and national infrastructure and support.

The additional and unavoidable pressures of inflation, increased energy prices and salary costs means finance has continued to be a key priority for the sector. We have worked with the NFCC to develop consistent asks for Government and to co-ordinate a joint approach to lobby ministers which has enabled us to secure the £5 Band D precept flexibility for all standalone FRAs. We continue to work closely with both the NFCC and the Home Office following the creation of an Efficiency and Productivity Board for fire services.

Building safety has continued to be a key priority for the LGA over the last year. We produced [case studies](#) in support of the document [Principles for effective regulation of fire safety in flats](#) and have continued to work with NFCC, DLUHC and the Home Office to support the remediation of buildings with dangerous cladding, including through our hosting of - and provision of policy support to - the Joint Inspection Team. Our influence has helped to ensure government expectations of the FRS in this sphere remain realistic and we are currently advising on the development of a protocol around decants to ensure government demands for information are proportionate and reasonable.

We have also worked with NFCC to secure funding to support the FRS role in delivering the new building safety regime and have continued (including through our membership of the Joint Regulator's Group) to push the HSE for greater clarity on how the Building Safety Regulator will work with the sector. We have organised webinars on the new regime and on the impact of the Fire Safety Act and new fire safety (England) regulations, which have provided an opportunity for NFCC to address duty holders in the social housing sector. We have also run Building Safety Leadership Essentials events and included building safety in the Fire Leadership Essentials programme. At our suggestion, the Home Office has established a group to look at how neighbour assistance might support the evacuation of disabled residents in the event of a fire – this supports our work, aligned with NFCC, to ensure that fire and rescue services are not left holding responsibilities that should lie with responsible persons.

We are in the midst of gearing up to our next Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition, taking place on 7-8 March in Nottingham and offer a discount for members of the LGA to attend.

On the improvement side, the LGA has continued to work alongside NFCC, HMICFRS and the Home Office to ensure we are best placed to provide tailored improvement support. Over the past 12 months this has included a bespoke protection peer challenge, a communications peer challenge in direct response to HMICFRS inspection and we are members of their multi-agency Improvement Board which is overseeing a challenging improvement programme. The LGA has also carried out two governance reviews.

Our workforce team has continued to support fire and rescue authorities and services, including support to the employers' sides of the three national negotiating bodies covering FRS employees including support staff, firefighters and senior managers. This support has included negotiations on pay, assistance in wider industrial relations matters, advice and interpretation on employment issues, acting

on behalf of FRAs in relation to the Sargeant/ McCloud and Matthews pension scheme related legal cases, and workforce transformation projects.

But we can only continue to speak and act on your behalf with your continued support. Mindful of the challenges facing our members, the LGA Board has agreed a **modest 2 per cent increase** in subscriptions for 2023/24. As usual, we will offset this with a 2.5 per cent loyalty discount and a further 2.5 per cent for those on the Direct Debit scheme.

Your subscription for 2023/24 will be **£7,337** (plus VAT), including the direct debit and loyalty discounts. As you've joined the Direct Debit scheme there is nothing further to do.

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

With very best wishes



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Mark Lloyd CBE