

# Compliance and Reporting Committee (CRC)

## HYBRID MEETING – 20 October 2025

### ITEM 6 PAPER C

#### Peer Support Offer

##### Current position

1. This paper outlines the work of this project since the last Committee meeting in June 2025. The working group met on 12 June 2025. As this was close to the previous Committee meeting, a verbal update was given at that time. For completeness, this paper now provides a written overview of that meeting and an update when the group met again on 15 September 2025.

##### Working group update

2. At the June 2025 working group meeting, an overview of the [Fit for Future Response](#) specifically covering the governance sections was discussed.
3. The working group discussed the route, scope and framework for the offer, with the main themes being:
  - Capacity of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) sector to participate in peer support.
  - Consideration of role of the pension board and the need to avoid duplication of it
  - Publication of the results of the peer support
4. The discussion focused on the various routes in for a fund wanting to have peer support. It was recognised that funds may seek peer support either in preparation for an Independent Governance Review (IGR) or following one. However, it was also acknowledged that there could be other reasons for accessing peer support not linked to an IGR. The working group suggested a fund self-referring was the likely route into peer support with the LGPS Senior Officer, Pension Committee or Pension Board making a referral. A rolling programme option was discussed but could only be brought in at a later stage when the program was more established and had capacity.
5. To provide a consistent basis for peer support activity, the Secretariat are developing a Framework of areas to be considered. Part of each peer support process will be choosing which areas will be focussed on in more depth. At the September 2025 meeting, the working group discussed different framework options and how the existing Local Government Association's (LGA's) five themes could apply to the LGPS:
  - Local priorities and outcomes
  - Organisational and place leadership
  - Governance and culture
  - Financial planning and management
  - Capacity for improvement

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6. The working group agreed to these existing LGA themes, recognising their proven success in supporting sector-led improvement within local authorities, were largely applicable to the LGPS. However, it was suggested that these themes should be adapted to reflect any specific context of the LGPS missing within these topics, such as a specific LGPS stakeholders and partnerships. A suggestion of these adapted themes is below:
  - Fund priorities and outcomes
  - Fund leadership, stakeholders and partnerships
  - Governance and culture
  - Fund performance and management
  - Capacity for improvement
7. The working group supported further communication of the peer support offer, saying that this could help understanding of peer support and how it is different to the IGR. The creation of communication material for funds (such as slides and content for newsletters) was suggested for use by fund officers in Board and Committee meetings. Attendees also supported continued use of the LGPS Bulletin and Board website to communicate the peer support offer.
8. The working group supported the idea of a pilot event in early 2026 and funds within the working group interested in this were invited to contact the Secretariat. The exact timings of a pilot event would need to be considered around the other demands on resources within funds during early 2026 which may limit officer, board and committee time. The Secretariat will consider known pressure-points for funds in scoping out the piloting plan.

## **Peer support pilot event**

9. At the Board meeting in July 2025, it was agreed to bid for budget to support a peer support pilot from the Board's levy. An amount for this has been included in the outline budget agreed by the Board for 2026/27 and the final budget will be submitted for Ministerial approval after the November Board meeting. As identified in this report, the timings of a peer support pilot event will need to consider when funds have suitable capacity.
10. The Secretariat met with LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) colleagues in September 2025 to discuss the support which can be provided for a LGPS peer support pilot. LGA colleagues are currently inputting their expertise into the pilot proposal which includes guidance on approach and methodology.

## **Polling questions and survey response overview**

11. The Board runs a webinar series called 'LGPS Live' and during the July event, which was focussed on governance, polling questions were put to the audience on peer support. Results from this poll provided insight into how the Secretariat needed to communicate more widely to funds. Results from the polls are shown in **Annex A**.

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12. The Secretariat also launched a survey looking at diversity of representation and awareness of the Peer Support offer in August 2025. This survey aimed to gain feedback on how the peer support offer is currently understood, where it could add value and what involvement will look like in practice. Results of this survey can be found in **Annex B**.

## Communications

13. The Secretariat are currently in the process of updating the Board's website and hoped to have a dedicated projects page in the future to support communication and engagement of all projects, including peer support.
14. The Board Chair, Councillor Roger Phillips is holding an in-person Annual Assembly meeting on 22 October 2025 and invited Pension Committee and Board Chairs. The event is a networking opportunity and attendees will be briefed on the Board's workplan, including the progress of a LGPS peer support offer. The agenda covers an hour's slot promoting the LGPS peer support offer we are developing and how peer support has been successful in the wider LGA. Peer support will also feature as an agenda item at the [Governance Conference](#) in January 2026.
15. The Secretariat would welcome feedback from the Committee on any additional areas to consider in terms of communicating the aims of this project.

## Project overview

16. The below initial milestones were agreed in February 2025 and are likely to evolve further as the deliverables are identified. The Secretariat regularly review these milestones as new information emerges and following feedback has added communicative requirements into the planning activities for October 2025.
- November 2024 – Board approval of workstream **(completed)**
  - January 2025 – March 2025 – project scoping, including creation of working group and initial engagement with MHCLG on proposals **(completed)**
  - March 2025 – Terms of Reference and other project documentation proposed to the Board **(completed)**
  - April, June, and September 2025 – working group meetings arranged **(completed)**
  - June 2025 – initial findings presented to CRC **(completed)**
  - July 2025 – project update to Board **(completed)**
  - October 2025 – draft framework and models of a LGPS peer support offer, including consideration of budget, communication requirements and other constraints **(ongoing)**
  - November 2025 – project proposal presented at the Board meeting **(ambition)**

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- January – March 2026 pilot launched (**ambition**)
- April 2026 – project roll out (**ambition**)

## **Recommendation**

That the Committee notes the progress of this workstream and notes the timeline of actions as set out above and provides views/comments on initial findings in the Annexes.

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## **Annex A – LGPS-Live Webinar 23rd July 2025 Poll Results**

### **How familiar are you with the concept of peer support? (29 responses)**

Very familiar - I actively use or contribute to existing peer networks **17.2%**

Heard of it, but not sure what it involves **62.1%**

Not familiar at all, this is the first I've heard about peer support **20.7%**

### **What do you see is the main benefit of peer support in the LGPS? (35 responses)**

Sharing knowledge and best practice **42.9%**

Building confidence in complex or changing areas **5.7%**

Reducing isolation in roles **5.7%**

Learning from others' experience **14.3%**

Strengthening consistency and compliance across the scheme **31.4%**

I'm not sure what peer support is **0%**

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## Annex B - LGPS Board survey results: Understanding diversity of representation and Peer Support insight

### Findings

The survey was distributed to pension fund managers and received responses from 38 funds, a response rate of 44 per cent.

When looking at familiarity with peer support networks, most of the respondents (80 per cent) reported that they are already aware of what peer support is, with over a third being very familiar and already actively involved in peer support networks. Only one respondent said that they hadn't heard of peer support networks at all.

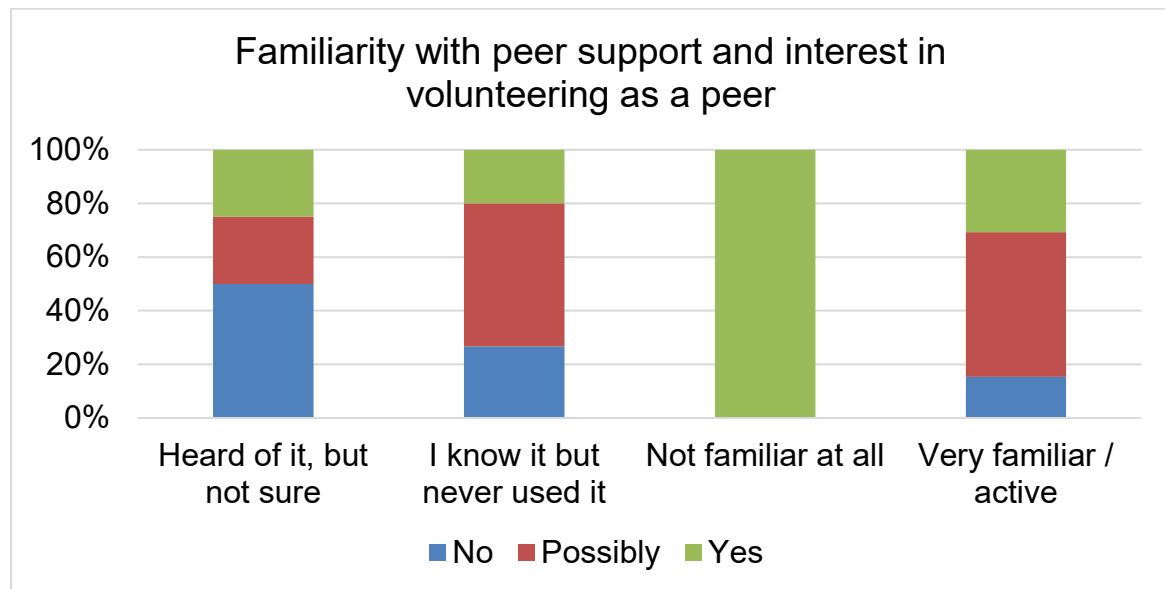
Respondents were asked what they believe to be the main benefit of peer support in the LGPS. Responses can be seen in the table below. Most respondents (66 per cent) said they believe the main benefit to be sharing knowledge and best practice. Only one respondent said "building confidence in complex or changing areas" and one answered that they were not sure of what peer support is.

Peer Support Benefit	Count	Percent
Sharing knowledge and best practice	25	66%
Strengthening consistency and compliance across the scheme	8	21%
Learning from others' experience	3	8%
Building confidence in complex or changing areas	1	3%
I'm not sure what peer support is	1	3%

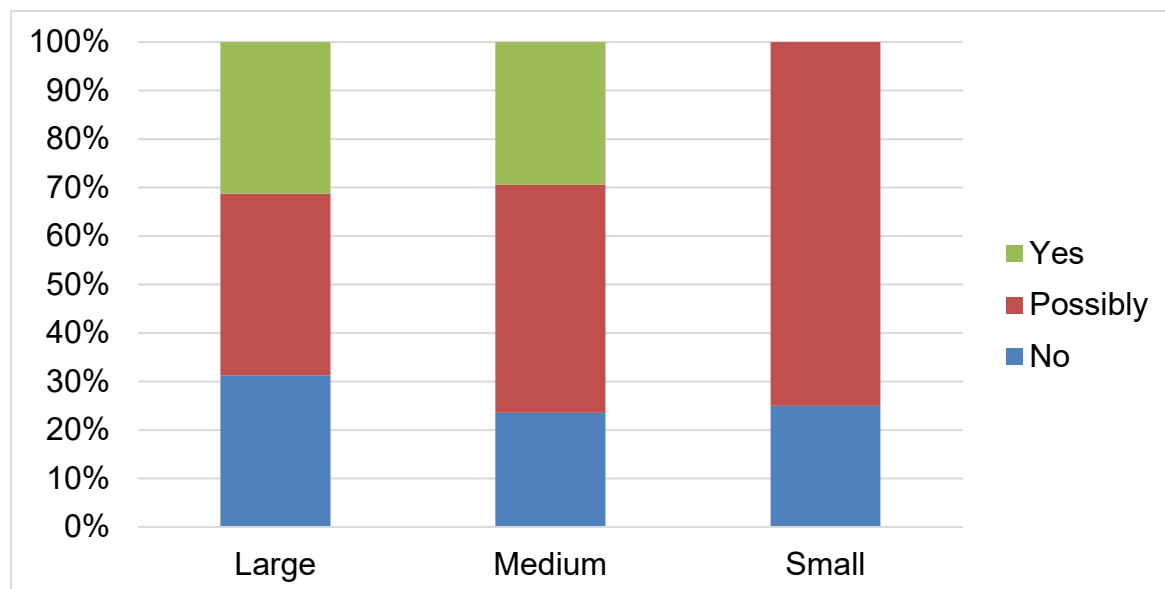
There was a lot of interest from respondents in finding out more about volunteering as a peer. Just over a quarter (26 per cent) said "yes" to finding out more about volunteering as a peer in their role, almost half (47 per cent) said "possibly", and just over a quarter (26 per cent) said they were not interested. In addition to this, there was also lots of interest in funds volunteering as part of a pilot scheme – 80 per cent of respondents said yes or possibly, with 20 per cent saying that their fund would not be interested.

There is a pattern between familiarity with peer support networks and interest in finding out more about volunteering as a peer. Among those who are very familiar and actively involved in peer networks, the majority (11 out of 13) expressed interest, either answering "yes" or "possibly." Those who know what peer support is but have never used it lean heavily toward "possibly" (8 out of 15), indicating openness but also uncertainty. Respondents who have only heard of peer support but are unsure what it involves were more likely to say "no" (4 out of 8), and only two said "yes".

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31 per cent of the large funds and 29 per cent of the medium funds that responded said that they would be interested in volunteering as a peer, while none of the small funds that responded said “yes”. This suggests that resource constraints or capacity concerns may influence smaller funds’ decisions.



\* Small fund – less than £2.5bn assets

Medium fund - between £2.5bn--£5bn assets

Large fund - above £5bn assets

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## Conclusions

To be caveated with a small sample and a short survey, the results show strong awareness of peer support across LGPS funds, with most respondents familiar with the concept and many already engaged. Sharing knowledge and best practice is seen as the main benefit, reinforcing the value of a collaborative approach and well suited to the whole scheme aim of improving governance.

While interest in volunteering and pilot participation is high, uncertainty remains about what involvement entails. Familiarity strongly influences willingness to volunteer, and medium and large-sized funds appear the most engaged overall, Small funds lean towards “possibly,” suggesting resource concerns and wanting to understand more about what the role would entail.

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