

Peer Support Survey

Introduction and Aims

The Scheme Advisory Board is exploring the establishment of an LGPS specific peer support offer. It has set the following initial objectives for what it could aim to achieve:

- Allow LGPS administering authorities to gain external assurance or support for its governance activities.
- Share, promote and increase good governance practices.
- Facilitate access to an expert network of LGPS peer members

The Board is aiming to follow in a proportionate way the principles of the LGA's valued improvement and assurance tool offer to councils. Further resources on peer support are available on the LGA website for those seeking more detail on how it works in a council context.

As part of scoping work to further shape the peer support offer, the SAB created this survey which aimed to gather feedback on how peer support is currently understood, where it could add value and what involvement will look like in practice.

Findings

The survey was distributed to all 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%

Scheme Advisory Board Secretariat

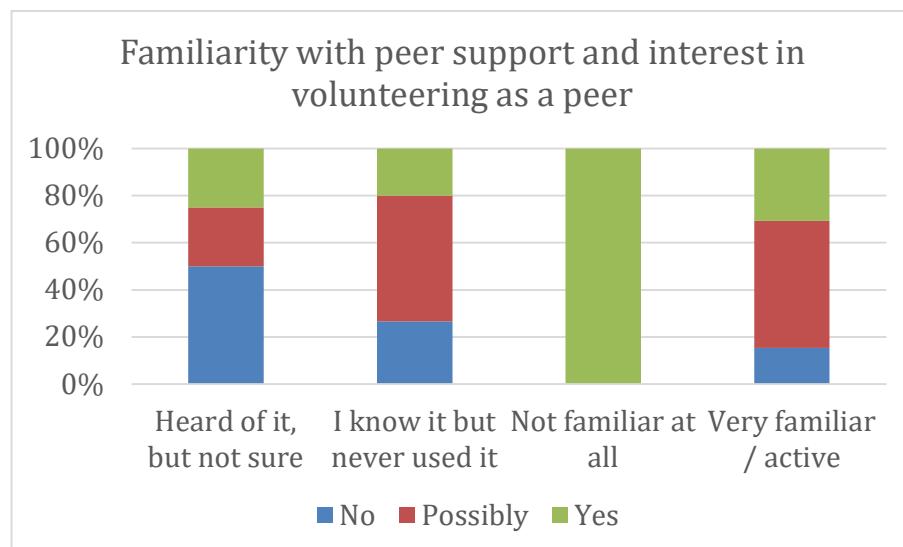
Local Government Association, 18 Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

Email: SABSecretariat@local.gov.uk Website: www.lgpsboard.org

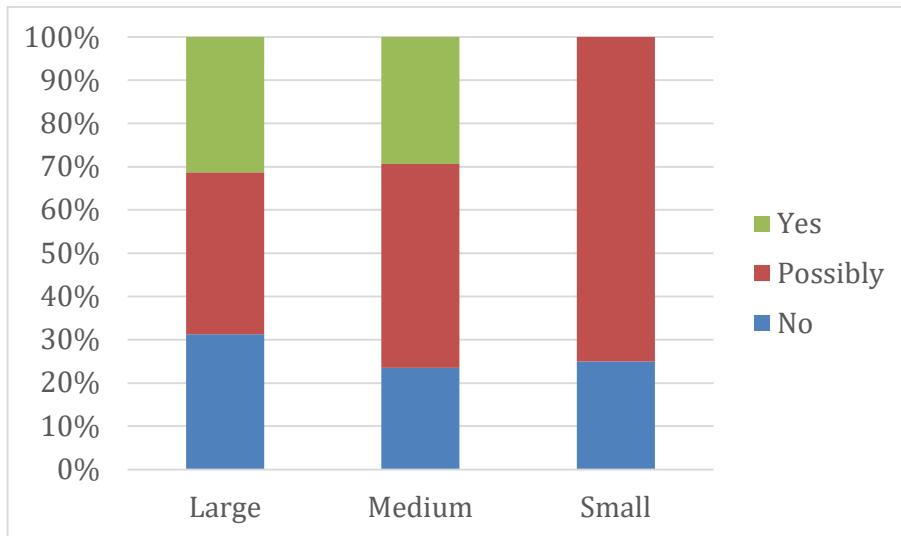
Building confidence in complex or changing areas	1	3%
I'm not sure what peer support is	1	3%

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”.



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

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.