

From the Chief Executive  
Carolyn Downs



Mr Dan Stephens  
Chief Fire Officer  
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Dear Dan

### **LGA Subscription 2014/15**

Last month, LGA Leadership Board agreed to freeze LGA membership for a further year.

**This means that for 2014/15 your subscription, including all the discounts will be £10,460 (plus VAT).**

We are once again offering the 2.5% loyalty discount for all councils/fire and rescue authorities not on notice, alongside the 2.5% prompt payment discount for those authorities which pay in full by 30 June 2014.

In the last year, we have worked closely with fire and rescue authorities on a wide range of issues, and have secured some significant wins. These include:

- delivering a fire pay settlement within the parameters set by stakeholders
- delivering a framework Major Incidents agreement to support resilience arrangements at local level arising from the pension scheme reform industrial action
- continuing to support all fire authorities with retained duty system staff in managing the resolution of the 12,000 plus Employment Tribunal cases linked to the part-time workers regulations
- continuing to influence the strategic direction and operation of the Fire Service College through political influence on both the Management Board and Customer Boards
- continuing support for the residual Firecontrol Projects, identifying risk and taking supporting action to ensure all 22 projects are on track
- through the LGA/CFOA/LFB National Operational Guidance strategy board, successfully setting up a definitive library published online for free, with the first 2 new projects due to be completed in December 2013; we are also working hard to ensure the sustainability of the programme to 2018 with a grant from central Government to match Authorities' contributions
- a continuation of the sprinklers campaign, including a CFOA/LGA campaign week in February 2014
- exemption for 8 FRAs from the council tax referendum requirements and continued lobbying for this to be available to all FRAs

- securing a smaller reduction in revenue funding in the 2015/16 spending round of 7.5% compared to 10% for local government, when the transformation fund is taken into account
- supporting 17 fire authorities to resolve local employee relations difficulties through the national dispute resolution processes; and providing training where requested
- engaging all fire and rescue authorities in the Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge programme with 22 delivered since 2011 and a further 24 confirmed or in discussion, and a formal evaluation commissioned from Cardiff University
- delivering a revised Fire Leadership Academy in September 2013 which was well received by all attendees; and bespoke leadership events on request
- 46 of the 49 fire authorities in England and Wales attended the LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition in Brighton on 12-13 March 2013 – with a total of 264 attendees. Next year's Fire Conference and Exhibition is being held in the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff on 11-12 March 2014, with delegate fees held once again at 2008 prices

In terms of working more broadly with local government, further achievements which will be of interest to you include:

- working with the NHS to access £1.9 billion of health funding for social care/health integration.
- an extra £400 million for local government's new public health responsibilities
- an extra £300 million for local roads maintenance
- we helped councils to recover a further £100 million from failed Icelandic banks, bringing the total amount to over £800 million, more than half the amount owing
- an extra £47 million for high-needs for post-16
- changes to the Audit Bill providing councils with the flexibility to procure audit nationally should they wish to do so, potentially saving more than £200 million over the next 5 years
- agreement from the government to allow capital receipts to be used to fund transformation
- lobbied for the principle of a Local Growth Pot and we will now focus on building it and getting it properly funded.

As well as reporting on activity last year, the Chairman of the Fire Services Management Committee, Councillor Kay Hammond wrote out to all FRAs in September asking for input about issues which are important to you. Those responses have determined the main priorities going forward.

Along with continuing to highlight the challenging financial position for fire and rescue authorities, we will be responding to the Government's response to the Knight Review, and we will continue to work on your behalf on issues such as interoperability, strategic resilience and examining challenges such as demographic change, and managing risk.

Other important issues include how FRSs can foster growth, and working more broadly with the public, private and voluntary sectors. Designed specifically for elected Members, I am pleased to say that our new Leadership Academies have gone from strength to strength and we will be offering two sessions in 2014 because of the continuing demand.

The current trade dispute between the FBU and the Government is providing an on-going challenge in terms of business continuity and resilience. We have supported fire authorities in managing the industrial relations implications and are continuing to try to resolve fitness issues related to the dispute, representing the clear and shared position of fire authorities in doing so.

Your subscription invoice will be sent out in April. To streamline the process could you ask your office to arrange for a purchase order number to be sent to [andrea.patrick@local.gov.uk](mailto:andrea.patrick@local.gov.uk) in my office.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolyn', written in a cursive style.

Carolyn Downs  
Chief Executive