

Connect

MEMBER REVIEW

PREPARED FOR THE
CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONERS' ALLIANCE

OCTOBER 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	4
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	5
Raise profile and tell your story of success(es).....	5
Focus on recruitment and appeal to new members.....	5
Improve member communications.....	6
Review structures.....	6
INTRODUCTION.....	7
METHODOLOGY.....	8
SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND TO PARTICIPANTS.....	9
Gender.....	9
Age group.....	9
Length of time retired.....	9
Length of time as a CSPA member.....	10
Length of service in the civil service.....	10
Partner organisations.....	11
SECTION TWO: YOUR MEMBERSHIP.....	12
1.1 Reasons for joining.....	12
1.2 Attendance at meetings.....	16
1.3 Services provided.....	18
SUMMARY.....	21
SECTION THREE: VIEWS TOWARDS THE CSPA.....	22
3.1 Describing the CSPA.....	22
3.2 Favourability.....	23
3.3 Effectiveness.....	24
3.4 Strengths.....	24
3.5 Weaknesses.....	25
SUMMARY.....	27
SECTION FOUR: BRANDING AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS.....	29
4.1 Tone and style.....	29
4.2 Profile.....	31
4.3 Campaigning.....	32
SUMMARY.....	34
SECTION FIVE: COMMUNICATIONS.....	35
5.1 Regular communications.....	35
5.2 'The Pensioner'.....	37
5.3 Website.....	39
5.5 Social media.....	40

5.6	Impact of lockdown and coronavirus	41
	SUMMARY	43
	SECTION SIX: STAFFING AND STRUCTURES.....	44
6.1	Awareness of staff	44
6.2	Leadership	44
6.3	Group structure.....	45
	SUMMARY	50
	SECTION SEVEN: THE FUTURE	51
7.1	Value of membership subscription.....	51
7.2	Specific challenges.....	51
7.3	Future priorities	53
	SUMMARY	56
	APPENDIX I – LETTER OF APPROACH.....	57
	APPENDIX II – ONLINE SURVEY	59
	APPENDIX III – ABBREVIATED SURVEY INCLUDED IN ‘THE PENSIONER’	64
	APPENDIX IV – GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW (MEMBERS)	67
	APPENDIX V – GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW (PARTNERS).....	73

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the members review which Connect undertook on behalf of the CSPA between April 2020 and August 2020.

The CSPA does excellent work that is highly valued by members. It is viewed as a professional and effective organisation that represents the views of members well.

Key themes that emerged when discussing the CSPA's strengths include the membership itself, campaigning activity and advice to members.

Conversely, weaknesses mentioned included an ageing membership, a lack of recruitment of new members, problems with structures, and a resistance around the use of new technologies.

Group meetings were highly valued by some members, and it is important to acknowledge that there are a large group of members who are happy to support the organisation without becoming actively involved. Others would like to be more involved but found local groups inaccessible.

There was a slight generational divide with some younger members suggesting that local groups are not very appealing and are focused on older members. Interestingly, the main consequence of lockdown appears to be an increased openness to using technology to facilitate meetings and member engagement.

The CSPA is not well-known by external organisations, and potential partners and there was a general feeling the CSPA could have a higher profile, both within the target market (current/retiring civil servants) and amongst influencers (Government).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the review, a number of recommendations for the CSPA headquarters team and Executive Committee are outlined below:

Raise profile and tell your story of success(es)

It is clear that the CSPA does excellent work that is highly valued by members. However, there was a strong sense that the organisation does not promote itself, and its successes well enough. We recommend:

- **Showcasing the support provided to individual members:** Support with individual pension queries is one of the main reasons members join and value the CSPA. However, your stories of success are not told or understood. Case studies should feature on the website and should be included in briefs to external audiences, as well as at recruitment events.
- **Focus on fewer campaigning priorities:** Be clear on your mission and reflect this in focused campaigning priorities.
- **Articulating the different campaigning priorities of Later Life Ambitions and the CSPA:** There must be more clarity around the differences between the campaigns that CSPA is taking forward as part of the coalition with Later Life Ambitions, and the campaigns CSPA is leading independently.
- **Explaining the impact and successes of national campaigns:** CSPA has achieved real and meaningful change for members. This should be made more explicit.
- **Increase the profile of the General Secretary:** Lisa Ray is well-respected and should be positioned as the voice of the CSPA. Lisa should be more prominent on CSPA communications, for example a welcome on the website, more prominence and editorial in The Pensioner, contributions to Group newsletters, as well as raising the General Secretary's profile with the media and political audiences.

Focus on recruitment and appeal to new members

Overwhelmingly, the biggest concern of members was declining membership and the need to increase recruitment and attract new members.

- **Diversity:** The civil service is very diverse and this is not currently reflected in the make of the CSPA, particularly in terms of the EC. CSPA should consider how the organisation moves to reflect the diversity of the existing service, as this will potentially attract new members.
- **Explore the use of language:** To attract younger members, language and cultural references should be regularly reviewed.
- **Consider a 'figurehead':** To increase awareness amongst potential members, CSPA should consider a national well-known figurehead to help promote the organisation, such as a member of the House of Lords with a civil service background.
- **Consider focus groups with current civil servants:** Building on this review, focus groups with current civil servants could help gain an enhanced understanding of barriers to joining.
- **Build a much stronger partnership with the civil service:** This should include interrogating the GDPR rules.
- **Focus on fewer, better services:** Do not stretch the capacity of the organisation too thinly, and focus on those services that are proven to attract new members, including the CSPA's role in protecting civil service pensions.

Improve member communications

The member review suggested a lack of consistency in terms of communications to members. We suggest:

- **Defining the base number of communications a member should receive:** Building an understanding of what an average member should expect to receive from HQ, Regions and Groups as part of their membership.
- **Provide more clarity to local officers on which communications should be cascaded.**
- **Developing simple and consistent branding guidelines** that can be used by Groups.
- **Review communications across channels:** Ensure there is consistency of message, tone of voice and operational guidelines across social media, website, and direct communications.
- **Aim to build database of member emails:** To enable more direct communication
- **Increasing the use of digital channels as an engagement tool:** (See below).

Review structures

The Group structure of the CSPA was raised as a potential difficulty throughout the review. It was felt that the current inherited structure may be caused a democratic deficit as not all members are able to fully engage in the work of the CSPA. We recommend:

- **Investigating the possibility of 're-mapping' groups:** In particular, basing groups on postcodes of current members rather than historical sites of civil service work.
- **Looking at the option of a stronger regional structure.**
- **Using technology to enable member engagement:** The CSPA should explore other forms of democracy such as direct democracy and voting using digital technology.
- **Training for members:** Both in terms of succession planning for new officers in local groups, as well as training in technology to facilitate more remote or virtual meetings, which may become increasingly important with the ongoing challenge of COVID-19.
- **Consider future of the AGM:** The CSPA should consider whether the AGM structure serves its purpose and whether it could be adjusted to appeal to more potential members, particularly those without a strong history of trade unionism.
- **Reviewing the structure of the EC:** Consider how the EC could be better connected and more accessible to the membership. This could involve reducing its size, and increasing the transparency of decision making.

INTRODUCTION

The members review was conducted over a four-month period between April 2020 and August 2020. It is important to note that the nationwide lockdown as a result of the coronavirus pandemic took place during this period.

There are a number of internal and external pressures on the Alliance.

Internal pressures include:

- Demographic profile of membership
- Decreasing activity/existence of local groups
- Patchy electronic member contact details
- Low female representation on the Executive Committee (EC)
- Unsustainable recruitment of new members.

External pressures include:

- GDPR regulations
- Changing career paths within the civil service
- Technological changes, meaning the old ways of distributing CSPA communications from Head Office are out of date and inefficient – however they must be continued to ensure members that aren't online are not excluded.

Collectively, these pressures present a very real challenge in the short, medium and long term of the Alliance to deliver for current, and attract new, members.

The member review was commissioned to inform the work of CSPA and to help meet these challenges. It sought to:

- Review the value, relevance and support for the CSPA existing members and partners
- Recommend how the CSPA can better support members in the future
- Recommend how the CSPA can grow membership
- Recommend how the CSPA can further develop and modernise its member communications
- Help shape recommendations around how the CSPA can become fit for the future

Connect would like to put on record our thanks to the hundreds of members who so generously gave them time and participated in the review.

METHODOLOGY

To give as full a picture of member views as possible, Connect adopted a mixed research method which included:

- An online member questionnaire
- An abbreviated member questionnaire included in 'The Pensioner' which could be submitted via post
- A structured and in-depth interview, conducted via telephone and designed to expand on the questions asked in the questionnaires.

Online questionnaire

All members were invited to participate in the online questionnaire, via an email to members on 16th April 2020 (see Appendix I). 700 members responded to the online questionnaire.

Abbreviated 'paper based' questionnaire

An abbreviated form of the questionnaire was included in the Summer edition of The Pensioner to ensure that those without access to the internet were not excluded. 394 people completed the abbreviated questionnaire.

Structured telephone interviews

Connect completed 46 interviews using an interview guide developed in partnership with the CSPA. The guide questionnaire is included as **Appendix I** and was an extended form of the online questionnaire.

Interviews were conducted between May 2020 and August 2020, taking between 15 and 60 minutes. All interviews were transcribed and analysed. The questions were a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions.

Quantitative questions are used to make statistical comparisons, which are useful for benchmarking and tracking progress. On these questions, a score of 4.2 or above (out of 5) should be considered very strong.

Qualitative questions are used to gather rich data and give an insight into the views of the respondents and what is driving perceptions.

Partner interviews

To supplement the member views, Connect also carried out in depth questionnaires with partner organisations. 35 partners were initially approached via email sent on behalf of Lisa Ray, General Secretary, outlining the purpose of the review. 10 partner organisations responded. The letter of approach is provided as **Appendix I**.

Where direct comments are included in the review document, they are from the telephone interviews unless they are explicitly referenced as (Online Survey), (Paper Survey) or (Partner comment).

It is important to note that participation in the review was entirely self-selecting. This means that those taking part may have stronger views than the general membership. This is particularly the case for those taking part in telephone interviews. It also represents a snapshot in time and may be affected by external pressures and events.

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND TO PARTICIPANTS

The first section of the report provides background on the members who participated.

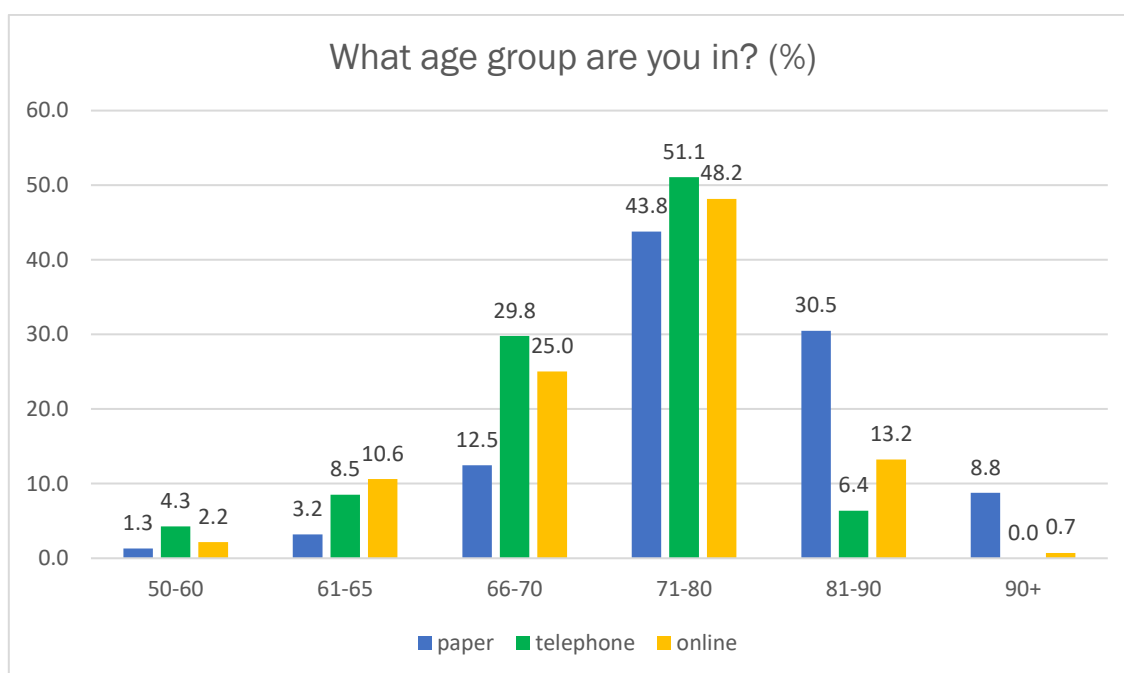
Gender

The balance was similar in each of the three surveys, with more men participating than women.

	Male	Female
Online survey	66%	34%
Paper-based questionnaire	60%	40%
Interviews	68%	22%

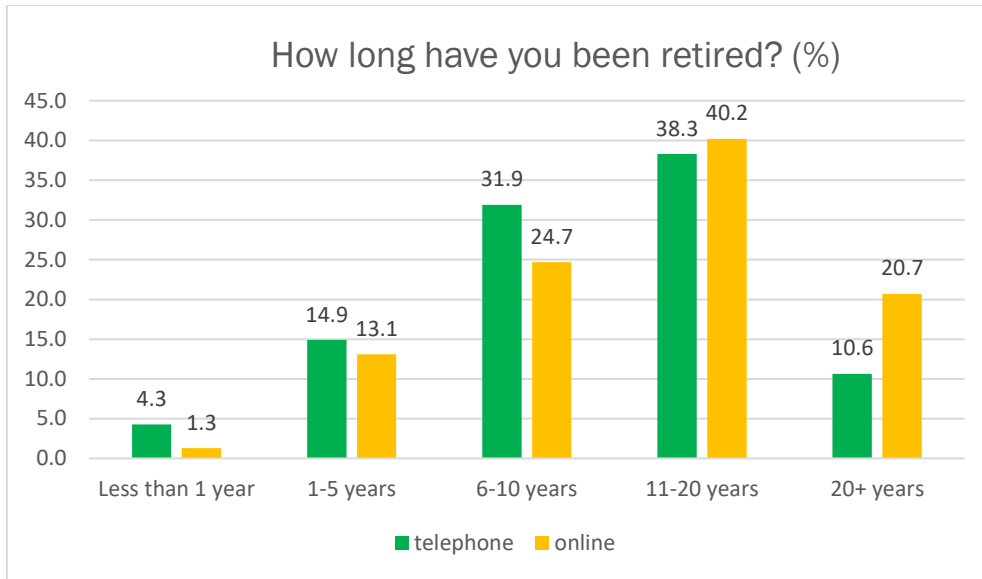
Age group

Around 50% of those answering each of the three surveys were in the 71-80 age group. As expected, those answering the survey in 'The Pensioner' tended to be slightly older.



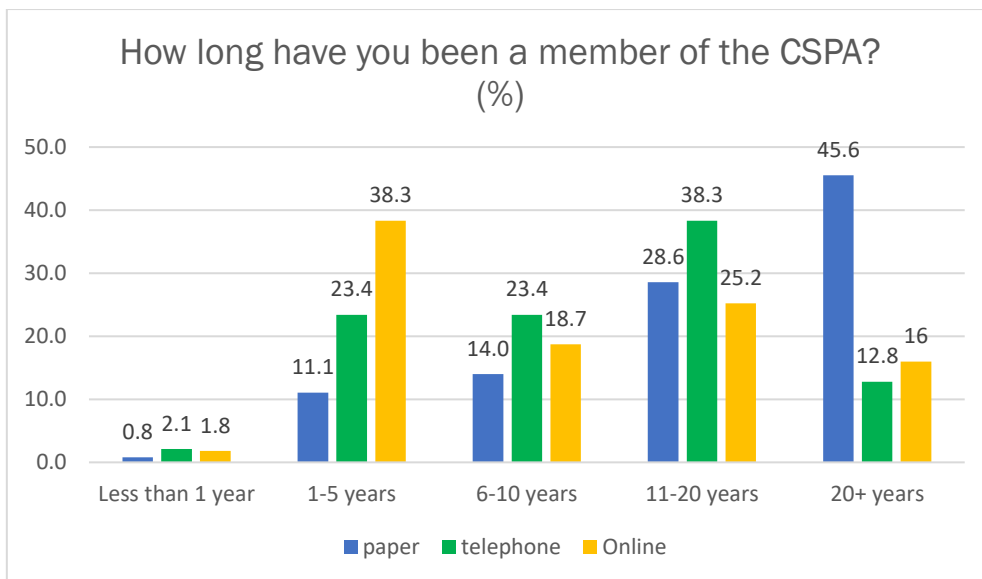
Length of time retired

The majority of participants had been retired between 6 and 20 years.



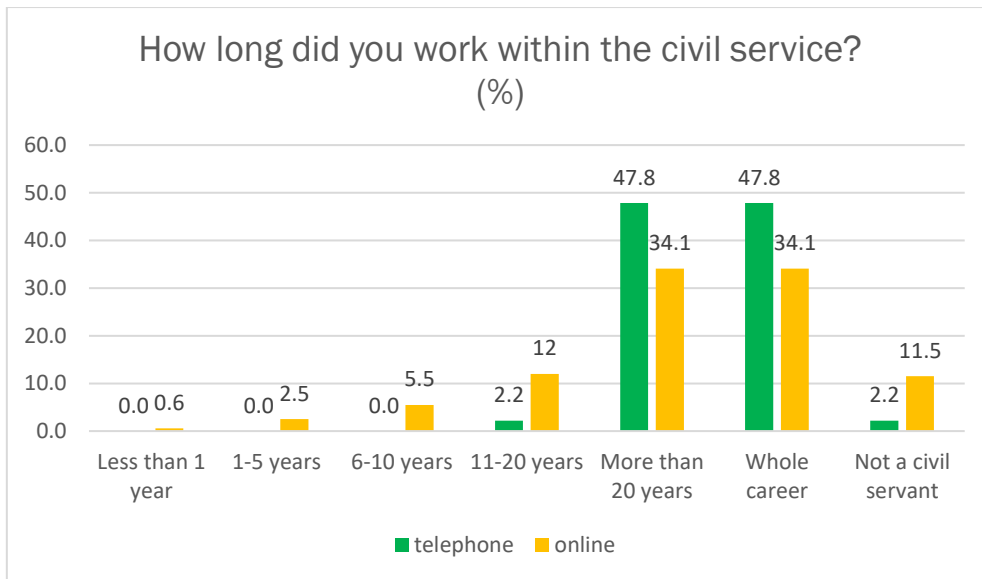
Length of time as a CSPA member

Most participants had been a member of the CSPA for around the same length of time they had been retired, or a slightly shorter period. As expected, due to the age profile of those answering the version in *The Pensioner*, those members tended to have been members for a longer period of time than those being interviewed over the telephone, or answering the online survey.



Length of service in the civil service

The vast majority of members worked within the civil service for more than twenty years or their whole career. Interestingly, 12% of those responding to the online survey and 2% of those interviewed said that they had not worked within the civil service.



Partner organisations

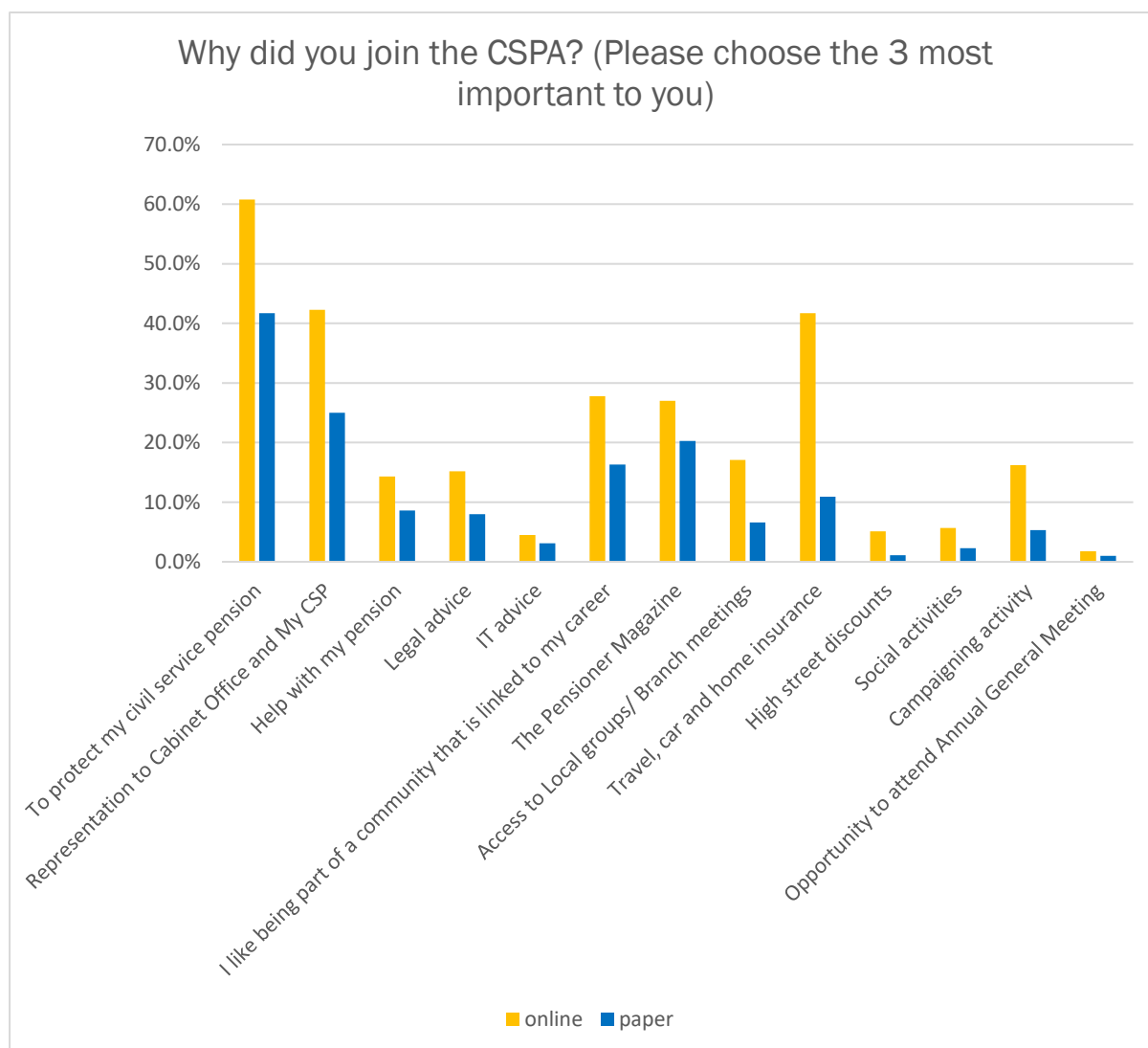
Of those who responded to the partner questionnaire, 75% had worked with the CSPA for longer than 10 years.

SECTION TWO: YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Interviewees were asked about their membership and the services provided by the CSPA.

1.1 Reasons for joining

Respondents were asked why they joined the CSPA.



The top three responses to options given were:

- To protect my civil service pension (61% online, 42% paper)
- Representation to the Cabinet Office and My CSP (42% online, 25% paper)

The next two most popular answers were:

- I like being part of a community that is linked to my career (28%, 16% paper)
- The Pensioner Magazine (27% online, 20% paper)

Interestingly, Travel, car and home insurance was cited by 42% of those that completed the online survey but only 11% of those who filled in the paper copy.

Responses provided during the telephone interviews reflected this pattern. A large proportion focused on the CSPA's **role in championing civil service pensioners and protecting pensions**:

- *"When I retired it seemed like the best way to take forward the interests of civil service pensioners"*
- *"One of the benefits of working at the civil service was a good pension benefit at the end, but that is not completely guaranteed and so I feel more comfortable with an organisation defending my interests."*
- *"I felt people with public service pensions needed effectively a form of trade union – isn't a trade union but works as one"*
- *"It looked like they would be a champion on behalf of civil service pensioners. My husband is part of NFOP and I liked the magazine and wondered if CSPA had one"*
- *"I had a problem with pension amount and so I relied on CSPA for guidance and their help was invaluable. You cannot navigate it on your own."*

Linked to this was an understanding that the CSPA keeps members **informed and engaged in a community**:

- *"I wanted to be kept informed of one development as I continued to consult after retirement from the civil service and I wanted to be kept up to date on pensions and issues affecting pensioners."*
- *"To keep in touch what was happening. I used to be in the union and I use it for the information"*
- *"I felt it would allow me to maintain certain things in relation to my background as a civil servant and I would use the groups to get to know people with similar backgrounds to myself".*

There was also a strong sense that involvement in the CSPA continued a **tradition of trade unionism** within the civil service:

- *"I was active in the PCS and was interested in a non-political retirement group, I still wanted to be active in the fight for rights but not to be political"*
- *"I was an active trade unionist, I see the CSPA as the trade union for retired members"*
- *"I've always been a member of a trade union or a professional association and I thought the CSPA would carry that on. It is "remarkably cheap" and keeps me informed on what is going on in the world of public sector"*
- *"I've been pretty active within the Unions over the years but I felt that it was representative of my views."*
- *"I always belonged to a union and thought it would be beneficial to be part of an organisation that actively pursues the interests of civil servants. It felt important to me as the issue of widows pensions was very important."*
- *"I was a trade union rep for much of my career so knew about CSPA." (OS)*

There was also a sense that joining was seen as **automatic or 'the right thing to do'**

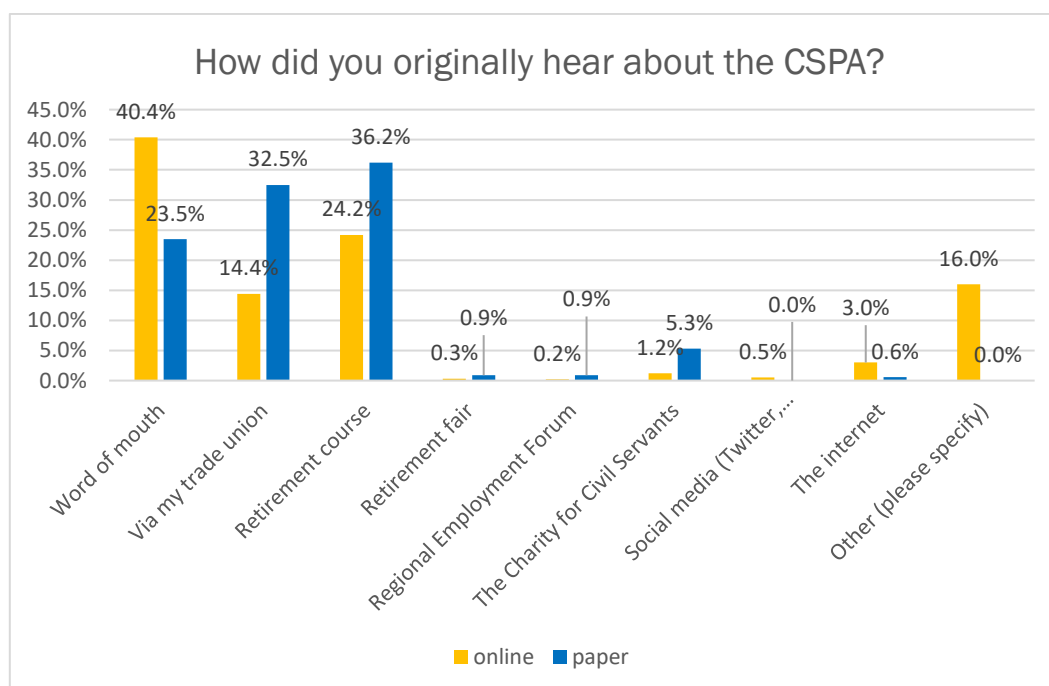
- *"It was routine at the time"*
- *"It was the done thing, it was normal to join. It's not expensive, so why not? "*

- “It was the thing to do when you retired, join the CSPA and the retired section of the union”

As in the online survey, a number referred to the **services available, particularly travel insurance**:

- “Someone told me about the travel insurance policy, which I wanted to take out but we haven’t taken the policy out yet.”
- “Travel insurance. It was recommended by a friend. I have underlying heart conditions, and was delighted not to have to declare that. It is a great scheme, I can't emphasise enough how valuable that is, and I would leave if they lost that. Even though it has gone up in money it is still an amazing scheme.”
- “I thought there were some good benefits for retirees, and some of my friends recommended it”
- “The travel insurance was recommended to me by a friend”

Q. How did you originally hear about the CSPA?



The three most cited reasons answers were:

- Word of mouth (40% online, 24% paper)
- Via a retirement course (24% online, 36% paper)
- Via my trade union (14% online, 32% paper)

This was also echoed in the interviews, where a number of members mentioned a personal connection or referral.

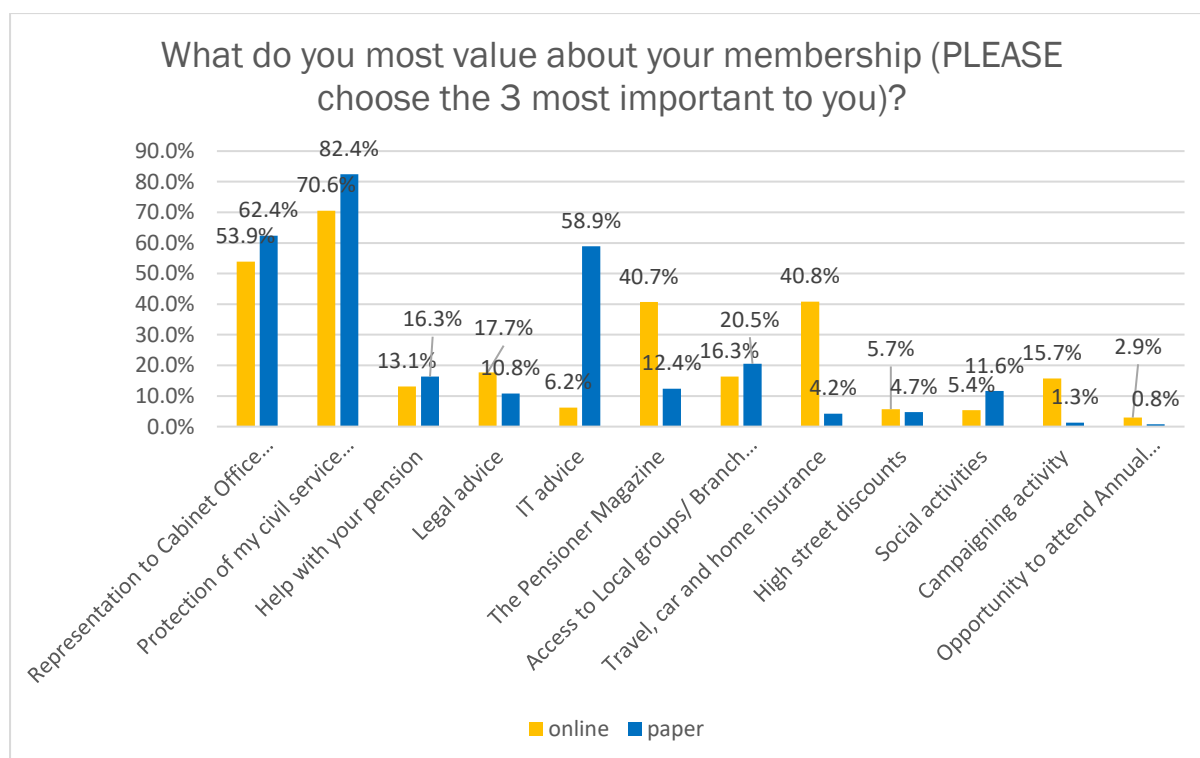
- “My parents were both members and I think I had been to a retirement seminar and there was someone there.”
- “A friend recommended it”

- “My father is a member and I knew about it and I thought it would be a good idea. They had good information in the magazine about what you do with taking the money for early retirement.”
- A fellow retired civil servant suggested it, it's a bit like being part of a union. I'm unlikely to need their help, but it's a loyalty thing.
- “I was recommended by a friend, I thoroughly enjoy it. It builds on my union rep experience. Joined CSPA over PCS because it's more of a campaigning group.”
- “I joined pre-retirement as had friends that were already members, and it was a good deal”

The higher proportion of those that heard about the CSPA via a trade union within those completing the paper survey, may reflect the age of those surveyed and stronger links with trade unions within the civil service in the past.

Q What do you value most about your membership?

Members were asked what they valued the most about their membership.



Answers echoed the reasons given for joining. 71% of online respondents referred to ‘protection of my civil service pension’, 54% the representation to Cabinet Office and My CSP, and 41% referring to travel, car and home insurance, and 41% referring to ‘The Pensioner’. A similar pattern was reflected in the paper surveys, with the outlier being IT advice which was valued by 59% of those filling in the paper surveys.

A similar pattern to that of the online survey was reflected in the telephone interviews.

In addition, **being kept ‘up to date’** was seen as important by many interviewees, particularly in regard to Government policy:

- *“Being informed of what’s going on in the world of Government legislation, budgets, and occupational pensions and knowing that if there are problems then CSPA will let me know.”*
- *“At the moment, because my local branch has shut down, the monthly updates which I always read online”*
- *“It’s a way of finding out new developments, sometimes the presentations/discussions in groups they are interesting. They are good if I have any questions and would like more information.”*

Members also talked about the **reassurance** offered by having an organisation working on their behalf:

- *“I like the reassurance that if something goes wrong they are there to support me with advice and campaigning”*
- *“The sense that there is someone in the background that would point me in the right direction and be able to assist if I need it.”*
- *“There's no one on your side at all without them. it's useful to be part of a bigger group of similar people with similar interest”*
- *“The fact we have an efficient headquarters staff who take on government on pensioners matters. The main thing is they are the only people with negotiations and talking rights with the Government on behalf of retired civil servants.”*

Actively campaigning was seen as important by those interviewed. The higher proportion may be accounted for by the fact that those who agreed to be interviewed are possibly the most ‘active’ members:

- *“I’m interested in the national issues that CSPA campaign on”*
- *“The fact that it is a campaigning group and working on issues that are relevant to me and connected to My CSP”*
- *“I also value the work with Parliament as you fight for pensioners.”*
- *“It is important that the CSPA campaigns on the things that matter most”*
- *“Important to keep campaigning and keep the age group in the limelight, and talk directly to Cabinet members.”*

Some members also spoke about **social engagement**:

- *“Seeing everyone, and it’s interesting to see the lobbying take place”*
- *“At branch meetings I like the social aspect, meeting up with member”*
- *“I am a chairman of a local group and we have an overtly active social group which I am very involved in.”*
- *“Some of the talks are interesting and I'm kept abreast of developments”*

1.2 Attendance at meetings

Respondents were asked whether they have attended events or meetings in person on more than two occasions.

66% of those answering the online questionnaire had attended Group meetings, and 33% had attended the AGM. However, it is important to note that the respondents are self-selecting which may mean that this is higher than amongst the wider membership.

35% of those interviewed over the phone had attended a group meeting, and 25% had attended the AGM.

Members gave a range of views as to why they have not attended face to face meetings. This included:

No local group to attend

- *The nearest group is a long way away from me and it's not practical for me to travel that distance.*
- *There are none in my area but I'd like to get involved.*
- *I live in central London and have no car, so there is no way to get to them and it's quite inaccessible.*
- *I used to go but there is no longer a group. I used to go to Maidstone but live in North Kent. It was a nice bunch of people.*
- *There isn't a local group to me, but I probably wouldn't go anyway as I didn't join for the social side.*
- *The Group in North East London has collapsed, if it existed, I might go along, but it would depend on the type of things they do. I don't have the capacity to set up or run it.*
- *I haven't attended a group meeting because the closest one to me is 12 miles away because it is not convenient.*
- *The nearest meetings to me are a best part of an hour to get there and I've never had any great desire to get there anyway.*

Others mentioned **other priorities and a lack of time:**

- *I don't have time and I'm not that politically motivated. I like to know what's being done and have a general awareness but I don't attend.*
- *I have other commitments and I don't think I would gain anything more than I already get from reading the magazine.*
- *Although I am financially retired, I still have 7 unpaid jobs that keep me busy so I just rely on the CSPA to be there in the background if I need support.*
- *As well as being a carer I am part of other groups and societies so have little time for other activities.*
- *I have more interesting stuff to do, so I never really pursued attending meetings*
- *I'm quite busy but they are quite awkward to get to, the nearest to me is Cardiff. But in some ways that is more of an excuse as I go to Cardiff for other things*
- *I'm the sort of member that pays my subs and is inactive, part of the reason for that is I'm busy with lots of other things like my tenants association, other campaigning.*

There was also a feeling from some interviewees that local groups were '**not for them**' or they weren't interested in the activities on offer:

- *It's a meeting with many elderly members and that is the way it has always been done.*
- *The average age of the meeting was a lot older than me, I will persevere for a while but there are interesting talks that I enjoyed.*

- *I've attended a group meeting and it was dire. it wasn't well run, it was a bit sad in honesty. It was a bit of a joke.*
- *I'm not into going to those sort of meetings, quite happy to receive the information and if there is anything I can do over email that's I would do it.*
- *I've looked at local meetings but they aren't very convenient and what they do doesn't sound very interesting.*
- *I didn't join to go to monthly meetings in church halls. I don't go if I can help it, they are not the most attractive options.*

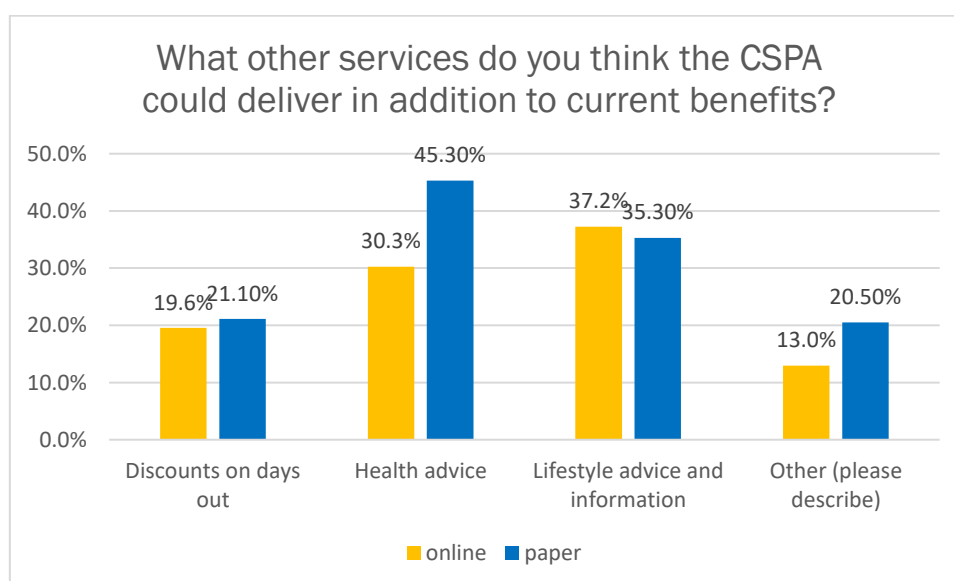
Members were also asked about views towards the AGM. The main comments about the AGM referenced bureaucracy and suggested that the format could be updated:

- *The AGM seems bureaucratic.*
- *I've been to the AGM as the sole representative from Portsmouth branch as acting secretary and acting chair as no one else wanted to do the job.*
- *Since the AGM moved venues it's very good. However, it is still a bit like being in the 1970s and they need to change the format for younger people. I understand that at the AGM people should be allowed to speak but if the question has been answered it becomes a waste of time and people just want to hear their own voices. But I do like to hear what the EC is doing from the horse's mouth.*
- *CSPA shouldn't spend too much time on constitutional amendments, it can lead to a lot of in-fighting which I think is a waste of time.*

1.3 Services provided

Members were asked which services provided by the CSPA they use. The service mentioned most frequently by interviewees was travel insurance (22 of those interviewed),

When asked about additional services that the CSPA could provide that was little consistency in the responses. For example, in the online questionnaire, 37% said that they would value more lifestyle advice and information, and 30% supported health advice.



Other ideas included:

- National Trust/English Heritage
- Care services
- Death plans
- Healthcare provision (although a number of interviewees mentioned they were also Benenden members)
- A credit union

A number of interviewees said that they felt the CSPA should consider benefits that may be of greater interest to **younger members**:

- *“The biggest issue is that there is a perception that you are either at work or you are retired. I may have taken my pension but I’m not retired. The services they offer fit into this dichotomy but I am looking for support for how you work alongside being a civil service pensioner. Even if services can’t be offered but there was an acknowledgment that some of us are still working even though they have taken their pension. I think it’s a major risk that CSPA are going to become irrelevant and will die out.”*
- *Somehow they have to get more people interested as people become retired this is dependent on having a link to people that are still at work. I don’t know how they can do that more than any other organisations that are dying quietly. (Partner)*

There was some feeling that the CSPA should focus on **‘exclusive’ deals**, rather than those that are more widely available:

- *“I believe that there are so many organisations like the CSPA that you must give something back to the members as a carrot to continue membership, the holiday insurance was great as many other organisation like NARPO etc all have them. Many organisations such as Boundless offer many "Deals" but 99% of them are available to everyone and they only offer them because they get paid to do so. I would rather get one Genuine deal than waste my time on 20 deals that I could get without membership of any organisation.” (Online survey)*
- *“It’s very easy to find out about services on the internet which makes it a very competitive market meaning they would have to offer something special.”*
- *“There are lots trying to fish in the same pond, like the Civil Service Sports, CS Sport and Leisure who also provide a shopping service. It is difficult to provide something unique, and I have reservations about whether or not it helps to grow or retain the membership.”*
- *There is a slight conflict here as rather than replicate services, I think there should be greater partnership and affiliation. I’m not sure providing a whole load of new services is the way to go. (Partner)*

A number of respondents suggested that the **focus of the CSPA should be less on services** and more on the representative nature of the organisation:

- *“Whilst I use some services my priority is CSPA role as a 'trade union' for retired civil servants.” (Online survey)*
- *“I’d rather efforts were focused on our core interests, and leave these kind of things to others.” (Online survey)*

- *"I'm not sure CSPA should be delivering more services - particularly if this detracts from the core functions of support with pension issues." (Online survey)*
- *"You need to be careful that interests are not spread too wide to ensure that you don't stray too far from the key aim of the organisation. I think they should concentrate on their core business. We all get discount cards from other places. I wouldn't like to see it go down a commercial line, i don't think there is anything else I would like to see. They are doing the main job of looking after our interests, which is what they should be doing."*
- *My personal view is that representation is the most important thing. (Partner)*

Travel insurance

Travel insurance was mentioned by interviews throughout the telephone conversations and was referred to by a large number of respondents to the online and paper survey.

Travel insurance was cited by many as a reason that they joined the CSPA.

- *I just joined for the travel insurance.*

It was clear that travel insurance is the most popular 'service' offered:

- *"Currently I'm not using any other services from the travel insurance. There are other benefits but I don't think they are worthwhile."*
- *"I use the excellent travel insurance, it is just amazing even if the premiums have gone up. I've had cancer and heart surgery, and am fit well and active but can travel because of the fantastic service."*

However, it was noted by a large proportion of those interviewed that the travel insurance offer is becoming much less attractive as a result of increasing premiums. It is clear from the language used that many members feel very strongly about this:

- *"I did use the travel insurance but they hiked the premium, and I was disgusted about that. It seemed out of step with the rest of the insurance industry. I did speak to them and Saga offered a better deal. I was very disappointed especially as The Pensioner kept recommending it."*
- *"Until this year I used the travel insurance, but the premiums have gone up so much and there is now no prospect of travelling so I ended it."*
- *I used to use the travel insurance but it became too expensive and doubled in price*
- *Travel insurance, home insurance, although I cancelled the travel insurance when the premium went up, I thought it was a disgrace.*
- *I got a quote for the travel insurance but I found a better quote myself and I was particularly disappointed by this.*
- *It [CSPA] could improve the travel insurance currently on offer. I still haven't received a response to a May email. The approved insurance provider is poor quality (AXA) and offers abysmal customer service. I think its case of getting the things right that are currently on offer. (Online Survey)*
- *"I'm concerned about the association with Tollgate and the increasing cost of travel insurance. Last year home insurance was more expensive through the CSPA than other providers." (Online survey)*

- *“Try asking for quotes from Insurance companies to see whether we are getting value for money. (In particular travel insurance which seems very expensive).” (Online survey)*
- *“I was very disappointed and would like to rant about the travel insurance. The premium last year was £403 and it was £552 this year which is a ridiculous charge. They said it was because the number of claims, but I have never made a claim and I feel like they are penalising those who haven't and that it is ageism.”*

SUMMARY

The CSPA's role in protecting civil service pensions and representing civil service pensioners to the Cabinet Office and MyCSP is highly valued by members and cited as the reason for joining by many members. As a result, campaigning was seen as an important function of the organisation.

Many members view the CSPA as an 'extension' to trade unionism, and it is clear that the union background of many members informed their decision to join the CSPA. Given the decline in union membership across the civil service, this may be a warning flag for future recruitment.

A large proportion of members heard about the CSPA via trade unions or retirement courses. Word of mouth or personal connections were also important.

Once part of the CSPA, members value the services provided, particularly travel insurance, although strong concerns were expressed about its value for money moving forward. This is something the CSPA should seek to address.

Group meetings were highly valued by some members, but it is important to acknowledge that there are a large group of members who are happy to support the organisation without becoming actively involved. Others would like to be more involved but found local groups inaccessible.

There was also a slight generational divide with some younger members suggesting that local groups are not very appealing and are focused on older members.

SECTION THREE: VIEWS TOWARDS THE CSPA

3.1 Describing the CSPA

Members were asked to describe in their own words, how they would explain the role of the CSPA to a friend or family member. The vast majority referred to your role in **representing the interests of civil service pensioners**:

- *“The CSPA represents the views of retired civil servants to the cabinet office and campaigns alongside other public sector pensions groups to improve the lives of older people”*
- *“Provides a legitimate and recognised voice of civil service pensioners. There are several recent examples of people with difficulties that the alliance has helped. That's the only USP we have.”*
- *“Champion the cause of civil service pensioners.”*
- *“The national group taking forward issues relevant to those who have retired or taken early retirement from the civil services, with an opportunity to meet locally to discuss national issues.”*
- *“They are the campaigning and coordinating group for retired civil servants”*
- *“They represent the interests of retired civil servants, for example with Mr Amos on the Today Programme. As a member you can do as much or as little as you want, e.g. writing to your MP, or just being kept informed.”*

Parallels were also drawn with the **trade unions**.

- *“It is akin to a trade union, as it is looking after the rights of the members.”*
- *“It's an important collective. I think it's a representation of solidarity. there are also other smaller benefits, like travel insurance”*
- *“They are the equivalent of a trade union for civil service pensioners, look out for the pensioners.”*

The CSPA was also described as a **‘community of interest’**

- *A group of like-minded ex civil servants that comes together for organisation and lobbying for pensioners interests.*
- *A community of interest for people who have retired.*
- *More relevant to a retiring member, active pressure group campaigning on relevant issues to pensioners such as social care, the NHS and pensions. You can also still maintain a lot of contact with old colleagues. Personal support and casework combats feelings of isolation.*
- *My friends are retired doctors and they joined and they enjoy it – I highlight the benefits that the Alliance provides. It's a club of people who work for the Government and looks after their interests.*

When Partner organisations were asked the same question, responses were similar:

- *They're an information and informative organisation for former members of the civil service.*
- *They defend the interests of people in receipt of a civil service pension.*
- *They are really an older person's organisation, it is run by the, and they have a key role, they are not just subscribers to a service, for example AARP in the US, older*

people don't own it. They have a large grassroots base who each have a say. That self-advocacy is very important to us.

Members were also asked to use three adjectives to describe the CSPA.

This drew a wide range of responses, with the majority describing the CSPA using positive, encouraging language. The word **'friendly'** was used on multiple occasions, and interviewees also pointed to the **professionalism and efficiency of staff**. This suggests that members look upon staff favourably and feel welcomed by HQ.

Friendly and caring

- *Friendly*
- *Active, Caring, Relevant*
- *Efficient, up to date, friendly*
- *Informative, friendly and has nice lunches.*
- *Competent, up to date, kind*
- *Friendly, interesting and cheap - "cheap morning out"*

Professional

- *Efficient, up to date, switched on*
- *Effective, business-like, bureaucratic*
- *Organised, comfortable, reactive*
- *Important, relevant*
- *trustworthy, competent, friendly*
- *Trustworthy, professional and dated*
- *Integrity, non-political, campaigning, even-handed, impartial*
- *Democratic, effective, national*
- *Quiet, professional, well thought of (Partner)*
- *Dedicated, committed to their cause, traditional (Partner)*

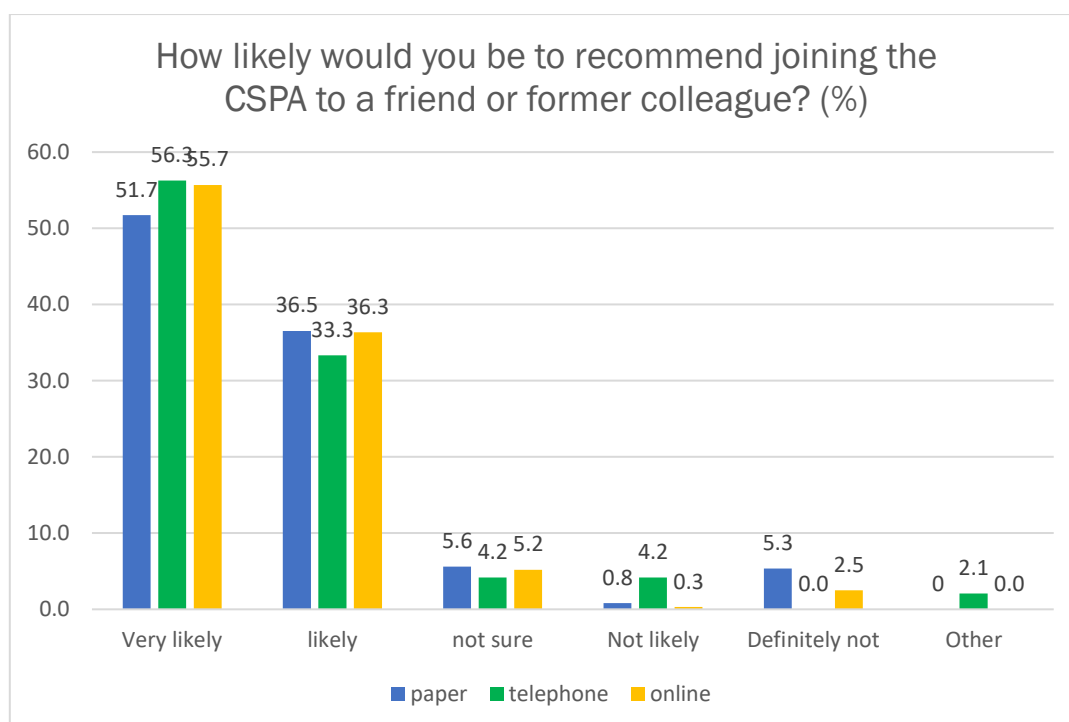
Any negative comments focused on bureaucracy and there was some feeling that the organisation is slightly 'old-fashioned' or outdated.

Old-fashioned

- *Old, older, and oldest*
- *Old-fashioned, valuable (campaigning side), blue-rinse*
- *"Traditional", "old-fashioned", "more dynamic with technology"*
- *Old-fashioned, really boring, the email newsletter etc is not interesting, it is like something from the 1980s or 90s – dull*
- *Quite boring, necessary*
- *Useful, well-meaning, dying - becoming irrelevant*
- *Established, Reliable, Old (Partner)*

3.2 Favourability

To test favourability towards the CSPA, respondents were asked how likely they would be to recommend joining the CSPA to a friend or former colleague.



88% of those completing the paper questionnaire said that they were either very likely or likely to recommend joining with less than 1% saying that they would be unlikely to recommend joining and 5% saying that would definitely not recommend joining.

90% of those interviewed by telephone said that they were either very likely or likely to recommend joining with 4% saying that they would be unlikely to recommend joining.

92% of those completing the online questionnaire said that they were either very likely or likely to recommend joining with less than 1% saying that they would be unlikely to recommend joining and 2.5% saying that would definitely not recommend joining.

3.3 Effectiveness

Respondents were asked to rate CSPA's effectiveness on a scale of one to five, where 1 = not at all effective and 5 = highly effective. The average effectiveness was **3.59**. This is a strong score.

3.4 Strengths

Respondents were asked to identify the CSPA's greatest strengths. This led to a broad range of responses across stakeholder categories, but the **size and strength of membership**, **campaigning ability**, and **advice to members** were most frequently mentioned.

Membership

- *Collectively together there is 50,000 people, and combined with others within Later Life Ambitions this means we're talking on behalf of half a million people*
- *The fact that it has members – its membership is its greatest strength*

- *Our numbers, the CSPA is a reasonably sized body of people that can achieve more together*
- *The depth, scale and diversity of its membership*
- *It's membership and the knowledge and expertise of the membership in pension issues.*
- *The membership, although they could recruit more and seem reluctant to push it. Recruiting is pretty pathetic*
- *Probably the number of active members*
- *Pretty steady membership which is silent but still supportive*
- *Its membership*
- *Their membership being so strong (many thousands) they are a body so that when they approach the government they can rely on their strength in numbers*

CSPA's ability to represent the voices of these members through **campaigning activity** was also seen as a real strength, particularly the links to Cabinet Office:

- *Having a contact in Central Government and input into Cabinet office. It may not be as effective because if the political will isn't there. They also link up to other likeminded organisations*
- *Pensions group which is being authorised to discuss openly with the cabinet office*
- *They are clearly good at the campaigning*
- *Their history of campaigning, they should have a good position in terms of negotiating*
- *Rights with the Treasury, or the Cabinet Office in terms of representing retired civil servants, whether this could be more useful I don't know*
- *Serving their members and being able to open doors with the government through a very pragmatic approach*
- *The fact they represent members, and are a unified voice for those people receiving a civil service pension (Partner)*

Advice to individual members was also highly rated:

- *They're a useful backup when you've got pension issue*
- *it's like belonging to a society, there's backing if you need it. It's very cheap and it carries on from year to year*
- *The advisory service and dealing with pensions for members is their number one strength*
- *On pensions reform, the strength is in individual cases, and they should be playing a stronger advocacy role*
- *They are in tune with the membership, they are very honest and straightforward and have a clear and precise message. They are also there for people, almost on the same level as charities, and I'm not sure how well illustrated that is (Partner)*

3.5 Weaknesses

When asked to identify the CSPA's weaknesses it should be noted that a large number said that they could not identify any weaknesses. However, weaknesses mentioned

included, an ageing membership, a lack of recruitment of new members, problems with structures, and a resistance around the use of new technologies.

Ageing membership

- *They need to focus on younger pensioners, I sometimes feel that it isn't for me.*
- *A lack of clarity in its mission, the [age] range of its membership creates tension as people have very different interests and circumstances, but this creates a “total lack of focus on people coming up to retirement.”*
- *They are maybe more geared for the older side of retirement than the newly retired.*
- *The age of the members who are getting elderly.*
- *It isn't getting retired people to join as the Government won't send out membership forms, therefore the membership gets older and older. So for somebody who retired in their 50s, it is quite a shock to go to a meeting and find yourself 30 years younger than the other people. It's not really their fault as recruiting members is difficult. There is a very different outlook for someone under 75 to someone over 75.*
- *Dying membership, inherited group structure, not many email addresses. Vast majority of members are happy to be passive although some are looking to be part of a campaigning organisation.*

Linked to the issue of an ageing membership were challenges in **recruiting new members** although there was some acknowledgement that this is a challenge for all membership bodies:

Recruitment and failure to engage civil service

- *It's not attracting new members.*
- *CSPA has a lack of members and there is a lack of awareness among retiring staff about what CSPA does.*
- *Not being able to attract enough people to join, but this is the same for every organisation.*
- *Not engaging retired civil servants enough – both those who are already retired and who are due to retire.*
- *Failure to attract newly retired civil servants. They need to attract younger people. The magazine name, 'The Pensioner' is not attractive, they asked about changing it then didn't because of the cost.*
- *They don't seem to be able to recruit a large number of retired people, especially as there is not so much the tradition of being in the in union. Many people also don't have the time.*
- *They don't appeal to the vast majority of members all of the time. There is an active segment but a silent majority that need communication beyond campaigning and need to be able to illustrate the value of membership. (Partner)*

A number of members talked about problems with **the Group structure of the CSPA:**

- *It's dated, there is an emphasis on regional groups and group meetings which I'm not sure works anymore.*
- *It's inability to get local sections really moving.*

- *There is no local organisation where I am, and from what I read in the Pensioner, this is the case for quite a few areas. It is not necessarily their weakness, or their fault but it is a weakness.*
- *The branch network, most branches are glorified social clubs that don't do much campaigning. In the six years we had a branch, we never wrote a letter to an MP*
- *Like all membership organisations, they do suffer from some internal wallowing in the mechanics of democracy. In terms of representation they have a lot of members but how many are active, and they need to keep a finger on the pulse. (Partner)*

This issue is explored in more detail in section six: staffing and structures.

There was a strong suggestion from those interviewed that CSPA should embrace **more technology** to reach more members:

- *Romantic attachment to the old idea of a local group structure, which brings a serious lack of modern channels of communication. We try and tackle digital exclusion by maintaining old ways of communication rather than empowering people to use digital tools.*
- *Modern technology, they should be using it more, things like the twitter address was wrong in the magazine which demonstrates to me that they are at the early stages.*
- *They ought to do more online, for example, meetings online, more information via email. I don't want to get involved in a group personally, I'm not sure how much I would have in common with anyone, apart from being retired civil servants.*
- *It can seem a bit distant and remote. In 2020, when we have social media and Zoom meetings being used incredibly frequently, it needs to "get with it" and go a bit more digital.*
- *Over the next 10 years communication issues could be an issue where at the moment electronic communication can be difficult but it will be important for the newer people they are looking to recruit. (Partner)*
- *Technological change, there are often motions about getting online at the AGM, and I think there is a cliff edge coming where members are being left behind and they will lose touch in terms of accessing services. Part of that is generational. (Partner)*

SUMMARY

When asked to describe the CSPA, members tended to use positive language and were complimentary about the work of CSPA staff, their friendliness and professionalism. Those that had a more negative view tended to focus on bureaucracy and a feeling the organisation is slightly 'old-fashioned'.

Members were highly favourable towards the organisation with the vast majority saying that they would recommend joining to a friend or former colleague.

Most members view the CSPA as an effective organisation.

Members saw the size of the CSPA's membership as a clear strength. Campaigning activity was also seen as a strength as was the advice given to individual members.

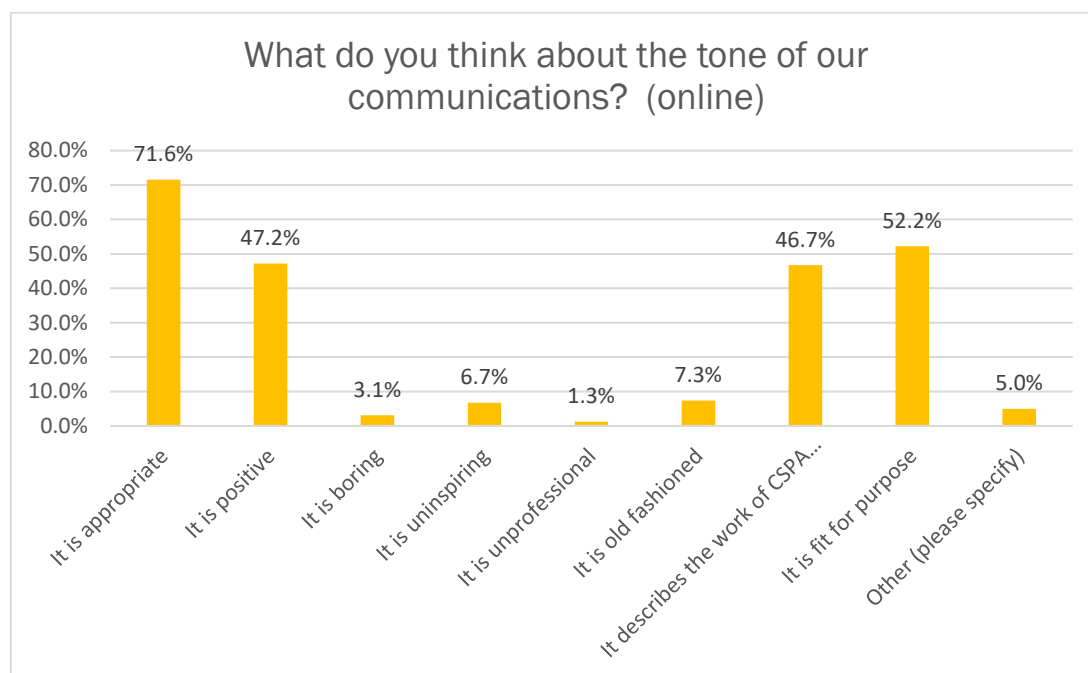
Overwhelmingly, the biggest 'weakness' identified was an ageing membership and challenge in recruiting new members, particularly those in the current civil service. There was a strong suggestion that to recruit new members the CSPA needs to embrace new technology and ways of communicating directly with members.

SECTION FOUR: BRANDING AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

This section of the survey tested respondent's attitude towards the CSPA brand and profile.

4.1 Tone and style

Views towards the tone and style of communications were mixed.



When those responding online were asked about the tone, the top three responses were:

- It is appropriate (72%)
- It is fit for purpose (52%)
- It is positive (47%)
- *I think it's bang on really. Very helpful and concise. They provide useful updates on what's happening in the media.*
- *Nothing wrong with it, it seems professional and is via email. It doesn't appear to be politically based although it tends to be anti-government, as it should. I don't want it to be overly political.*
- *Suits me very well, nerdish civil service flavour but that's what I'm like so it suits me well. Detailed and thorough. Under the influence of the new general secretary there is a sort of lightening of tone.*
- *It is "very civil service" it is factual, a little dry at times but well written.*
- *It is very matter of fact and straight to the point. They err on the side of practical rather than social. (Partner)*

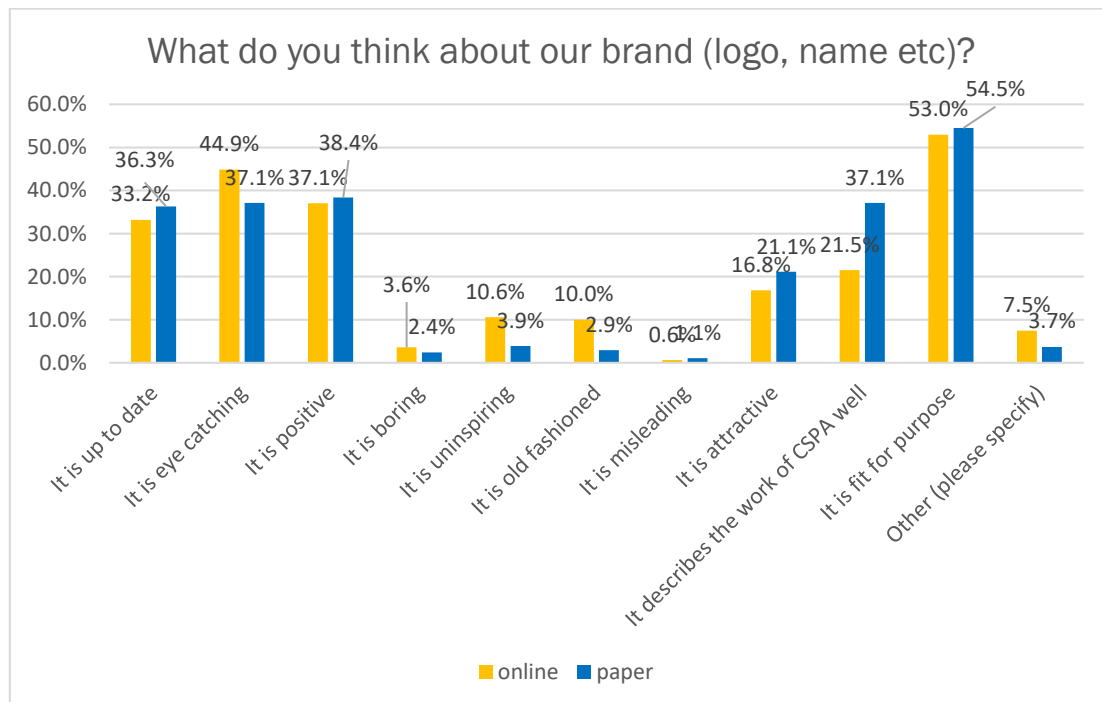
However, some members expressed concerns that the tone is not as appealing to younger audiences and can be **slightly old-fashioned**:

- *Dated. Very worthy but longwinded. Reminded me of what my department was like in the 1990s and 1980s, which stopped trying to tell everyone everything.*

- *“It’s a bit all or nothing”. It tends to be very focused on bits of paper, which means what you get is very dense and you have to wade through it. It’s a non-digital age approach to communications.*
- *Quite old fashioned, it is objective but can be a bit bureaucratic and in need of refreshing.*
- *They talk down to the membership sometimes.*
- *It is quite boring. We've all had jobs where we have had to communicate with the public and they aren't doing that. The Magazine needs to be more interesting, the Saga magazine is better but even that is getting more boring. Just because we are older, we are not in lala land. More needs to be online.*
- *I feel that some of their advice is annoying (especially in the Magazine) as it assumes we are all stuck in past. For example on IT is refers to Windows 10, and there is the assumption no-one is savvy.*
- *They are clearly oriented towards people who are retired, but in theory many civil servants could be receiving their state pension at the age of 50. It feels a bit directed towards the older end, particularly in the adverts in the magazine, it has obviously been sold on the basis of the readership but I’m not sure I’m ready for a stairlift yet. (Partner)*
- *It feels slightly dated, but the audience is quite elderly, from what I’ve seen at the AGM and things, so maybe its pitched accordingly, it needs to resonate with those people. (Partner)*

Brand and logo

Those that completed the online and paper surveys were asked to provide views on the CSPA brand. Over half (53% online, 55% paper) felt that the brand is ‘fit for purpose’, and 45% (online) thought that the brand is ‘eye catching’.



During the telephone interviews, there were mixed views on whether the brand should be updated. Some respondents pointed to a need to **refresh the language**:

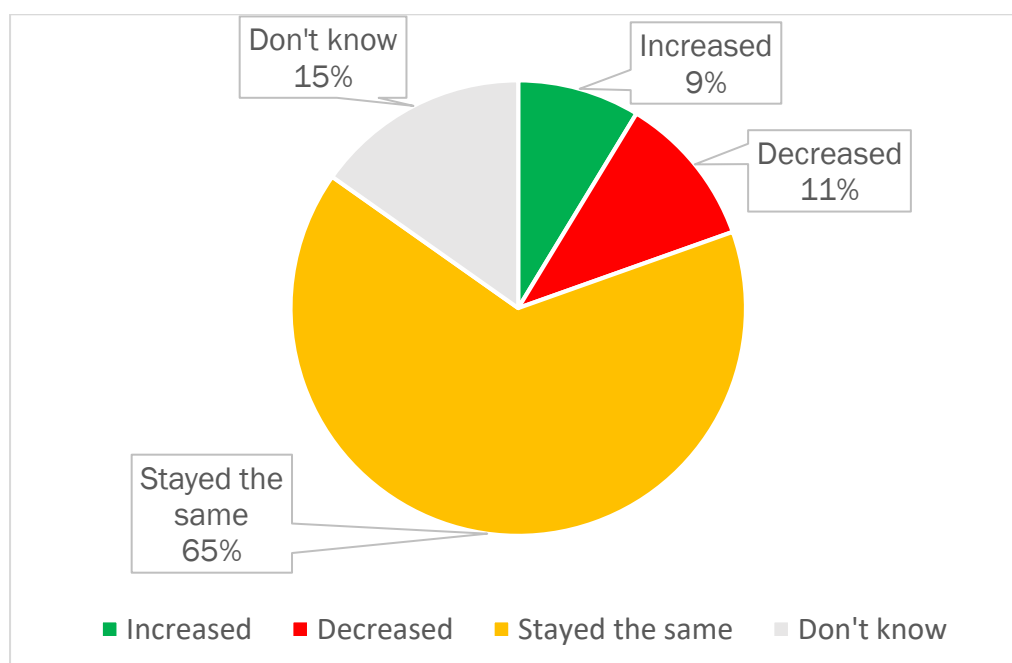
- *The branding is very very old fashioned. The argument given for not changing is that it excludes older people. That is a very poor excuse. As a secretary that needs to use the branding, it is very bad from an artistic point of view. We need branding guidelines and we are nowhere near that. They don't seem to know how important it is, we need simple straplines which encompass what it's about and that are inspirational.*
- *"Drop the word 'Pensioner' which implies dependency and 'over the hill'. (Online survey)*
- *"Does it need the word pensioner? Retirement association sounds a bit more youthful." (Online survey)*
- *"I think it is fine but is easily confused with CPSA. That might be why I didn't realise the organisation existed." (Online survey)*

Others felt that any potential rebrand may be **unnecessary and costly**:

- *"Don't spend money changing it. I liked the old one even though it was old-fashioned." (Online survey)*
- *"Please do not waste money getting consultants to change this!" (Online survey)*
- *"We should be very cautious about making changes to our logo, many organisations have been persuaded to change their logos at great cost and not been success" (Online survey)*

4.2 Profile

Q: Would you say the CSPA's profile has increased/decreased/stayed the same over the last 12 months?



65% of those responding online felt that the CSPA's profile has stayed the same over the last 12 months.

Generally it was felt that the CSPA's profile is relatively low, both within the civil service, and with those who the CSPA is targeting in campaigning work.

- *Campaigning maybe, but they're not very good at self-promotion*

A number of interviewees felt that the CSPA should seek to increase profile:

- *They need a higher profile, so that more people are aware of their services (Partner)*
- *The fact that people don't know about it – when I left the civil service it was mentioned in passing but there was no promotion of it. The civil services sheds jobs at such speed that they haven't raised the profile of it. I did a day of pre-retirement course where it was mentioned but I didn't do anything about it until 6 years later. CSPA is not something you join straight away, which is a shame, there needs more promotion of it. There should be leaflets in public places.*
- *Advertise their organisation more and get out there, they need to be more widely known about, especially now. I know this is difficult. Without members an organisation or local committee can just fold.*
- *It's low profile, it's not on the at 10 to get its views across.*

4.3 Campaigning

Later Life Ambitions

47% of those interviewed had heard of Later Life Ambitions. 53% had not.

Where there was an awareness, views towards Later Life Ambitions were generally positive, with respondents pointing to a strength in numbers:

- *It's a good idea to have the three organisations working towards common goals, its more logical*
- *I think its brilliant, that's the way to go, combine with other like-minded organisations*
- *I think it's a good idea, I have been meaning to get involved*
- *I think it's good, bringing pensioners together is a useful idea*
- *It is a good overall body for pushing the needs of pensioners, and good that bodies are working together*

However, some members felt that the CSPA's role should be more clearly articulated:

- *It's one of our pressure groups we use, a campaigning organisation particularly in relation to social care and pensioner issues but I'm sure not sure how it differs from CSPA. It's quite a good negotiating body.*
- *In one sense it adds weight whether it brings greater success is a moot point. Politically, we are the moderate wing of the pensioner movement which is comfortable but leads to some tensions. There is a tendency to get involved in lots of issues, but we need to be more specific.*

Interestingly, there appeared to be some confusion over the use of the word 'Alliance' in relation the CSPA, and Later Life Ambitions, whereby it was felt that when the word 'Alliance' is used, this means Later Life Ambitions:

- *Calling ourselves 'the alliance' doesn't take any credit and we need to say who led on it i.e. the alliance vs the CSPA. I have the impression others lead on the Alliance.*

There was also some feeling that it was difficult to replicate links with NFOP and NARPO 'on the ground':

- *It's aspirational, one of the best things they are trying to do. However, we've tried to forge links with the retired police and others on the ground and locally they don't want to know, so I'm not sure the links exist below HQ.*

Campaigning

A number of interviewees had views on campaigning more generally.

There was some feeling that the CSPA should be better at promoting its successes and updating members on campaigns:

- *"Maybe list achievements on website from time to time" (Online survey)*
- *"It would help to summarise each month or quarter the action being taken on behalf of members to valid the worth of the subscription." (Online survey)*
- *"CSPAs standing and image needs raising. There needs to be more tangible IMPACT and demonstrable achievements" (Online survey)*
- *The profile is low and it could do with being raised and a good way of doing that is to point to the successes the organisation has had, this should be locally based.*
- *I would want more on what campaigns are happening – a campaign bulletin specifically on motions from the AGM. It comes to a crescendo at the AGM and then I don't hear anything on it anymore. For example, I am a WASPI woman and I went to a meeting last year and they said they would take it up nationally but I didn't feel they were behind us, and instead focused on other issues such as bus service reductions. I went along specifically to the meeting to talk about this issue but it feels they are retired too long to know about the issues. The Group secretary wrote to us but it wasn't enough. There have been more circulars from the national level in the last few weeks, I suppose usually they are discussed in the group meeting but would prefer for them to be sent round and discussed.*

There was also some suggestion that there should be greater prioritisation of campaigning issues:

- *It feels that CSPA tried to cover and campaign on too much. I think there should be a smaller number of priorities and these should be more focused.*
- *I think they should limit their campaigning to five key issues and once they are resolved then add another. I think if there are too many issues the group is spreading itself too thin.*
- *The campaigning is too broad, CSPA has opinions on lots of things without a focus - care homes would have been great but gets lost amongst the other issues. CSPA reminds me of a union and not an alliance or campaigning organisation. You shouldn't be sitting in a room discussing motions, you should be doing. Other areas of interest are fine but they should always be able to be linked back to the overall aims of the campaigning organisation*

- *They are sometimes obliged to pursue things that they will never achieve, like past improvements to the scheme. (Partner)*

There was some suggestion that campaigning should recognise other pressures on spending:

- *“Be more positive about the benefits to a civil service pension. Accept many pensioners are now IT literate and can cope in a cashless society etc. Pensioners will have to contribute to the correction of the financial black hole the country is in, triple lock will have to give. In other words less whinging.” (Online survey)*
- *“I was totally against the TV license campaign believing many of the older generation have never had it so good and to dump so many debts onto the shoulders of young people (no pensions, no homes etc) was unbelievably greedy and need should be means tested. There appeared no representation for many people like me who didn't support free TV license for over 75s. A more representative view from a very privileged, taxpayer supporter section of the community would be an improvement.” (Online survey)*
- *“Concentration on really important issues (e.g. maintenance of pensions and free, ticketless travel on public transport) rather than non-incidentals like the minuscule Christmas bonus, free TV licences (provided there are reliefs for the really poor).” (Online survey)*

The widows pension campaign was also mentioned by a number of members:

- *The widows pensions campaign. I feel very strongly about it, my late husband died, it is the principle of it. He didn't draw a penny, why should I forfeit any of it? He contributed to widows and orphans, and I've worked in a benefit office and know how much evasion goes on,*
- *The widows pensions is why I'm 100% supportive of the CSPA. If injustices like that can be clarified then I'll continue to support it.*

SUMMARY

Views towards the CSPA 'brand' were generally positive. However, when questioned in more depth some felt that it is slightly 'old-fashioned'. Views towards the logo were more polarised with members either feeling strongly that the logo should remain the same, or that it needs updating.

There was a general feeling that the CSPA's profile is low, both within the target market (current/retiring civil servants) and amongst influencers (Government).

Where members had heard of Later Life Ambitions, views were positive, however there were some suggestions that more clarity is required around the differences between the CSPA and Later Life Ambitions' campaigning work, as well as the CSPA's role within the coalition.

A number of members had views on campaigning. Whilst the majority were very supportive of the CSPA's efforts, some felt that more should be done to communicate impact and successes to members, and external audiences. There was also some suggestion that there should be greater prioritisation on campaigning issues.

SECTION FIVE: COMMUNICATIONS

5.1 Regular communications

Members were asked to rate the communications received from the CSPA across a range of channels including; email, post, magazine, website, social media, group meetings and socials. Experiences were highly variable.

Q: How do you rate communications from the CSPA?

Telephone interviews (the most common response is highlighted)

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Don't know
Email	9.1	34.1	20.5	6.8	29.5
Post	13.6	25.0	22.7	4.5	29.5
Magazine	25.0	31.8	27.3	2.3	9.1
Website	4.5	13.6	15.9	13.6	34.1
Facebook	2.3	4.5	0.0	2.3	84.1
Twitter	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.9
Group meetings	4.5	22.7	4.5	9.1	47.7
Social events	2.3	9.1	9.1	6.8	61.4

Online survey

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Don't Know
Email	18.2	39.5	16.4	2.7	23.3
Post	17.3	44.1	18.3	2.3	18.0
Magazine	36.2	46.6	13.8	2.8	0.7
Website	10.8	28.9	14.7	2.0	43.6
Facebook	2.0	3.7	3.3	1.2	95.4
Twitter	0.4	1.7	1.7	0.6	95.6
Group Meetings	8.4	16.5	5.5	2.8	66.8
Social Events	3.4	8.3	7.3	2.1	78.9

It is important to note that a large number of members felt that they were unable to answer the question fully as they do not receive communications via all channels:

- *The only communication I have seen is the Pensioner which I find interesting (Online survey)*
- *I have had very little communication (Online survey)*
- *Don't see that many [communications] (Online survey)*

During the interviews, a number of respondents pointed to inconsistencies in the level of communication received by members due to the Group structure.

- *I don't seem to get much national level stuff, communication is all via the group – it begins generally and then provides summaries of the group's work. The local group stuff is good but I think I feel I should be getting more from the national level on the national campaigns and the national work. Recently, we have had more circulars due to coronavirus and I now wish that we get these rather than waiting for the information to be put into quarterly updates as by that point the information can feel out of date.*
- *I like the magazine and John [local group chair] sends us through all the emails that come to him. Like everything else, if you want to find out the information it is there.*
- *Not much goes to members, depending on the group, it will be disseminated further. Newsletters - some are very good, some are very bad. The Pensioner is not an essential read. I can't get worked up about it, I think it's a turnoff but I have no evidence to back that up.*
- *They are fairly traditional in the way they communicate, the magazine is the major communication that we receive but its not of great interest to me for me to hear about what is happening about what is happening in other local groups. I suggest reducing the magazine to focus on the national campaigning issues and email out updates for members, meaning the Alliance can save money on the magazine.*
- *There needs to be a move to be more IT based, the circulars are not enough. We don't get electronic copies and newsletters are only sent in colour once a year. I don't buy the argument that people don't have email as more and more do.*

There were also a number of comments made around a lack of consistency in terms of quality between the regions, groups and national level communications:

- *“Regional communications I often find meandering, unclear and verbose. National communications are more professionally written, but the subject matter is often quite dry and doesn't make me want to read it.” (Online survey)*

Respondents were asked whether they would like see more or less communication via the channels listed above. Strikingly, for most channels, the majority of members said that they 'didn't know'.

- 27% of online respondents said that they would like more communication via email
- 14% of the same group said that they would like less by post
- 28% of those interviewed said that they would like less communication via Facebook as did 18% of those completing the paper survey

Telephone interviews (the most common response is highlighted)

	More	About Right	Less	Don't Know
Email	11.8	47.6	14.2	26.4
Post	13.9	77.8	3.0	5.3
Magazine	15.4	79.6	2.1	3.0
Via the Website	6.6	34.3	15.5	46.0
Facebook	0.9	5.6	28.2	65.3
Twitter	0.5	3.8	27.2	69.0
Instagram	0.0	3.3	27.7	69.5

Via Group Meetings	9.4	38.5	10.8	49.8
Social Events	8.5	31.0	9.4	57.7

Online survey

	More	About Right	Less	Don't Know
Email	26.6	71.2	3.0	15.6
Post	5.3	75.3	13.6	14.4
Magazine	13.0	96.1	4.5	3.0
Via the Website	14.6	41.8	3.6	42.4
Facebook	3.4	6.7	7.1	85.2
Twitter	1.0	3.4	6.9	89.3
Instagram	0.8	1.8	7.1	90.3
Via Group Meetings	5.7	28.4	2.4	65.3
Social Events	8.3	18.1	3.0	72.4

Paper survey

	More	About Right	Less	Don't Know
Email	8.6	34.6	10.4	44.4
Post	13.9	77.8	3.0	5.3
Magazine	15.4	79.6	2.1	3.0
Via the Website	4.1	21.6	9.8	58.6
Facebook	0.6	3.6	17.8	70.7
Twitter	0.0	2.1	17.5	73.4
Instagram	0.3	2.4	17.2	73.1
Via Group Meetings	5.9	24.3	6.8	60.9
Social Events	5.3	19.5	5.9	66.0

5.2 'The Pensioner'

It is clear that 'The Pensioner' is highly valued by the majority of members and was cited by 41% of online participants as one of the things most valued about their membership.

- *Pensioner magazine is one of the best I've seen, compared with the NFOP one it's a very precise detailed set of information.*
- *I really like the magazine. It's brilliant.*
- *Very happy with the magazine, I read it cover to cover.*
- *It's very good, the way it's been rebranded in recent months is excellent. I like the analysis of parliamentary procedures. I like the letters from members too.*
- *the magazine is extremely good and educational.*
- *The magazine is pretty good and gives people the chance to communicate.*

However, a small minority of members suggested improvements, particularly in **terms of tone**:

- *“Afraid I am one of those who finds the magazine “fuddy duddy” with stereotypical humour and adverts that cater to the worst type of ageist cliché. Too little stimulation and too much playing safe.” (Online survey)*
- *Magazine (especially humour) often from male perspective and dated. (Online survey)*
- *It's a bit old fashioned. The information on pension matters, proposed changes, the AGM etc is fine but the tone of the rest is a bit old fashioned and slightly silly at times. The light-hearted jokey bits are sometimes quite offensive, 1950s in style.*
- *It's a bit old-fashioned, especially in this day and age when people have smartphones. The magazine is a bit dated with lots of bits of paper in, who will pick it up? 70 is the new 40.*
- *It is stuck in the 1950s/60s, sexism runs through it. They need to be careful not to offend so are ultra-cautious and can sound anodyne.*
- *I subscribe to and receive the magazine but don't get any electronic mailouts. The magazine is very traditional and has been the same style and format for many years. But it may be relevant to the readership. Some of the advertising is a bit old-fashioned. If they are trying to attract new members, will they be interested in a pair of new corduroy pants? (Partner)*

There was also some suggestions that it could be made more **‘lively’**:

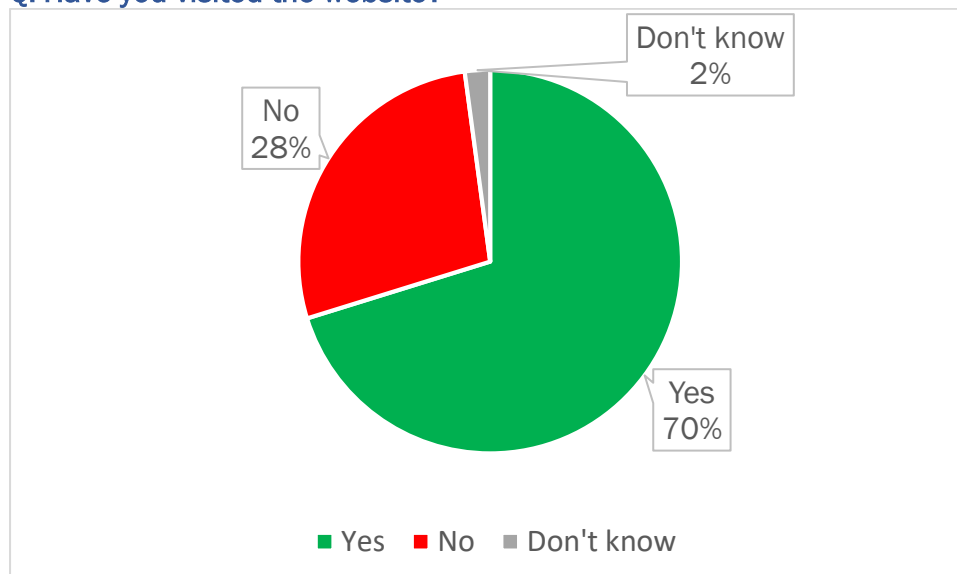
- *They're [the CSPA is] quite dry, I like the letters from members but it can be hard-going and longwinded.*
- *The Pensioner is a bit magazine-y and it could be more newspaper-y to make it cheaper to produce so it is distributed more often. Rather than boring bulletins issued to secretaries.*
- *It could be updated and made more lively.*

Imagery was also mentioned:

- *The pictures in the magazine [need updating], and there is some very boring stuff.*
- *Although I like the magazine, I feel a lot of the pictures are of old men. Pictures have more impact than words. Separately on the promotional material I'm not sure it should be all elderly people. I know there was a lot of controversy around the name of the pensioner magazine as not all of us are pensioners and are still working. I do like the content of the magazine it gets split into smaller chunks. I also like the surveys as it's an opportunity for members to say what they think.*

5.3 Website

Q: Have you visited the website?



When asked about experiences of using the CSPA website, large number of interviewees said that they **do not use the website**:

- *I don't go there, so maybe it needs to be pushed a bit more, I can't see the website written on our local group newsletter, it is just contact details of the local group*
- *There's not an awful lot on there, I would need to have a proper look at it before I could answer that properly*
- *I've hardly bothered with it*
- *I'm computer literate but I've never been on it, it didn't seem to be quite up and running when I last checked. It wasn't clear so I haven't revisited it*

There was a general feeling that most information available on the website is also available via other means:

- *I haven't had an inclination to do that, I rely on the magazine and the circulars that are sent out*
- *I'm not an IT person but I find the magazine helpful for updates*

Some members indicated that they were unaware they could access additional pages once logged in:

- *It's fine, it responds ok and it's not clunky, not difficult to use. I've realised it's much better if you log in. I found some of the E-newsletters out with emails are a bit ordinary but the group newsletters are nicer to read.*
- *"I can never find where local Group News is on the website. I can find group newsletters but other items are harder to find." (Online survey)*

A number of members felt that the website should be updated, both in terms of style and out of date information:

- *On the website a couple of pages are out of date but most things are up to date.*
- *It is very old-fashioned, it needs updating. It looks like a load of papers and needs a personal touch.*
- *I think it could be a bit out of date.*
- *Could be updated, hard to illustrate pensions, looks a bit like they could sell insurance. (Partner)*
- *I don't get any emails, the content looks good and easy to understand but the website could be a pension company. (Partner)*
- *It looks hard to navigate, and is lacking a focus. Would be good to have campaigning priorities front and centre, e.g. three things we want (Partner)*
- *It feels slightly old. I'm also never a fan of stock shots. (Partner)*

A number of improvements to **functionality** were also suggested, many linked to suggestions of engaging members via a new structure:

- *There should be more opportunity for more two-way communication with member through the website.*
- *It needs to be interactive, allow members to post etc. It needs investment and nurturing so that it can replace the groups and you can vote and ask members for their views.*
- *I think it could be slightly more dynamic with more news updates and ensuring the homepage is more regularly updated so that you know what has been added. Perhaps the website could use a poll where members can respond to a question, which could change each week and could focus on peoples experiences as retired civil servants – particularly important for environment during COVID-19. In the medium to longer term this could focus on the way social care services are managed. This would allow the Alliance to campaign on exactly what members want and get some fundamental change from the Government on social care.*

However there was acknowledgement that the website has **improved in recent years**:

- *I think they made a number of changes a few years ago and it has improved. I think it is a fairly easy website to navigate.*
- *It is getting better, well organised, no improvements, I rarely find don't find what I'm looking for. Most of what you need is there. Assiduous at putting documentation on the website quickly.*

There was a recognition that significant improvements will require investment:

- *I look MyCSP portal and website more than I do the CSPA website as it is really clear. I think there is a funding issue here - subscriptions are cheap meaning there is not the resource to go to the website.*
- *It's fine but is not the greatest. It could be better but that involves work. We're pulled in two directions, to attract a new audience we need social media savvy but a section of members have a negative view of that. A section campaign for paper based everything and a return of the penny post.*

5.5 Social media

There appears to be a lack of engagement on social media.

Only 3% of those interviewed on the telephone followed CSPA on twitter and only 8% on Facebook.

- 83 % said they did not know whether they would like more communications via Facebook
- 89% said they did not know whether they would like more communications via twitter
- 90% said they did not know whether they would like more communications via Instagram

5.6 Impact of lockdown and coronavirus

When asked whether lockdown has had an impact on the level of CSPA's influence/profile, 34% said it had, 25% said no and 41% said they didn't know.

A digital opportunity?

Members were asked whether lockdown has changed the way in which they would like the CSPA to communicate with them.

A number of interviewees recommended an increased use of Zoom, Skype or Microsoft Teams in the future.

- *Could Zoom be used more widely in the future? We may need to use Zoom as I think some people, even those that are older than I am may be wary of attending a meeting.*
- *I think there is the potential use of Zoom meetings for those who cannot attend physical group meetings. In general there should be great emphasis on digitality regardless whether or not there is a pandemic on.*
- *It could be positive, in getting more people to use Skype, Zoom etc.*
- *It might allow us to do things like committee meetings on Zoom.*
- *We're finding more people are willing to participate in digital forms, that might have a longer impact.*

A number also suggested that **email** should be used more frequently:

- *As an ordinary member, I'm not sure what emails people would get. I think they could pass on more information for example on the widows' pensions that we could then use in updates to other organisations and potential members.*
- *Generally, organisations have moved to sending e-newsletters or more frequent digital correspondence and that would be helpful. There is a danger the CSPA is left behind if it doesn't react the way other organisations have to the pandemic.*
- *I think there should be a lot more email communication and with the lockdown they could have done things such as Zoom meetings.*
- *I would like a bit more communication via email.*
- *I would like more email, specifically from the national level but I still want everything I'm getting in the post.*
- *if the information can come out via email then i would be quite happy to have everything via email aimed at me.*

However there was a plea from some interviewees to return to 'in person' meetings:

- *I would like to go back to having meetings with speakers*
- *Personally I like seeing people in person*

There is a clearly a tension between the strong desire of some members to move towards more digital services, and the equally strong desire of others to maintain contact via post or in person. For example:

- *There is a problem due to age, I rely entirely on the internet, whereas others would rely on the magazine. I think they should beef up the digital side, I get emails but it would be more helpful if the website was up to date on a day to day basis.*
- *We live in a digital age and there aren't many civil servants that retired in the last 20 years who would be unable to use a computer, the membership is more digital savvy than they give us credit.*

Interestingly, 68% of those that filled in the paper copy of the survey said that they do have access to the internet. This suggests that some of the resistance to technology may be a personal choice rather than 'digital exclusion' in its strictest sense.

Service during lockdown

When asked specifically about the service provided during lockdown, the majority of interviewees had welcomed regular updates from the CSPA:

- *The updates about COVID-19 have been excellent.*
- *They have certainly done their best to keep us informed, though Lisa Ray's emails were quite commendable. Good on them.*

Others had not received any updates:

- *No I haven't felt kept up to date, the only thing I've had is a circular from the secretary and some were not Covid related. Given the target audience is pensioners who may be vulnerable with underlying health conditions who have had to shield, the mental health side of things is bad. Many older people are finding it really hard or are not following the rules because its too hard. I feel there could have been more support about welfare and mental wellness. Specifically, a helpline or guidance on who to contact if you feel down and that should have come out via circulars from the national level.*
- *I've only seen what is in the Pensioner*
- *I haven't received anything apart from the magazine, if they put something on the website it would be helpful if it was flagged on email.*
- *I don't feel I've been fully informed. It would have been helpful to have an email detailing the different changes to government guidance*
- *I've been kept informed by looking on the website but there is no other communication. The CSPA has not put out any special communications to members.*
- *I've not had any updates on coronavirus, but I will have a look on the Facebook site.*

Others did not feel that it was the role of the CSPA:

- *I'm grown up, I can sort that out for myself.*
- *I wouldn't look to the CSPA to provide relevant information and they don't need to as there are so many in that field already*
- *I've not been kept up to date by the CSPA but I don't expect that from them*

SUMMARY

Views towards the communications received from members was mixed. There appears to be a difference in experience between members of both the quantity, and quality of communications. This was largely attributed to the Group structure and the fact that a large proportion of communication is cascaded down.

It is clear that The Pensioner is highly valued by the majority of members and it was listed as a key benefit by a high proportion.

A large proportion of members have not visited the website, and even when they had, individual conversations indicated that many had looked it once or twice but engaged more consistently. A number of members suggested that the website's functionality should be included to allow more interactive communication with members.

It is clear that the majority of members do not engage with the CSPA's social media channels, however it should be noted that this may be due to a lack of awareness around their existence.

The main consequence of lockdown appears to be an increased openness to using technology to facilitate meetings and member engagement.

There is clearly a tension between those that support a move to online services and those that still operate mainly using paper. However, nearly 70% of those who filled in the paper-based survey, the group we would expect not to have access to the internet, do have access.

SECTION SIX: STAFFING AND STRUCTURES

6.1 Awareness of staff

Interviewees were asked which staff they knew or knew of at the CSPA. Name recognition was relatively low compared to similar surveys although the following names were mentioned most frequently:

- Lisa Ray (3)
- David Luxton (2)
- Ralph Groves (5)
- Paul Devine (1)
- Mike Duggan (1)
- Mike Lawler (1)
- Marian (2)
- Jim McGovern (1)
- Darlene (1)
- Brian Sturtevant (1)

However, it should be noted that where interviewees could name staff, they were very complimentary:

- *“For the first time in all my years of membership, I copied CSPA into an email to my MP about pension issues. I was very impressed with David Luxton's response.” (Online survey)*
- *“I wish Ralph a long and happy retirement and hope our paths cross again someday. The world needs more Ralphs.” (Online survey)*
- *“The fact that they [staff] are ex-civil servants and they know the system [is a strength], not hired in from outside its breadth of understanding”*

Unsurprisingly, name recognition amongst partners was stronger with David Luxton and Ralph Groves being mentioned on multiple occasions.

6.2 Leadership

Interviewees were asked if they could name the General Secretary of the CSPA, with the aim of gauging profile. 28% (13) of the respondents could name Lisa Ray.

6 further members knew that there had been a change in General Secretary but couldn't recall the name:

- *I've forgotten the name, a new lass*
- *It has changed recently, I know it is a lady but I can't remember her name*
- *She's just taken over”*
- *I used to work closely with Mike Duggan but the name of the new Chief Executive escapes me (Partner)*
- *Ralph Groves? No it's a woman but I don't know her name (Partner)*
- *Can't name her but knows it's a young lady who has just taken over (Partner)*

Again where respondents did know of Lisa, they were very positive:

- *I met Lisa Ray once and was very impressed with her, I couldn't praise her enough when she came to the local group to do a presentation*

Interviewees were also asked if they could name the Chair or any members of the Executive Committee.

68% could not name a member of the EC or the Chair. Names mentioned were:

- Brian Sturtevant (3)
- Mike Sparham (3) – met him when I was union activist.
- Anne Bryant – (acknowledged resigned recently)
- Brian Sturtevant, my wife worked with Brian
- Brian Surleman
- Charlie Cochrane
- Don Makepiece (3)
- Frank Edwards
- Tony Hall
- Peter Stivesent
- Les Priestly
- Harry Brett

6.3 Group structure

Interviewees were asked whether the Group structure is effective and serves the purpose of the organisation.

47% said that it was effective. 31% said that it did not, and 22% said they didn't know.

Benefits of Group structure

Many of those that were positive about the Group structure referred to the **social benefits of attendance**:

- *It's the best way to make it social. I think it's necessary to stop people distant from the organisation*
- *It is not far from where I live and it connects people*
- *Provides an incentive to go out and meet people and find out about things that you don't know about. Certainly the case in Corydon. Full calendar of talks – I'm on the committee and we are considering having two meetings a year where we didn't have a speaker but we sat and talked to each other. It is assumed people of our age have friends but you lose friends, they either die or they move away or their life changes and so they have less time. You need to keep renewing your pool of friends*

It was also felt that it is a good way of **linking members' views to the EC**:

- *It is very useful, people have issues they put forward and it is interesting to hear their viewpoints.*
- *I don't feel very associated or interested, but it is a way of feeding up*
- *They are good at telling people what's going on, good at soliciting views, particularly through the federal structure*
- *Democratic character and the thoroughness and profundity on engagement of issues that matter to older people – has a trade union flavour about it, people are really engaged with it.*

Weaknesses of Group structure

A number of interviewees expressed concerns that the weaknesses in the Group structure may be creating a '**democratic deficit**' whereby the views of some members are not adequately represented. There was also some concern that existing structures are confusing:

- *"The structure of the organisation isn't obvious to new members."*
- *"Contact with local groups is haphazard and appears to vary around the country." (Online survey)*
- *The main problem is understanding the structure of groups in an area, there are quite a number of co-owned groups.... Huge numbers are not represented by the branch structure. They either need to change the branch structure or have larger regions, and could have conversations on Zoom, that could help especially if taking views on motions and things*

The closure of local Groups was mentioned by a large number of interviewees:

- *There are a number of issues [with the structure]- 22-25% of members are not allocated to groups and it is not organised in a satisfactory way.*
- *Unfortunately the group I used to go to is no longer in existence. There are not many groups left in Scotland so I cannot access one. Groups were organised on a postcode basis rather than where the person spent their working career.*
- *It is effective if it is active but it is hit and miss, for example, Gosport has two groups and other areas have none*

The accessibility of existing Groups was also seen as problematic:

- *Distance is a problem, I live 70 miles from the meeting.*
- *Think there should be more groups in Scotland so that everyone is represented, rather than just the two groups in the two major cities.*
- *I think it works if you live in a population centre but I can't see it working for myself, where we have a relatively small population of retired civil servants.*
- *I'm sure it is effective for people who live close by, I don't think it is worth driving to*
- *"Our group's members are scattered over a very large area and very few attend our meetings. to try and arrange meetings in different areas presents difficulties in arranging transport. Financial help towards the hire of a mini bus could be an answer." (Online survey)*
- *"The branch network is falling to bits. The Regional reps stay in office for far too long, they resemble a soviet politburo." (Online survey)*

- *The geographic spread of members [is difficult]. If I lived in a more built up area I would attend meetings but there are not many civil servants near me in the Midlands*
- *As secretary of a group, we have 305 members concentrated in towns but it is a large area and engagement is very difficult. It is a very old-fashioned model based on the trade unions which is no longer fit for purpose.*

Even where groups do exist, a number of respondents spoke about the difficulties in encouraging people to attend and/or take positions of responsibility:

- *There is nobody to take the jobs in the groups.*
- *"In my experience it has been very hard to get members to attend meetings or send any issues or motions they wish to be discussed at meetings which could be forwarded to HQ This is even after broadcasting about the CSPA on Local radio Recently I been able local members to reinstate a committee but still not been able find a treasurer for the group Consideration to be given for groups to issue up to 6 newsletter each year" (Online survey)*
- *"I would attend a local group but the meetings I attended were clearly struggling." (Online survey)*
- *It's so difficult to get people to take the plunge and go to a meeting. We need to try and catch the younger members.*
- *There are a number of reasons why I don't think it works. I attended a meeting and there were a handful of people there but there are a number of retired civil servants in the area. You value what you pay for and the membership is so cheap people don't want to do anything with. It is about ensuring there is a common purpose and interest amongst members but I'm not sure there is a clear interest. Additionally, many of the group are much older than me and were obviously ones that always attended.*
- *It's the best that can be done. It is a huge challenge as people don't want to come. Younger people are more likely to do things online than want to come to meetings*
- *It's as effective as the people who manage the group. It depends on the individuals*
- *Trouble is it is dependent on 1 or 2 individuals and is a shaky system. The Manchester group has 600 or 700 members but spread over a huge distance and there is a reluctance to travel for some older members. We're lucky if we get 7 or 8 people at meetings but we're encouraged by the fact that when we ask for donations to run the branch people are very willing and we sometimes get £1000 or £2000, so people contribute financially even if they aren't prepared to come to the meetings,*
- *I feel guilty that I am a committee member but I am not really willing to get particularly involved. It's always the same people who get involved in the running of the organisation, there is a general feeling from other people that view the committee as people that we were stupid enough to get involved. I like being involved because I want to fight for things pensioners need.*

Some members said that the local Groups did not appeal them,

- *I can't see how a group meeting is attractive for a new member*
- *The local group was sparsely attended and rather elderly. There was nothing in it for me. (Online survey)*
- *I would like to be more involved socially but want there to be things that are of interest. Things that are more intellectual, there must be a vast knowledge of*

current and complex affairs, there could be lectures, articles, something with a bit of meat about it. Lectures could even take place online.

- *“There are so many organisations that offer you the same or very similar things. I think locally, people would benefit if they could have more groups and have socials, such as book clubs and debating clubs”*
- *The branch is informative but quite parochial. But it's nice to meet people, and some whom I worked with*

The Executive Committee

Some specific comments were made around the role of the Executive Committee. Specifically, there were calls to increase accountability and bring in new members without a trade union background:

- *“A smaller executive council and stronger regional organisation” (Online survey)*
- *The EC and area reps are all a load of white old men, and they ought not to go on past 70 years old. At one stage the 3 person standing orders committee had 250 years between them. There should be more done to recruit people from the age of 50. There needs to be newer blood to take over roles and more planning for the future, otherwise branches will close*
- *Spend more time of succession planning, make up of NEC, where it is fairly mature and struggling to find replacements especially in the regions. We are heavily reliant on Brian and Don. We are very vulnerable to death or illness.*
- *CSPA needs to be looking for someone who is not ex trade union to be a part of the executive committee and ensuring the group structure is sorted so that it is not left to drift. If it is left to drift, it will make people stop attending, making group organisations fail through lack of membership. CSPA needs a better organised structure with better enthusiasm.*
- *Next person on the E C should come from outside the civil service and trade unions, to bring in new ideas and organisation” (Online survey)*

Fit for the future?

A number of members suggested changes to the structure of the organisation to help reduce the perceived democratic deficit.

This included **restructuring groups**, according to geography or postcodes rather than historical workplaces, and looking at stronger regional organisation:

- *I think they should review where the meetings are rather than being based on historical civil service bases.*
- *“[CSPA must] Sort out closed Groups and a better allocation of group boundaries based on local government boundaries, not post codes” (Online survey)*
- *I think people appreciate the protection the CSPA offers without getting off their bums. I can see in the future that we might move to regions with a regional conference that sends members to the AGM*
- *In Scotland and Northern Ireland there is one branch, there could be one branch for the South East of England, one for London etc. They need a revamp of structure. This also needs to be based on knowledge of where the membership actually live, not historic links to the civil service, e.g. Portsmouth had a dockyard so there will be civil servants there.*

- *I think its relevant to have different groups at different levels, you need local contacts to feed stuff up and feed stuff down. It was helpful for personal casework referred up from local groups into group structure. Sometimes I think the groups are very big and we could do with more regional executive committee member – more than just one in the north west and north east. There should be more of them and they are the active on the ground, would be better to spread the load.*

It was also suggested that newer members should be offered training and encouragement to take up positions in branches:

- *A training course for Secretaries is essential, it is very difficult to pick up and not much understanding of expectations. They should ensure that papers are sent to membership not just branch secretaries who don't always send things on.*

Increased use of technology for engagement was a popular suggestion, particularly whereby members can vote remotely:

- *If we were starting again, groups may be in the paramount position but there is a fairly significant democratic deficit. There is no alternative model in the round but we could look at others where there could be more direct democracy. E.g. The National Trust where you can vote as an ordinary member and even civil service unions have some form of direct democracy.*
- *It is an age-old problem in that any structure that relies on physical meetings becomes difficult. There needs to be a pivot so there is a virtual way of organising and exploring other channels.*
- *I am no longer able to be a member of a local group. I live in Carnoustie, Tayside, and, even with a city of the size of Dundee (which is within reasonable travelling distance), there is no local group. I suggest that with the increased use of Zoom, some thought should be given to establishing a remote group for members who are unable to participate in Edinburgh and Glasgow group meetings.” (Online survey)*
- *Explore how younger and potential members might be engaged across the UK rather than via local groups. Local groups clearly reflect the demographics of their local members. Also recognise that many of us are not simply retired. We are still working, volunteering and/or looking for new opportunities to share our expertise. Support for this would be a good way to bring new membership. (Online survey)*
- *More meetings via Zoom and similar remote workings (Online survey)*
- *“More web-based info sessions to 'meet' national officers. Links to other members” (Online survey)*
- *During the lockdown, I have thought about the Alliance facilitating Zoom meetings for those who cannot join local groups because they are scattered about the country, perhaps quarterly. I have done some voluntary work with NHS Scotland that uses Microsoft Teams to hold virtual meetings, perhaps these tools can be used to give members who do not have a local group a voice. It would also be useful to provide webinars and podcasts on particular issues to allow for engagement from afar. I would also suggest for those in Scotland to be able to attend groups across the border in Cumberland for example, rather than groups being based solely on postcode.*
- *The group structure should allow you to feed their views in in reality it doesn't really happen that way – you usually get one or two active committee members and they*

are the only people who are engaging. CSPA needs to move to more national basis for that using digital technology.

- *The groups do not work for me personally, perhaps look at video conference calling for the meetings*

SUMMARY

Most respondents were unable to name either the General Secretary or members of the Executive Committee. This suggests a lack of profile. However, where members had experience of dealing with either the staff team or Executive Committee, they were largely supportive and complimentary.

Just under half of respondents felt that the Group structure is effective, and benefits expressed included social opportunities and engagement between the wider membership and EC.

A number of weaknesses to the Group structure were expressed including; closure of local groups, accessibility of groups and lack of appetite to get involved.

Many members had suggestions of improvements to the structure. This included 're-mapping' Groups, a stronger regional structure, using technology to engage those members without a local group, or who would prefer to operate outside of the Group model.

SECTION SEVEN: THE FUTURE

7.1 Value of membership subscription

When asked whether the membership subscription provides value for money, 90% of online respondents said that it did, as did 98% of those interviewed.

However, a number of respondents caveated their response by saying that it provided value for money because it is 'so cheap':

- *“Membership fee could be increased to enhance the good service CSPA provides” (Online survey)*

However, another member suggested that the size of the EC should be examined before any future rise in the subscription:

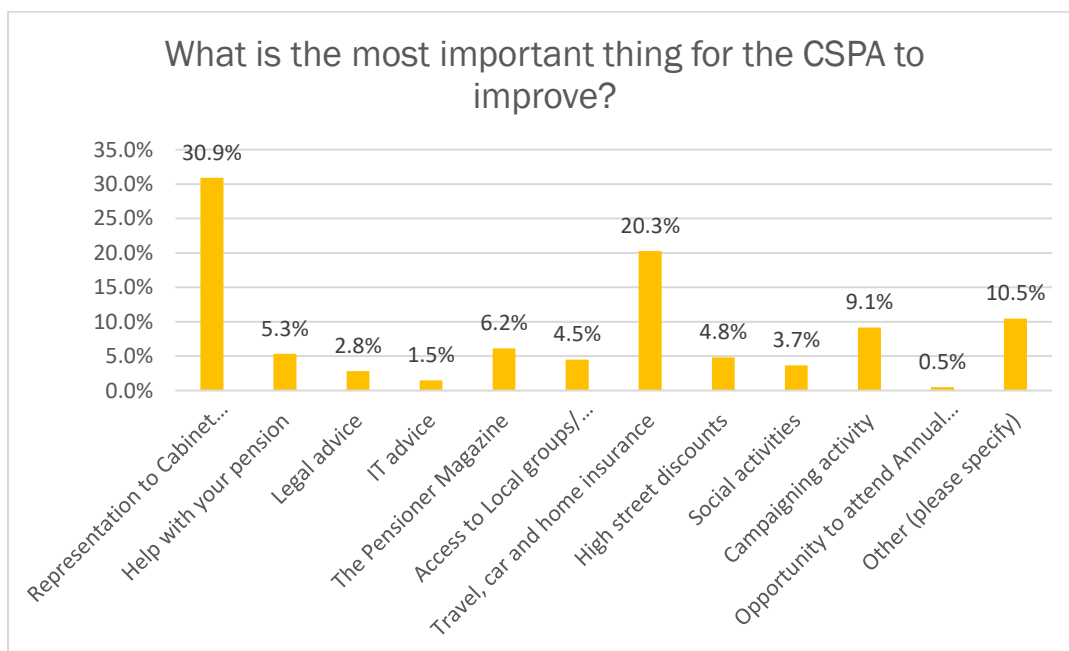
- *I would float the idea that before raising subscriptions we need to look at the costs of the NEC, and we could reduce the size first.*

Future membership

91% of online respondents said that they are still likely to be a member in two years. 4% said that they were 'not likely' to be a member, and 0.3% said that they would 'definitely not' be a member in two years.

Where members said that they were unlikely to be a member in 2 years, 42% said that this was due to their age. Only 6 respondents (out of 700) said it was because it is too expensive.

7.2 Specific challenges



Respondents were asked to identify specific challenges that they felt the CSPA is facing and needs to address. As has been reflected throughout the review, **recruitment and a declining membership** was seen as the biggest challenge facing the CSPA:

- *It is withering on the vine. The EC think they've succeeded if they don't lose as many members as the year before. The CSPA is dying.*
- *Recruitment of new members is the main thing, if it wants to keep going it needs an ongoing membership.*
- *Lack of membership is the main one and declining membership amongst existing members.*
- *Recruitment and trying to encourage new members. They need to be more open to sharing information with potential members. To recruit more younger members they should use social media and civil service special interest groups*
- *Trying to recruit new members, I'm not sure how but we need to be proactive in that area and keep it going. I've recommended people to join and extolled the virtues. What is the minimum joining age? Can people sign up pre-retirement? I think we need to catch people early.*
- *They need to recruit younger members to make them relevant. No way would I consider joining if it wasn't for the travel insurance, it doesn't seem fun, it seems so serious. Just because you are older it doesn't mean you don't want to have fun. They could come up with some incentives to get new members, like a £25 gift voucher for introducing a new member.*
- *Membership and recruiting members, that might bring in more money so they could invest in things like digital and doing things in a different way*
- *I think they need to broaden the scope of things that they are campaigning for to appeal to potential and existing members. There is a concern that the membership doesn't decline, they need better retention and to find newer, younger members. (Partner)*

Another related challenge was better engagement and profile with the current civil service:

- *It is not raising its profile sufficiently with people who are still at work. The other challenge is those who retire very quickly leave without knowing what the CSPA does - should get a list of recently retired to get in there early.*
- *The obvious one is the shrinking civil service.*
- *I would reemphasise that the best way to get new members is for potential members to know about it. The interpretation of GDPR is wrong and CSPA should pressurise the Government on it, saying the legal advice says its wrong.*
- *The AGM is very old, more than you would expect.*
- *Traditional, lifelong civil service careers font exist anymore and peoples' working lives have changed. There will be more doing part time work after retirement from the civil service, and whereas people used to sign up automatically upon retirement, that won't happen anymore. When I received my civil service pension, I don't remember seeing anything about CSPA in the pack. (Partner)*

Members also referred to external challenges including **responding to Government**, particularly in the context of spending cuts following COVID-19. Safeguarding the triple lock was mentioned on a number of occasions.

7.3 Future priorities

The final question asked what the key priority of the General Secretary should be over the next three years.

Online respondents were asked what the most important thing for CSPA to improve is. The most popular suggestion was representation to the Cabinet Office and My CSP (31%), followed by travel, car and home insurance (21%).

- *I do find all the politics boring, but realise that campaigning matters (Online survey)*
- *Representation, pension help and campaigning. Not a criticism. There is always scope to do these better if people can be mobilised to participate (Online survey)*

Those interviewed gave much more extensive views, which fell into four main categories; the need to appeal to new members, the need to modernise the organisation, the need to improve communications with members, and to raise the CSPA's profile.

Appeal to new members

The need to appeal to and attract new members was the most common response:

- *"We need to attract more members for the right reasons but we also know that people are retiring earlier and looking for wider interests and not so interested in organisations for retired staff; and many are rather complacent about their pension and don't know enough about how it is composed and the dangers we face." (Online survey)*
- *"We are desperately short of new members so it is imperative that all civil servants, but particularly those about to retire, are given information about the CSPA and what important work it does on their behalf and what benefits there are in joining the organization." (Online survey)*
- *"Make the purpose of the Alliance completely clear and obvious. I have advised retired colleagues to join but they ask me why but have not joined. I knew nothing about the services of Parliament Hill Limited until I saw it in the 2019 Annual Report. This could be one of the selling points for the Alliance. The Alliance seems to be like an old boys club and does not promote services to members or prospective members at all well." (Online survey)*
- *"Engagement with younger members and potential members" (Online survey)*
- *"My friend who worked in the Tax office had not heard of CSPA" (Online survey)*
- *"Improve take-up of membership by civil servants about to retire, since reaching out to non-members once they have retired is difficult - emphasise CSPA as a social and campaigning network, and support groups and branches in making this a reality." (Online survey)*
- *"The membership will increase if CSPA offer a full pension calculation check for all new and existing members as part of their advertising campaign." (Online survey)*
- *To target new members when they retire or take early retirement, especially. I feel a lot of those are being missed. How they find out when people are retiring I don't know but they should be targeting them.*
- *Getting round to potential members and recruiting them, if you've got no membership you've got no CSPA.*
- *Get more people actively involved and expand membership.*

- *Growing the membership base, maybe merging with CSRF and retirement groups for retired public servants. The NPC is too ideological.*

Modernise the organisation

There was a strong sense that the organisation requires some modernisation:

- *Creating a strategy that is clear about goals and learning from other successful campaigning organisations, perhaps through an advisory group to provide help with distilling aims. CSPA should also redefine the relationship with the civil service to ensure that you are not out of touch with the reality.*
- *Engaging with new ways of working, and stimulating the organisation. I don't underestimate the challenge, I would be researching and finding out how the CSPA is perceived, how can I gradually move it to a different place? The social media is out of date and they need to grasp positivity. It is not a social club and needs to be relevant politically and with the media.*
- *Modernise, too bureaucratic and old fashioned. Stuck in union mode. (Online survey)*

Particular comments were made around structures, language and diversity:

Structures

- *"I am not sure if this is helpful but clearly a branch with a membership of 100's (possibly approaching 1000) that can only regularly muster about 10 people for branch meetings is on a one way journey. Therefore I think a review of branches and their active membership might be something to be looked at."*
- *Finding a way to have a debate about the role of the groups.*
- *Get the groups sorted out and get an outside influence on the executive committee. I know the editor of magazine is leaving, this is a good opportunity to get someone who is from outside the civil service to challenge what's going on with new ideas.*
- *Aside for the communication, it is probably worth reviewing the structure of the geographic or functional groups. The demography of those volunteers willing to keep that structure going is changing, which will mean things will be different in five years' time. How can we afford to organise if we can't get the volunteers*
- *They need to get away from the union image, to think about how people live their lives. Discounts and things are good, and they need to look at what people would welcome. They are doing a good job but it's a thankless task. Retired civil servants often think they did a great job, and will complain about everything. (Partner)*
- *The AGM feels very formal and old-fashioned. It is a bit dated and feels like a 1970s union meeting, how do they turn it into something that is attractive to others that works in a different way. With everyone now working remotely, I'm not sure we can, or should go back. (Partner)*

Diversity

- *It is very male dominated. It feels a bit like a men's club although I am sure Lisa will make a huge difference.*
- *It is also male and white and the civil service is not, it is predominantly female and the BAME community is about 30%, more in some parts of the country. To*

attract more, we need to do more. I think we need to get something in the mailing to MyCSP, the pre-retirement courses bring limited success and Civil Service Live is useful but we need to be careful who we send, I'm not entirely sure current civil servants have much empathy with an 80 year old. Civil service people used to have much more identity e.g. how you described yourself on a passport, which is not the case now. There is not a lot of data on the make-up of membership, e.g. grades, departments etc and that would be interesting to know.

- *Like all retired organisations you have a generation of people who are isolated as they are not technologically able. It is difficult to try and meet the ranging requirements of older people. This is compounded by the fact that there are no longer so-called careers for life, people work for agencies. There have also been gender changes, the sectors such as civil service and police were 90% male. (Partner)*
- *A changing organisation which is being led by a woman for the first time and has to get women in positions which have been male orientated for a long time. (Partner)*

Language

- *I enjoy IT and Tax articles in the Pensioner but cannot get excited about AGM reports of old-fashioned motions and amendments. (Online survey)*
- *Get away from the impression that all your members are very old and remember Suez or WW2! (Online survey)*
- *“CSPA does good work but comes over as a bit stuck in the past, with a focus on meetings and worthy but uninspiring magazines. That probably reflects the membership as it has been but if we want to attract new members we need to recognise that those retiring now will often not have been long-serving civil servants, will increasingly have grown up with IT and don't regard themselves as being old. The Association needs to change to be responsive to their needs, which probably don't include long reports on Parliamentary debates! Perhaps some discussions with those nearing retirement about what would attract them to join the Association would be helpful rather than asking current members what they think.” (Online survey)*

Raise profile and create a new narrative around civil service pensioners

Raising the profile of the CSPA was seen as important, as was playing a role in developing a new narrative around civil service pensioners:

- *There seems to be a backlash against pensioners, stating they are all rich and everyone else is poor, from the media, increasing media profile to combat this.*
- *Trying to stop reviews of 'gold-plated' pensions.*
- *To try and bring back any negative public feeling and press that pensioners are all rich and can afford to take a cut.*
- *Protecting the pensions of civil servants. There are misconceptions around civil service pensions, often in the media, and sometimes it would be nice if the CSPA stepped in and corrected that, and put the record straight.*
- *“I feel the CSPA is missing a whole trench of potential (associate) members. I only heard of you from a friend. Your profile is quite limited and yet you offer a wide range of activities/ opportunities. You should be far better known.” (Online survey)*

- *“Public image is non-existent. CSPA needs a high profile "name" to spark interest. Suggest someone like Gus McDonnell or a famous current member?” (Online survey)*
- *“I was a civil servant in my 20s and 30s only. I had no idea about the CSPA until a friend - totally unconnected with my work - told me about you. If I'd known about you earlier, I would have joined you at 60 when I got my pension, instead of by chance at 64. There must be lots of other people like me that left the civil service long before retirement, and don't know of you. How do you advertise yourself?”*
- *Improve and raise the profile, modernise the communications and drive up an improvement in communications from the pension scheme. (Partner)*

Improve communication with members

A number of members also said that there is a need to improve communications with members:

- *Improving communication, that's the whole name of the game. It works both ways.
“Communications generally (style and content) and making the organisation more attractive to modern pensioners.” (Online survey)*
- *They need to move to the 21st century and maybe even change the name. 'Pensioners' has connotations of elderly people and it needs revamp, rename, get off all paper, can have zoom discussions etc. It needs to be fun, relevant and up to date not something out of the 1970s.*
- *Ways to communicate with members we don't hear from through more direct forms of communication.*

SUMMARY

An overwhelming majority of members felt that the membership subscription provides value for money. In fact, some members suggested that it is too cheap and ‘devalues’ the work of the organisation.

Similarly, a huge majority said that they will still be members in two years' time.

When asked to identify specific challenges that the CSPA is facing, recruitment and declining membership was again seen as the overriding issue. The need for better engagement and profile with the current civil service was seen as an associated issue.

Members also identified the need to respond to external challenges, particularly related to Government spending cuts related to COVID-19, specifically, threats to the triple lock.

When asked what the General Secretary's priorities should be, the responses echoed issues mentioned throughout the survey including increasing appeal to new members, modernisation, raising profile and improving communications with members.

APPENDIX I – LETTER OF APPROACH

Dear

THE CSPA: INVITATION TO TAKE PART IN ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

I am writing to invite you to participate in an organisational review of the Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance.

As you will be aware, the CSPA was formed over 60 years ago and has achieved remarkable success over this time. We continue to work hard on behalf of all our members, meeting regularly with the Cabinet Office to protect the value of civil service pensions, and providing excellent membership services and social activities.

However, to ensure that the Alliance remains fit for purpose in the coming years, we are carrying out a review of the organisation, assessing how well we meet the needs and expectations of members and potential members, and exploring perceptions amongst partner organisations. We will be talking to colleagues from a range of organisations including trades unions, the broader civil service community, the age sector, charities, the media and government stakeholders.

We have commissioned Connect to carry out this research on our behalf and interviews with partners will take the form of a brief, 20-minute telephone interview. The results will be analysed and will inform our organisational strategy moving forward. I can assure you that all views expressed in interviews will be treated in complete confidence, and your comments will not be attributed to you unless requested.

If you are willing to take part, we will arrange for Connect Communications to contact you to find a convenient time for a telephone interview. We appreciate that time is at a premium for you and Connect will be happy to find times for interviews outside normal office hours if that would be helpful. Please contact Natasha Brewis on n.brewis@connectpa.co.uk or on 07885 274 065 to arrange a slot.

We very much hope you will be able to contribute to this piece of work. Your participation will make a significant contribution and will help us to shape the Alliance's future and allow us to continue to deliver the very best services to our members.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Ray
General Secretary
Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance

EMAIL TO MEMBERS

Members online survey



Dear Member

The CSPA was formed over 60 years ago and has achieved remarkable success over this time. We continue to work hard on behalf of all our members, meeting regularly with the Cabinet Office to protect the value of civil service pensions, and providing excellent membership services and social activities.

To ensure that the Alliance remains fit for purpose in the coming years, we are conducting research into the views of our members and potential future members. The research asks how well we currently meet your needs and expectations, as well as asking you to share your views on our services.

The first step is an online survey of members. I would be very grateful if you could complete the survey and share the link with other members.

Please click on the following link to take part

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VMGB9HQ>

We have commissioned Connect to carry out this research on our behalf. Connect will also be conducting more in-depth interviews with some members via telephone.

If you would like to take part, please send your name and contact details to Natasha Brewis at Connect on n.brewis@connectpa.co.uk or 07885 274 065 and she will arrange an appointment at your convenience.

I very much hope that you are able to complete the online survey. Your participation will make a significant contribution and will help us to shape the Alliance's future.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Ray
General Secretary

APPENDIX II – ONLINE SURVEY

CSPA: WHAT MATTERS TO MEMBERS?

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this online survey for the CSPA. We are conducting member benefits research to uncover the value members place on CSPA membership, and the benefits and services offered as part of our package. The research asks members about how well we currently meet your needs and expectations, as well as asking you to share your views on the full range of our offering, to make sure that we are fit for the future. It should not take any longer than 10 minutes and your response is confidential.

ABOUT YOU

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

2. What age group are you in?

- 50 - 60
- 61 - 65
- 66-70
- 71 - 80
- 81 - 90
- 90 plus

3. How long have you been retired?

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 6- 10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years

4. How long have you been a member of the CSPA?

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 6- 10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years

5. How long did you work within the civil service?

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 6- 10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years
- Whole career
- Not a civil servant

6. Which department of the civil service/area of the public sector/local government did you work in the longest?

.....
JOINING THE CSPA

7. How did you originally hear about the CSPA?

- Word of mouth []
- Via my trade union []
- Retirement course []
- Retirement fair []
- Regional Employment Forum []
- The Charity for Civil Servants []
- Social media (Twitter, Facebook etc) []
- The internet []
- Other (please state)

8. Why did you join the CSPA? (Please choose the 3 most important to you)

- To protect my civil service pension []
- Representation to Cabinet Office and My CSP []
- Help with your pension []
- Legal advice []
- IT advice []
- I like being part of a community that is linked to my career []
- The Pensioner Magazine []
- Access to Local groups/ Branch meetings []
- Travel, car and home insurance []
- High street discounts []
- Social activities []
- Campaigning activity []
- Opportunity to attend Annual General Meeting []

9. How likely would you be to recommend joining the CSPA to a friend or former colleague?

- Very likely []
- Likely []
- Not likely []
- Definitely not []
- Not sure []

YOUR MEMBERSHIP

10. What do you most value about your membership (PLEASE choose the 3 most important to you)?

- Representation to Cabinet Office and My CSP
- Protection of my civil service pension []
- Help with your pension []
- Legal advice []
- IT advice []
- The Pensioner Magazine []
- Access to Local groups/ Branch meetings []
- Travel, car and home insurance []
- High street discounts []
- Social activities []
- Campaigning activity []
- Opportunity to attend Annual General Meeting []

11. Have you attended any of the following twice or more?

- Group meetings []
- Group AGM []
- Regional Meetings []
- Branch meetings []
- Annual General Meeting []

If not, why not?

If so, why?

12. What other services do you think the CSPA could deliver in addition to current benefits?

- Discounts on days out []
- Health advice []
- Lifestyle advice and information []
- Other [Please describe.....]

13. What do you think about our brand (logo, name etc)? (Tick as many as you like)

- It is up to date []
- It is eye catching []
- It is positive []
- It is boring []
- It is uninspiring []
- It is old fashioned []
- It is misleading []
- It is attractive []
- It describes the work of CSPA well []
- It is fit for purpose []
- Other [.....]

14. What do you think about the tone of our communications? (Tick as many as you like)

- It is appropriate []
- It is positive []
- It is boring []
- It is uninspiring []
- It is unprofessional []
- It is old fashioned []
- It describes the work of CSPA well []
- It is fit for purpose []
- Other [.....]

15. On a scale of one to five, [where FIVE = excellent and ONE = poor] how do you rate communications from the CSPA?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| Email | EXCELLENT [] | GOOD [] | AVERAGE [] | POOR [] | DON'T KNOW [] |
| Post | EXCELLENT [] | GOOD [] | AVERAGE [] | POOR [] | DON'T KNOW [] |
| Magazine | EXCELLENT [] | GOOD [] | AVERAGE [] | POOR [] | DON'T KNOW [] |
| Via the website | EXCELLENT [] | GOOD [] | AVERAGE [] | POOR [] | DON'T KNOW [] |
| Facebook | EXCELLENT [] | GOOD [] | AVERAGE [] | POOR [] | DON'T KNOW [] |
| Instagram | EXCELLENT [] | GOOD [] | AVERAGE [] | POOR [] | DON'T KNOW [] |
| Twitter | EXCELLENT [] | GOOD [] | AVERAGE [] | POOR [] | DON'T KNOW [] |
| Via Group meetings | EXCELLENT [] | GOOD [] | AVERAGE [] | POOR [] | DON'T KNOW [] |
| Social events | EXCELLENT [] | GOOD [] | AVERAGE [] | POOR [] | DON'T KNOW [] |

16. Would you like more or less communication via the following channels?

Email MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Post MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Magazine MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Via the website MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Facebook MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Instagram MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Twitter MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Via Group meetings MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Social events MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

17. What is the most important thing for the CSPA to improve?

Representation to Cabinet Office and My CSP
Help with your pension
Legal advice
IT advice
The Pensioner Magazine
Access to Local groups/ Branch meetings
Travel, car and home insurance
High street discounts
Social activities
Campaigning activity
Opportunity to attend Annual Conference and AGM
Other [...]

18. Do you think your membership fee provides value for money?

Yes
No
Don't know

THE FUTURE

19. Do you have any suggestions on what we could do better in the future?

.....

20. How likely is it that you will still be a member in two years?

Very likely Likely Not likely Definitely not Not sure

21. If not likely or definitely not, what is the reason you do not expect to be a member in two years? (Can tick more than one box)

Do not value the services
Too expensive
Due to my age
Other [....]

22. Do you have any further comments?

If you would like to be contacted by a member of the Connect team for a longer telephone interview (around 20 minutes), please fill out your name and contact details.

Name:
Telephone number:
Email address:

Thank you very much for taking part.

APPENDIX III – ABBREVIATED SURVEY INCLUDED IN ‘THE PENSIONER’

CSPA: WHAT MATTERS TO MEMBERS?

We are conducting member benefits research to uncover the value members place on CSPA membership, and the benefits and services offered as part of our package. Please fill out the survey online at XXX. Alternatively, if you do not have access to the internet, please complete this shortened version.

ABOUT YOU

23. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

24. What age group are you in?

- 50 - 60
- 61 - 65
- 66-70
- 71 - 80
- 81 - 90
- 90 plus

25. How long have you been a member of the CSPA?

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 6- 10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years

JOINING THE CSPA

26. How did you originally hear about the CSPA?

- Word of mouth
- Via my trade union
- Retirement course
- Retirement fair
- Regional Employment Forum
- The Charity for Civil Servants
- Social media (Twitter, Facebook etc)
- The internet
- Other (please state)

27. Why did you join the CSPA? (Please choose the 3 most important to you)

- To protect my civil service pension
- Representation to Cabinet Office and My CSP
- Help with your pension
- Legal advice
- IT advice
- I like being part of a community that is linked to my career

- The Pensioner Magazine []
- Access to Local groups/ Branch meetings []
- Travel, car and home insurance []
- High street discounts []
- Social activities []
- Campaigning activity []
- Opportunity to attend Annual General Meeting []

28. How likely would you be to recommend joining the CSPA to a friend or former colleague?

- Very likely [] Likely [] Not likely [] Definitely not [] Not sure []

YOUR MEMBERSHIP

29. What do you most value about your membership (PLEASE choose the 3 most important to you)?

- Representation to Cabinet Office and My CSP
- Protection of my civil service pension []
- Help with your pension []
- Legal advice []
- IT advice []
- The Pensioner Magazine []
- Access to Local groups/ Branch meetings []
- Travel, car and home insurance []
- High street discounts []
- Social activities []
- Campaigning activity []
- Opportunity to attend Annual General Meeting []

30. What other services do you think the CSPA could deliver in addition to current benefits?

- Discounts on days out []
- Health advice []
- Lifestyle advice and information []
- Other [Please describe.....]

31. What do you think about our brand (logo, name etc)? (Tick as many as you like)

- It is up to date []
- It is eye catching []
- It is positive []
- It is boring []
- It is uninspiring []
- It is old fashioned []
- It is misleading []
- It is attractive []
- It describes the work of CSPA well []
- It is fit for purpose []
- Other [.....]

32. Do you have access to the internet?

- YES [] NO []

33. Would you like more or less communication via the following channels?

Email MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Post MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Magazine MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Via the website MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Facebook MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Instagram MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Twitter MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Via Group meetings MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW
Social events MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

34. Do you have any suggestions on what we could do better in the future?

.....

If you would like to be contacted by a member of the Connect team for a longer telephone interview (around 20 minutes), please fill out your name and contact details.

Name:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Thank you very much for taking part.

APPENDIX IV – GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW (MEMBERS)

CSPA: WHAT MATTERS TO MEMBERS? INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MEMBERS

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this telephone interview for the CSPA. It should not take any longer than 20 minutes. Before we start, all the data we capture will be anonymised so do feel free to be as candid as you would like. Some of the questions may be similar/the same as those you answered on the online questionnaire. You do not need to answer all questions if you would prefer not to.

BACKGROUND

35. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

36. What age group are you in?

- 50 - 60
- 61 - 65
- 66-70
- 71 - 80
- 81 - 90
- 90 plus

37. How long have you been retired?

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 6- 10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years

38. How long have you been a member of the CSPA?

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 6- 10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years

39. How long did you work within the civil service ?

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 6- 10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years
- Whole career

Not a civil servant []

NB: The majority of ex-Civil Servants with under 5-years service, unless exceptionally retired on medical grounds will NOT be in receipt of a Civil Service Pension – nor a CSPA member – unless they are a Widow(er) and this questionnaire does not seem to cater for these people.

40. Which department of the civil service/area of the public sector/local government/trade union did you work in the longest?

YOUR MEMBERSHIP

41. Why did you join the CSPA?

42. What do you most value about your membership?

43. Have you attended any of the following twice or more?

Group meetings []

Group AGM []

Regional Meetings (NB restricted to representatives from Groups and excludes the Branches) []

Branch meetings (NB Scotland, Northern Ireland and Malta) []

Annual General Meeting []

If not, why not? If so, why?

44. Which services provided by CSPA do you use?

45. What other services do you think the CSPA could deliver in addition to current benefits?

VIEWS TOWARD THE CSPA

46. How would you explain the role of the CSPA to a friend or family member?

47. What three words would you use to describe the CSPA?

48. How effective an organisation do you think the CSPA is? [On a scale of ONE to FIVE where ONE = not at all effective FIVE = highly effective]

49. What do you regard as the CSPA's greatest strengths?

50. What do you regard as the CSPA's greatest weaknesses?

51. How likely would you be to recommend joining the CSPA to a friend or former colleague?

Very likely [] Likely [] Not likely [] Definitely not [] Not sure []

BRANDING AND PROFILE

52. What do you think about the tone or style of our communications?

53. Would you say CSPA's profile and/or influence has increased/decreased or stayed the same over the last 12 months?

Increased []
Decreased []
Stayed the same []
Don't know []

54. Do you think the lockdown period has had an impact on the level of influence/profile?

Yes []
No []
Don't know []

55. Have you visited the website?

Yes [] No [] Don't know []

What were your impressions? Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

56. Do you follow CSPA on social media?

Twitter Yes No

Facebook Yes No

Do you have any comments:

57. How do you rate communications from the CSPA?

Email EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW

Post EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW

Magazine EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW

Via the website EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW

Facebook EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW

Twitter EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW

Via Group meetings EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW

Social events EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW

58. Would you like more or less communication via the following channels?

Email MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

Post MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

Magazine MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

Via the website MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

Facebook MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

Instagram MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

Twitter MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

Via Group meetings MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

Social events MORE ABOUT RIGHT LESS DON'T KNOW

59. Has the coronavirus lockdown changed the way in which you would like the CSPA to communicate with you in the future (eg; more on email less by post)

60. Do you have any comments on the CSPA's response to coronavirus? Have you felt kept up to date and informed?

61. Have you heard of Later Life Ambitions?

Yes No

What is your view of it?

STAFFING AND STRUCTURES

62. Which staff do you know/know of at the CSPA?

63. Can you name the General Secretary of the CSPA?

64. Can you name the Chair or any members of the Executive Committee?

65. Do you think that the Group structure is effective/serves the purpose of the organisation?

Yes []

No []

Don't know []

Please can you explain your answer

THE FUTURE

66. Do you think your membership subscription provides value for money?

Yes []

No []

Don't know []

67. How likely is it that you will still be a member in two years?

Very likely [] Likely [] Not likely [] Definitely not [] Not sure []

68. If not likely or definitely not, what is the reason you do not expect to be a member in two years? (Can tick more than one box)

Do not value the services []

Too expensive []

Due to my age []

Other [....]

69. Are there any specific challenges you think the CSPA is facing and needs to address?

70. If you were the General Secretary, what would be your key priority over the next 3 years?

71. Do you have any further comments?

Thank you very much for taking part.

APPENDIX V – GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW (PARTNERS)

CSPA: WHAT MATTERS TO MEMBERS? INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this telephone interview for the CSPA. It should not take any longer than 20 minutes. Before we start, all the data we capture will be anonymised so do feel free to be as candid as you would like. You do not need to answer all questions if you would prefer not to.

BACKGROUND

How long have you/your organisation worked with the CSPA?

- Less than a year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

Which people at CSPA do you deal with most?

What do you work with them on?

AWARENESS

1. On a scale of one to five, [where ONE = not at all aware and FIVE = very aware], how aware are you of the CSPA as an organisation?

2. On a scale of one to five{[where ONE = not at all aware and FIVE = very aware how aware are you of membership bodies operating in the age sector more generally?

BRANDING AND PROFILE

3. How would you describe the role of the CSPA?

4. What three words would you use to describe the CSPA?

5. What are your views/perceptions of the CSPA brand?

6. What do you think about the tone and style of the communications?

7. Would you say CSPA's profile and/or influence has increased/decreased or stayed the same over the last 12 months?

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same
- Don't know

8. Have you visited the website?

- Yes No Don't know

If you did visit what were your impressions? Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

9. Do you follow CSPA on social media?

- Twitter Yes No
Facebook Yes No

If you do follow CSPA on social media do you have any comments:

10.] How do you rate communications from the CSPA?

- Email EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW
Post EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW
Magazine EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW
Via the website EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW
Facebook EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW
Twitter EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW
Via Group meetings (IF APPLICABLE) EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW
Social events (IF APPLICABLE) EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE POOR DON'T KNOW

11. Have you heard of Later Life Ambitions?

- Yes No

What is your view of it?

MEMBER SERVICES

12. Are you aware that the CSPA offers the following member services?

- Campaigning around civil service pensions Yes No
Representation to Cabinet Office and My CSP Yes No
Legal advice Yes No
IT advice Yes No
The Pensioner Magazine Yes No

Local groups/ Branch meetings	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Travel, car and home insurance	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
High street discounts	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Social activities	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

13. What other services do you think the CSPA should deliver in addition to current benefits?

EFFECTIVENESS

14. How effective an organisation do you think the CSPA is? [On a scale of ONE to FIVE where ONE = not at all effective, FIVE = highly effective]

15. What do you regard as the CSPA's greatest strengths?

16. What do you regard as the CSPA's greatest weaknesses?

17. How favourable do you feel towards CSPA [on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = not at all favourably, 5 = highly favourable)?

18. Has your view/perception of CSPA become more or less favourable in the last 12-18 months?

More Less Same Not sure

STAFFING AND STRUCTURES

19. Which staff do you know/know of at the CSPA?

20. Can you name the General Secretary of the CSPA?

21. Can you name the Chair or any members of the Executive Committee?

THE FUTURE

22. Are there any specific challenges you think the CSPA is facing and needs to address?

23. If you were the General Secretary, what would be your key priority over the next 3 years?

24. Do you have any further comments?

Thank you very much for taking part.