

GROUP CIRCULAR 972

To: Branches, Groups and Executive Council

11 July 2025

Dear Colleague

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1) Nominations for Certificates of Merit

The work of CSPA is largely taken forward by individual members as volunteers, for whom it may sometimes seem there is little by way of recognition. There is one notable exception in the 'Certificate of Merit'. Groups and Branches can nominate a group or branch postholder who has held office for 10 years, or more, in recognition of their efforts on behalf of CSPA members. Nominations should be notified to the General Secretary, with a note providing a short summary of the positions held, and the periods for which they have been held, briefly describing the contributions they have made to CSPA. A Certificate of Merit can only be awarded once to an individual, so it is important for it to be seen as a valued and fitting reward for their work in support of their group or branch or the wider membership of CSPA. Once a nomination has been received, the EC will consider whether to approve the award or not and once approved, arrangements will then be made for its presentation at a group or branch meeting, or at the AGM if appropriate. Kindly refer to the document 'Advice for Groups in England and Wales' (Revised May 2017) for further information.

After a flurry of presentations in recent years (8 in 2024 and 4 in 2023) the EC has been disappointed not to have received any nominations from

Groups and Branches at all since the 2024 AGM. To encourage nominations, the EC have asked me to share with you the names of those who have received Certificates of Merit in recent years – *please see the list attached of those we could find on our records in HQ*. Please do get in touch if your Group or Branch would like to make a nomination.

2) Second call for volunteers to be on Newsletter Award judging panel

Sadly, despite our notice and request for volunteers from Groups and Branches to participate in the Newsletter Award judging panel in Group Circular GC 970/25, no members had come forward to assist us in the way by the time of the EC's F&GP Committee's meeting on the 24th June.

The EC is keen to act upon Motion A15, carried at the 2024 AGM, and reintroduce the competition, but would like to make the process as inclusive, transparent and fair as possible by involving members from Groups and Branches.

All active Groups and Branches are therefore again invited to nominate one member to the judging panel by sending an e-mail to: david.luxton@cspa.co.uk headed “**Newsletter Competition 2025**” to arrive no later than **Monday 21st July**. The selected members of the judging panel will be notified after the next EC Meeting on the 24th July, and their names will thereafter be confirmed in a Group Circular.

3) A Civil Service Pensions Updates

- In April 2025 we learned that the NAO was investigating complaints about MyCSP's services. We were keen to speak to the inquiry team to reflect complaints from members about their experiences of poor customer service on the part of MyCSP in the form of delayed call answering, late or non-existent email responses, the late issue of their Remedy 2015 'choice packs', and general slowness in dealing with personal cases. The GS and Pensions & Personal Case Manager spoke directly to the NAO Inquiry team just before they concluded their investigation.
- On 16 June 2025, the NAO published their report “Investigation into the Administration of the Civil Service Pension Scheme”, highlighting that Capita had missed three key milestones in the transition to taking on the administration of the Scheme from December 2025. The report also said that the Cabinet Office had withheld £9.6M in transition payments due to Capita due to their failure to meet agreed deliverables associated with the design and development phase and user readiness.

- On 17 June 2025, at a meeting with the Cabinet Office, CSPA were told that two of the missed key milestones had since been met by Capita and the third would soon be met, but this doesn't give us much confidence on their future service delivery from December!
- The GS, DGS and Pensions & Personal Case Manager have been engaging with the Cabinet Office and with Capita directly on the transition and future service delivery through additional online meetings, at our regular update meetings with the Cabinet Office team, and also at the recent 'Regional Employer Forums' (REFs) hosted by the Cabinet Office in various locations in May.
- We were introduced to members of the Capita team at the Cabinet Office Regional Employer Forums (REFs) and have since met with their engagement team and the Cabinet office pensions team. A further meeting with Capita will take place on the 4th August in London.
- Following an online meeting with the Capita team on 16 April, CSPA was invited to nominate members to participate in Capita's scheme member focus groups as part of their stakeholder engagement in preparation for the contract, as reported in Group Circular **GC 970/25**. **Any members interested in participating in these focus groups are reminded to submit names of volunteers to Head Office.**
- In early May the House of Commons' Public Accounts Committee (PAC) announced they were undertaking a separate review of the administration of the Civil Service pension scheme and the transition to Capita, following the NAO inquiry's report. CSPA submitted written evidence, based on our members' recent experiences in dealing with MyCSP. To gather this evidence, we launched an online survey of members in late May (e-Newsletter, dated 29 May), the results of which were anonymised, collated and submitted to the Public Accounts Committee on 20 June.
- A summary of the CSPA's evidence and recommendations is included in **Appendix 1** and *a copy of CSPA's submission is attached.*
- The Public Accounts Committee are expected to publish their report before the end of July

- The Cabinet Office confirmed to CSPA at a recent meeting that in the 12 months to May 2025, MyCSP had received 5,112 complaints. Of those complaints,
 - 4,919 were 'resolved'
 - 3,553 were not upheld
 - 1,616 were upheld
- MyCSP has acknowledged delays in their Contact Centre but explained that call volumes had increased by 20%; with average caller waiting times being around 14 minutes.
- MyCSP also confirmed that, since April 2024, 99.9% of all retirement quotes were provided within the Service Level timeframe, despite a 16% increase in the number of Civil Servants retiring in the same period.
- PCS union members at MyCSP are to take industrial action over the transfer of union recognition over the TUPE process, which is due to commence in late July.

4) Carer Poverty Coalition (CPC) Response to Welfare Reforms

CSPA is part of the Carer Poverty Coalition (CPC). As you might have read, in response to huge amounts of campaigning by parliamentarians and a whole range of poverty, disability, older people's, women's, human rights and of course, carers' organisations, the Government has announced a few concessions that you might have read about in the press:

These include:

- protection for existing PIP claimants. New eligibility requirements for new claims only applied from November 2026.
- all existing recipients of the Universal Credit health element - and any new claimant meeting the severe conditions criteria - have their incomes fully protected in real terms.

Plus, the review of PIP including co-production with disabled people.

CPC's response so far is:

- Protection for existing PIP claimants is important, and the Government has listened. We continue to be concerned about future claimants of PIP/Carer's Allowance. We need to see the detail of what "protection" means.

- Universal Credit changes above - we need to see the detail of what that means in real terms for claimants, but it's welcome.
- Co-production with disabled people is welcome but we want to see separate engagement with unpaid carers and the impact on them.
- Reiterate that we want to see a review of Carer's Allowance as it's an outdated benefit.

The Carer Poverty Coalition's formal response to the consultation was submitted by the deadline on Monday 30 June 2025.

A debate on the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment elements of the Bill was held on 1 July 2025 and debate on all remaining parts of the Bill will take place on 9th July 2025. This is an unusual process and there are concerns about the lack of time for debate and proper consideration.

During Second Reading of the Bill, on 1 July 2025, the Minister for Social Security & Welfare, Sir Stephen Timms MP, announced that the Government planned to make significant changes to the Bill when it reaches Committee stage. Most notably, he said no new provisions or changes to PIP would come into effect ahead of the publication of the Minister's review of PIP. Clause 5 of the Bill which would have meant PIP claimants would need to score 4 points in any needs category, but this will now be removed.

We are pleased that the Government has made these concessions, so many current unpaid carers will no longer be made worse off as a result of the Bill, and we would like to thank those who have supported this campaign. Many MPs have voiced their concerns about how the Bill would impact carers, but many are still to decide whether they will vote against the Bill on that basis.

As a result of the concessions, Carers UK and the Carer Poverty Alliance have decided to halt their #ProtectCarers Benefits campaign, due to the significant changes made since the Green Paper plans were first announced. However, we will still be raising outstanding issues in relation to both the Bill and the Green Paper, and we will be making a robust case for Carer's Allowance to be reviewed and improved.

5) Buses Services Bill (No. 2) and PAC Inquiry into Local Bus Services

As you may have read, the GS and DGS have been actively supporting the National Federation for the Blind UK's campaign against 'floating bus stops'. The DGS has recently attended a number of the Committee Stage debates in both the House of Lords and House of Commons in support of NFBUK campaigners.

During the fifth sitting of the Bus Services (No. 2) Bill [Lords] in the House of Commons, floating bus stops were discussed in some detail. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Simon Lightwood, has said that the Bill would result in improved performance, quality and accessibility of bus passenger services in Great Britain. He went on to say that it would also –

- Connect people to the destinations they need to reach
- Make bus services more reliable, affordable, inclusive and seamlessly integrated into the wider transport network.
- Prioritise the safety of all passengers – particularly women and girls – throughout their journeys.
- Provide accurate, accessible and timely information about bus routes and schedules.

Jerome Mayhew MP (Con, Broadland and Fakenham) noted several concerns around floating bus stops, saying the Conservatives would lay out their concerns in further detail.

Steff Aquarone MP (LibDem, North Norfolk) said in the Commons that the UK lacks examples of successful rural transport networks and has called for bold action to ensure everyone has equal access to bus services.

The UK Government has since announced a pause on the installation of these most inaccessible types of bus stops, which are dangerous when passengers are forced to get on and off buses by stepping directly into a cycle path.

The Minister for Local Transport said this decision was based on evidence about the dangers of these bus stops, and highlighted Guide Dogs' research with University College London. You can read more about the research [here](#).

Guide Dogs UK has acknowledged the work done by the NFBUK and CSPA in raising awareness about the dangers of 'floating bus stops'.

In the meantime, the Public Accounts Committee have been conducting an inquiry into Local Bus Services, seeking to establish –

- Whether the performance of local bus services has improved;
- Whether the DfT has understood the effectiveness of its actions in delivering improved performance in local bus services and addressed barriers to improvement, and
- To what extent the DfT is set up to address the remaining barriers effectively, assess new and ongoing risks, and improve local bus services in the light of growing usage.

With Connect's assistance, LLA written evidence was compiled and duly submitted by the deadline on 5 July 2025.

In conclusion, LLA asked for a comprehensive strategy for improving bus service accessibility and simplicity as part of any statutory reform of bus services. We suggested that Local Authorities may be best placed to understand and consult with those reliant on these services to participate in society and, with funding being allocated by central government, this would present opportunities to improve older people's quality of life, with ease of access being regarded as a priority.

Please see a copy of the LLA evidence submission attached.

6) NHS Ten Year Plan

On 3 July 2025, the Government's policy paper "Fit for the future: 10 Year Health Plan for England" was published. Wes Streeting MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, has referred to it as an "ambitious blueprint to get the NHS back on its feet and make it fit for the future".

At a recent Age Sector meeting attended by CSPA, Caroline Abrahams, CEO of Age UK said she had read the draft, noting the shift from hospital to home, which brings together community teams including GPs. She went on to say that it wouldn't be without problems and would take extra staff, money, and a lot of time to get running. The Government have said that they will create another workforce plan to go along side it, but even with the extra money the NHS has been given its progress will likely be slow. Age UK are supportive of the Plan, pointing out that the voluntary sector has a large part to play in making it a success.

A copy of the Executive Summary of the Government's publication is attached for your reference, but briefly it outlines the following.

- The choice for the NHS is stark: reform or die. Transformational change is required to guarantee its sustainability for future generations.
- Science and technology will be key to that reinvention.
- The service must be equipped to narrow health inequalities.
- Despite the scale of the challenge, there are more reasons for optimism than pessimism. The NHS is the best system in the world to harness the advances we are seeing in artificial intelligence (AI) and genomic science and can lead the world in developing treatments and technologies for the future.
- The plan aims to reinvent the NHS through 3 radical shifts, from hospital to community, from analogue to digital, and from sickness to prevention.

- To deliver the core components of the new care model at scale, the plan aims to shift the NHS at pace through a new operating model, by ushering in a new era of transparency, and by creating a new workforce model with staff genuinely aligned with the future direction of reform.

7) NPC Newsletters and updates

Please find *attached copies* of the following NPC publications:

‘NPC doubts that Minister’s PIP assurances are enough’ – 30 June

NPC Digital Working Party Newsletter - ‘Connections for All’ (July 2025 – Issue 18)

If you have any questions or require any further information about the matters covered by this Group Circular, please don’t hesitate to contact me, either by email at sally.tsoukaris@cspa.co.uk or by telephone on **020 8688 8418 (Office)**.

Yours sincerely

Sally T.

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Appendix 1

Executive summary of CSPA Evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into MyCSP administration and the transition to Capita:

1. The Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance (CSPA) represents around 40,000 retired civil servants.
2. A snap member survey confirms persistent service failings at MyCSP:
 - 42 % of callers waited 30–60 mins; 24 % waited over an hour; 11 % abandoned calls.
 - 45 % of email users never received a reply; 35 % waited more than a fortnight.
 - Satisfaction and confidence scores were low; comments cite lost records, lengthy delays and unclear communication.
3. This matters, because delays jeopardise timely pension payments, undermine trust, and exacerbate digital exclusion.
4. Members fear further deterioration and data-security risks when administration moves from MyCSP to Capita (whose public-sector record attracts criticism).
5. In response, CSPA calls on decisionmakers to:
 - Publish administrator KPIs, performance data and a clear McCloud Remedy timetable.
 - Engage routinely with CSPA, trade unions and other stakeholders.
 - Guarantee adequate staffing, training and job security through transition.
 - Keep existing phone and email channels unchanged during and after hand-over.