



CSPA WEST MERCIA GROUP NEWSLETTER NUMBER 15 – AUTUMN 2025

CSPA WEST MERCIA GROUP OFFICERS – 2025/26

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Secretary: David Humphreys - 01562 631188 - dnhumphreys@gmail.com (David also covers Membership matters)

WEST MERCIA GROUP

CSPA West Mercia Group began life in February 2022, following the merger of the Hereford & Worcester Group with the closed Shropshire Group. We have over 700 members in the Three Counties. CSPA nationally has about 34,000 members.

Our informal quarterly meetings last no more than 2 hours. Those held at Hereford and Worcester are preceded by an optional pub lunch. Meetings end with tea and biscuits. We plan to complement the in-person meetings with occasional online gatherings using the free Zoom platform. We also produce a seasonal newsletter which we aim to issue at least 3 weeks before each quarterly meeting.

If you wish to join our 150-strong email group, please contact the Group Secretary. You will then receive occasional emails on subjects of interest to older people.

YOUR CIVIL SERVICE PENSION

MyCSP pays your Civil Service pension. Its contact details are: MyCSP, PO Box 2017, Liverpool, L69 2BU; Phone: 0300 123 6666 (Mon-Fri: 0830 -1800). Full information about our pension scheme is on the scheme website at: <https://civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk>. There are various “what to expect” guides. You can also register for the **Civil Service Pension Portal**, which gives online access

to your pension information. **If you experience any problems with your pension, which MyCSP can’t or will not resolve, please contact the Group Secretary for help and initial advice.** More complicated matters will be referred to Christine Haswell, the CSPA Pensions & Personal Case Manager at CSPA HQ, to pursue.

MyCSP has experienced problems in recent months delivering its service to the standards expected by the Cabinet Office. CSPA nationally has been in contact with the Cabinet Office, which has implemented a “recovery plan” including additional staffing for the MyCSP call centre. The contract for managing the Civil Service Pension Scheme has been awarded by the Cabinet Office to Capita for 10 years from December 2025. Capita held the contract prior to MyCSP. CSPA is in close contact with the Cabinet Office to ensure that the transition from MyCSP to Capita goes seamlessly.

The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee is currently enquiring into the administration of the Civil Service pension. It interviewed senior representatives of the Cabinet Office and MyCSP on 7 July. https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16264/html/?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwLwwQtleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHviHCi1HsPQmjvECVIhKayD6LS8RFOnz_2s8AhYnpqzB8n6rzg2Oskjttfmc_aem_YJg2BkG7N0McldxHm6geQg

WEST MERCIA GROUP MEETINGS IN 2025

Our Group meetings for the remainder of 2025 are as follows:

- **Monday 15 September 2025** from 1.30pm to 3.30pm at **Shrewsbury** United Reformed Church, Coleham Head, **SY3 7BJ**
- **Monday 8 December 2025** - 2pm to 4pm at Quaker Meeting House, Sansome Walk, **Worcester, WR1 1UG**.

Our 17 March 2025 meeting in Worcester elected the Group Officers etc for the coming year (see overleaf) and adopted the Statement of Accounts for 2024. The 16 June meeting in Hereford approved a nomination for election to the CSPA Executive Council and devised 3 motions for discussion at the CSPA 2025 National AGM in early October. All 3 of our motions – on **energy prices**, **banking hubs**, and the **CS Pensions Board** - are on the National AGM agenda. The Shrewsbury meeting on 15 September will give a steer to Malcolm Moore, our delegate to the CSPA National AGM. The 8 December meeting will review our activities in 2025 and make plans for 2026.

Meeting reminders appear in the quarterly Group newsletters. Members of our email group receive copies of the meeting papers. If you cannot attend a meeting but have a bee in your bonnet about an issue affecting older people that you think can usefully be discussed, please contact David Humphreys, our Group Secretary.

KEEPING YOUR PERSONAL AFFAIRS IN ORDER

The consumer guru, Martin Lewis, regularly extols everyone, regardless of age, to keep their personal affairs in order. In particular, he emphasises the importance of:

- Having an **up-to-date will** – CSPA members who don't have a family solicitor can get free legal advice from Lyons Davidson on 01752300584, who can also advise on their likely charges for drawing up a will (<https://www.lyonsdavidson.co.uk>)
- Making and registering **Lasting Powers of Attorney**, covering Health & Welfare, and Property & Financial Affairs – <https://www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney>. It costs £82 for each LPA, and our Group Secretary found it straightforward to prepare ones for himself and his wife online.

One of our members also recently experienced some difficulties in securing her **property deeds** from her solicitor. Many solicitors are no longer prepared to store property deeds, so it's worth checking that your deeds are secure and/or are easily accessible.

"LATER LIFE AMBITIONS" CAMPAIGNS

"Later Life Ambitions" (LLA) is contracted to represents the nearly 160,000 members of the CSPA, the National Federation of Occupational Pensioners (NFOP), and the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO). Its manifesto - <https://www.laterlifeambitions.co.uk/manifesto> - was launched at a Westminster Parliamentary event in November 2023 and sets out six aims for a better future for the 11 million older people in the UK.

THE CHARITY FOR CIVIL SERVANTS (CfCS)

CfCS, formerly the Civil Service Benevolent Fund, helps current and former civil servants with whatever problems they may have. Its vision is of a lifelong community of people offering effective support for each other when life takes a turn for the worse. Support includes financial assistance and a range of services, including help with bereavement, residential care, relationships, caring, dementia, and long-term illness. It works with specialist organisations – such as Macmillan, Dementia UK and Relate – and signposts other helpful advice. One of our members recently received a substantial CfCS grant to revamp her bathroom to accommodate her declining mobility.

Find out more by visiting the CfCS website www.foryoubyyou.org.uk or call its free confidential helpline on 0800 056 2424. **CfCS is a charity and not a membership organisation, so all serving and former civil servants can ask it for help.**

THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION (NPC)

CSPA is affiliated to the **National Pensioners Convention (NPC)**, the largest pensioners organisation in the UK. NPC campaigns for and promotes the welfare and interests of all pensioners and older people, as a way of securing dignity, respect, and financial security in retirement. It organises rallies, lobbies of MPs, and makes submissions to Government on policies affecting older people. Its 2024 Biennial Delegate Conference elected the NPC national officers and determined its policies and priorities until 2026. NPC also stages an annual 2-day “Pensioners Convention” in Blackpool. Sadly, current financial difficulties mean that the 2025 event has been postponed until 2026.

NPC’s monthly bulletin “Campaign!” is sent by the Group Secretary to the 150 members of our email group. Visit the NPC website at <https://www.npcuk.org> to receive it. The latest edition of Campaign contained articles on the successful campaigns on Winter Fuel Payment and the Warm Homes scheme; action on Climate Change; and news from the NPC Regions. The NPC also has several working parties covering a variety of topics and which issue regular newsletters.

CSPA West Mercia Group is affiliated to the **West Midlands Pensioners Convention (WMPC)**. We attend its monthly meetings in Birmingham. WMPC’s informative website is at <https://wmpc.org.uk> and it also issues a quarterly newsletter. The WMPC Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/7125023377569919>

CSPA MEMBERSHIP SERVICES AND BENEFITS

There are a wide range of services and benefits available to CSPA members. These can be found in the Members Area of the CSPA national website - <https://www.cspa.co.uk/> and are usually featured in “The Pensioner” magazine.

Some of the services and benefits are accessed online, but many can also be accessed by phone. The Group Secretary will help with access if you encounter a problem. **The services and member benefits on offer have recently been extensively revamped, so it’s well worth checking them out.**

CSPA – “PROTECTING WHAT YOU’VE EARNED”

CSPA West Mercia Group brings together over 700 CSPA members in Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Worcestershire, with a view to stimulating interest and support for **CSPA’s objects**, which are:

- **To maintain and improve the purchasing power of all pensions from Civil Service and related schemes.**
- **To initiate and participate in action which will benefit pensioners.**
- **To promote the economic and social well-being of pensioners.**

Our Group meets quarterly in various locations in the Three Counties, issues a quarterly Newsletter, communicates additionally through our 150-strong email group, and hopes to offer occasional Zoom gatherings. We know that not everyone can attend meetings in our far-flung area. So, if there are local concerns - e.g. bus services, adult social care, health care, public services such as libraries and public toilets - please contact a Group Officer.

We rely on volunteers to keep West Mercia Group going. Without “new blood” our long-term future cannot be assured. If you have some spare time, we can put it to good use!

CSPA is a membership organisation. Please spread the good news about CSPA to all your retired civil and public service contacts. The discounted cost of our CSIS travel insurance may well save them more than the CSPA annual subscription! Prospective members can download an application form from the national website <https://www.cspa.co.uk/> and post it free to CSPA HQ; or call 020 8688 8418 for a membership pack; or join easily and quickly online.

CSPA has a **Facebook** page - <https://www.facebook.com/cspalliance>. The Autumn 2025 issue of “**The Pensioner**” magazine should come through your letterbox by early September. If you do not receive it, please contact the Group Secretary. The Pensioner magazine is also published online on the national website - <https://www.cspa.co.uk> - if you want to look at previous issues.

If you believe CSPA can do things differently/better, locally, and/or nationally, please don’t hesitate to tell us.