Institute and Faculty of Actuaries

Engaging with and supporting regional communities

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Welcome to your toolkit

This toolkit has been created for established regional communities to highlight all the materials and information that is available in one place, for ease of access. Also to share top tips provided by some of the regional communities, to help guide member led groups organising regional member events.

Visit the **Institute and Faculty of Actuaries' (IFoA's) website** for information about where the regional communities are based.

What is a regional community?

A regional community is a group of members who have come together either virtually or in person and who have a common interest in providing a regional or cultural hub for actuarial development, both professionally and socially, with the support and encouragement of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

1 Engaging with and supporting regional communities

1.1 Your IFoA Executive contact

Your IFoA Executive contact is Kirstie Smith, Senior Stakeholder Relationship Manager.

Email: Kirstie.Smith@actuaries.org.uk

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 268 212

Kirstie will be happy to help you with any queries you might have, and will be able to connect you with the right people around the organisation.

Get in touch with Kirstie if you would like to discuss any aspect of your regional community.

We recommend that each regional community appoints at least one member of their committee to act as a Regional Community Representative (RCR) and to be the liaison point for effective communication between your community and the IFoA.

These individuals will be appointed as an IFoA volunteer and will be invited to participate in the following:

- two way open communication direct to the IFoA
- monthly engagement meetings to share best practice
- subsidy entitlement and associated guidance
- enhancing the online toolkit
- providing updates to your IFoA website page.
- This support is all managed by Kirstie Smith.

1.1.1 Monthly engagement meetings

All RCRs will be invited to join a monthly video conference discussion.

These meetings are the perfect opportunity to have open discussions with other regional groups to find out what is working well for their members.

1.1.2 Your IFoA regional community webpage

All regional communities have the opportunity to use the IFoA website to advertise information about their group, to help raise awareness and encourage members to get involved.

Your webpage is an ideal way to link existing and potential new members to the variety of ways you choose to communicate with your members. We have created a form to help you update your webpage information.

Download the webpage template

If you prefer a Word version of the above document, please contact **Kirstie Smith.**

1.1.3 Finding additional support

When you need to recruit additional, or replacement, committee members the IFoA will be delighted to support you.

We can advertise your vacancy on the volunteer vacancies page of the IFoA website. By promoting your vacancy in this way, it will allow you to reach out to a wider audience and you can also share the advert with your regional community membership.

If you would like to find out more, please contact **Debbie Atkins**, Head of Engagement. Debbie will be pleased to discuss this with you and she can draft an advert for you to approve.

View the Volunteer Vacancies webpage to see how we advertise vacancies

1.2 Online resources - content to use at your events

The IFoA has an excellent range of online materials available, which you can use to run your own regional events.

This gives you access to excellent content without having to source a speaker.

Accessing the online material has been a useful resource for regional communities, with many using the content to hold CPD events, particularly for professional skills events.

1.2.1 Video and audio resources

You will find the wide range of video and audio recordings (with new content regularly added) by following the links below:

View the online learning resources - video and audio

View the Professional Skills for experienced members

If you have concerns about streaming content, please contact **Jennie Smart,** who will be able to provide you with a download.

David Storman Treasurer for the Norwich Actuarial Society says:

We have found it particularly useful to be able to watch the on-demand content from the IFoA conference plenaries, as not all members can attend the conferences. This keeps us up to date with current topics, and keeps the cost down as we only need to pay one fee for a group viewing (for those that are not free).

1.2.2 Professional Skills Toolkit

The IFoA have developed a toolkit to help guide you in running your own professional skills events. This toolkit is packed full of suggestions and guidance for using the online material. You'll find things like:

- suggested course outline
- links to video content

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- discussion points
- how to get a discussion started
- quizzes
- vignettes.

Please email the **Professional Skills team** if you would like to receive the most recent version.

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1.3 The annual IFoA member subsidy

As part of the on-going support that the IFoA provides to the regional communities, each recognised member led group is entitled to claim a £5 subsidy per IFoA member per year.

The subsidy is available to regional communities in their capacity as an actuarial community for the purposes of creating educational events and other activities in line with the IFoA's **Royal Charter objectives**.

NB: Purely social activities are specifically excluded from activities for which the subsidy can be used.

1.3.1 Who qualifies for the subsidy?

Only IFoA members with an active membership status will be counted towards the annual entitlement for each regional community.

1.3.2 What does the member need to do?

Members can nominate the regional community they are engaged with, by logging into their IFoA online account, and selecting from the drop down menu on the 'Contact Preferences' page.

You might want to send a member's guidance note out to your members to remind them to select your group.

Download a member's guidance note, which might be helpful

If you prefer a Word version of the above document, please contact **Kirstie Smith.**

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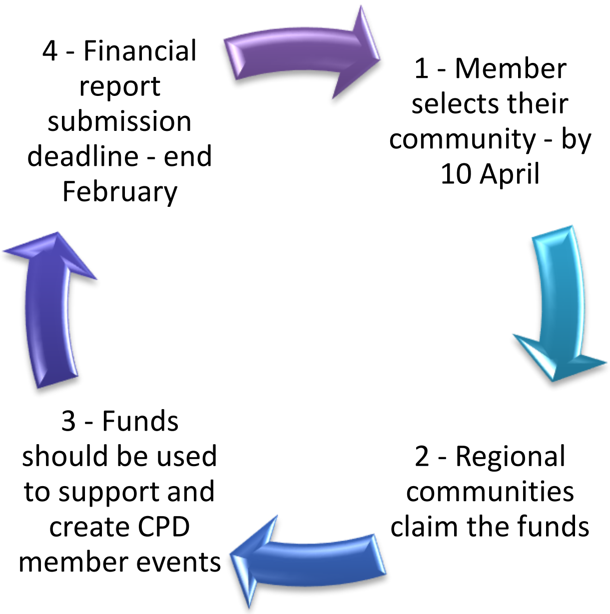
1.3.3 How does it work?

All recognised regional communities are entitled to claim the subsidy of £5 per head, per IFoA member. The below cycle represents the annual deadlines.



Below is a breakdown of each stage in the annual cycle.

Stage 1 - Member selects their Community - by 10 April

- members are required to select the regional community that they are actively engaged with, by the annual cut-off date of 10 April
- this selection can be changed at any time by the member, but will only be counted towards the subsidy entitlement at the annual cut-off date.

Stage 2 - Regional communities claim the funds

- following the annual cut-off date regional communities will receive an email confirming the entitlement amount for that year
- regional communities must use the claim form to request subsidy funds
- the funds will be transferred to a bank account, which has been set up in the name of the regional community*.

Download the template subsidy claim form

If you prefer a Word version of the above document, please contact **Kirstie Smith.**

NB: Funds will not be paid into a private bank account, and claims will not be processed until all requirements have been met from the previous year.

*If you do not have a bank account, please get in touch with **Kirstie Smith** to discuss a solution for your group.

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Stage 3 - Funds should be used to support and create CPD member events

Subsidy funds must only be used for the following purposes, which must be linked to running a CPD content member event:

- event speaker costs (travel and accommodation expenses)
- hire of a room to host a technical or Professional Skills CPD content event
- refreshments at an above described event (which can include alcoholic beverages)
- merchandise or promotion of an above described event

Regional communities must retain original receipts and keep records of their expenditure, and are required to submit a financial report by the end of February each year.

Stage 4 - Financial report submission deadline - end of February

- all regional communities that have received subsidy funds from the IFoA are required to submit an end of year financial record, accompanied by original receipts for expenditure

- any funds that have not been used in the year they were claimed, will automatically be deducted from the subsequent year's entitlement.

Download a financial report template, which you might want to use.

If you prefer a Word version of the above document, please contact **Kirstie Smith.**

NB: in the first year following the introduction of the subsidy (March 2017 - February 2018) the IFoA allowed the subsidy funds to be carried over and used in the following year (March 2018 - February 2019). This was the only exception to the above rule and will not be repeated going forward.

Mayank Goyal from the Actuarial Club of India says:

We used the IFoA subsidy money to pay for our speaker's travel and accommodation, to ensure we had a good speaker for the topic, as he was already giving up his time at the weekend to offer the talk.

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2 Information and knowledge sharing

2.1 Running your regional events

When you are planning your events, you might find the below information useful when thinking about the Who, What, Where and When.

2.1.1 Choosing a topic

You might want to think about using some of the material available online via the 'My Learning Environment', which you can access by logging in as a member through the IFoA website.

See section 1.2 for quick links to the IFoA's catalogue of online material.

Use the links below to visit the IFoA webpages and find out more about the research working parties, to give you inspiration for topics of interest to your members:

- **Finance and Investment**
- **General Insurance**
- **Health and Care**
- **Life**
- **Pensions**
- **Research and Environment**
- **Risk Management**
- **Cross practice work**

If any topics are of particular interest, please get in touch with **Kirstie Smith,** who will be happy to connect you with the right people in the organisation to find out what's available for regional communities.

Also take a look at our **Lifelong Learning website pages**, where you'll find information on hot topics like data science that might also be of interest to your members.

2.1.2 Sourcing a speaker

We now have 40 active regional communities based around the world, with some groups organising multiple CPD events each month, so you might want to think about reaching out to other regional contacts at the monthly engagement VC/call. This would be a good opportunity to find out what other groups are organising.

Working parties

Once the working parties have finalised the material they work on throughout the year, and disseminated the outputs, they may also be able to present talks to regional communities.

Click on the practice area links in the bullet list above (under choosing a topic) to find out what the working parties are working on right now.

It may be more realistic for these talks to be delivered via video conference rather than in person, depending on the logistics of your group.

Stacey Wilen Honorary Secretary of Channel Islands Actuarial Society (CIAA) says:

We've used the [Professional Skills] toolkit to run a few of our CPD member events, it's got some great content that our members have really enjoyed, so I would recommend using it, especially if you're struggling to get a speaker for an event.

2.1.3 Useful reference materials

Actuarial Knowledge Hub

You might find the information available in the IFoA's knowledge hub, or via the library services, helpful for planning the topics you would like to cover at your events.

The Actuarial Knowledge Hub is a gateway to Journals, papers and eBooks at the cutting edge of actuarial research. IFoA members can **log in using their IFoA website credentials**.

The IFoA also supports the research process by providing members with access to an extensive range of **Library Services.**

2.1.4 Event venues

The delivery methods of holding events are changing. Some groups hold events virtually, while others use the offices of their employers. Here are some examples of how some groups are delivering events:

Rishi Bhatia from the Network of Consulting Actuaries (NoCA) says:

We hold all our monthly CPD events via a teleconferencing facility, as it cuts out expenses and travel time for members, which seems to work well as we typically get around 200 members joining our calls.

Karen Ritchie from the Yorkshire Actuarial Society (YAS) says:

YAS are very fortunate in that we hold our events in the offices of large firms within the area, some of which can hold up to 100 people, and so we've not yet had to pay out for venue hire. However we are considering whether to use some of our subsidy money to book a larger venue for our annual event as these 'mini-conferences' are very popular, and attendance is increasing year on year. We are also now using the money to subsidise travel of some of our guest speakers to enable us to reach a broader range of presenters in areas outside of our county.

2.1.5 Member attendance or online participation confirmation

With 10% of members being selected at random annually, for audit by the IFoA Membership team, selected members will be required to provide evidence of participation in activities that they have recorded in their online CPD record, to meet their minimum CPD requirement.

Regional communities usually provide sign-in sheets at events, which are then scanned and sent direct to the **Membership team,** who hold the information securely for audit referencing purposes.

Download a template sign-in sheet you might find useful.

In addition to the sign-in sheets the IFoA has also produced a CPD event/online participation confirmation form, which may be used by members to obtain signed verification from another member to confirm attendance/participation.

Following feedback from regional committee members, this form has been created to:

- give members the means to obtain written evidence of viewing online material when viewed in a group (as they may not be the member signed in and automatically recorded)
- put the member in control of retaining their own evidence records, should they be selected for audit
- provide regional communities with a solution, to pass on to members attending regional events.

Download the CPD attendance/online participation confirmation form

If you prefer a Word version of the above document, please contact **Kirstie Smith.**

2.1.6 Timing of the event

You will never be able to please everyone, but it can be useful to understand what your members prefer when it comes to the time you hold your events.

You might also want to think about your student members, as they may be studying or planning to sit an exam at certain times in the year.

Here are some shared experiences from a couple of groups, to give you an idea of what is working well for them and why:

Evening events with networking

Vicky Proctor of the North West Actuarial Society (NWAS) says:

Most of our members stay on for social and professional networking after our events, with drinks and nibbles, so we typically have our events in the evening.

Teleconferences at lunchtime

Rishi Bhatia from the Network of Consulting Actuaries (NoCA) says:

We hold all our monthly teleconferences at lunchtime, which has proved most popular with our members, as it is the least disruptive time to the working day. We typically get around 200 members joining our calls, so it's clearly working well for people.

2.1.7 Managing your bookings

Once your members have expressed an interest in attending your events, you might want to think about how they can make changes and be kept informed of the information they need in order to attend.

Here are some approaches to this that are working very successfully for some groups:

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Having a website with registration functionality

Sarah Dawes from the Faculty of Actuaries Student Society (FASS) says:

Our executive committee oversees the running of sub-committees specialising individually in CPD events; Social events; and Communications. This allows us to stay coordinated and efficient in organising our regional member events, whilst maintaining enough volunteers to share the work load and bring new ideas and resources needed for a community our size. We always have volunteers from the committees to act as a venue contacts to ensure all our requirements are met. Our website allows our members to register for events, which makes the admin easier to manage.

Using a free online event booking tool

Chris Reynolds, the past president of the Zurich Actuarial Society, discovered a free online tool (Eventbrite) to help manage their events. Chris says:

It only took about 10 mins to set up a free account, and seems to be really easy to use. You can upload a logo too, I would recommend trying it out.

View the quick start guide to see if this could work for you

Having a committee role for an Events Organiser

Samantha Milligan of the Society of Northern Ireland Actuaries (SoNIA) says:

"I am new to the role of Events Organiser on the SoNIA committee, and learning how SoNIA have traditionally organised their events, but also thinking of new ways to improve the process. I want to look into using free online tools that can help me manage this, but currently the kind of tasks I cover are:

Prior to the event

- *being or organising a contact for bookings*
- *ensure bookings are recorded securely*
- *print copies of sign in sheets*
- *manage cancellations and no shows*
- *email attendees details of the event.*

On the Day

- *organise someone to greet members on arrival*
- *directions or signpost to the session.*

Following the event

- *email a scanned copy of sign in sheets to* **membership@actuaries.org.uk**

You might want to email attendees thanking them for attending and asking for feedback. However, remember the importance of adhering to all relevant data protection requirements.

Please view the IFoA website for guidance on the new UK Data Protection Act and the GDPR

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2.2 Communicating with the members of your regional community

You will know what works best for you and your members, but if you are interested in finding out what is working well for other groups, you might want to think about raising this as a topic for discussion at the monthly engagement meeting.

Contact **Kirstie Smith** to raise any topics for group discussion.

Here are some examples of what other groups are doing:

Using a central newsletter system

Vicky Proctor from North West Actuarial Society (NWAS) says:

We use a central newsletter system to contact our members about upcoming events. This also has our GDPR information and an 'opt out' option for recipients, to make sure we are compliant with the regulations.

Using a free online tool to manage compliance responsibilities

Nick Foster from the Leicester Actuarial Student Society (LASS) shared his experience in one of the monthly engagement meetings:

*I use a spreadsheet to hold our members contact details, so used a free online tool called 'Mail Chimp' to manage my compliance responsibilities, as they have a step by step guide to being GDPR compliant. (You can find this information **here.**)*