

# Engagement Policy Implementation Statement (“EPIS”)

## The Eaton-Williams Group Pension and Assurance Scheme (the “Scheme”)

Scheme Year End – 31 December 2023

The purpose of the EPIS is for us, the Trustees of the Eaton-Williams Group Pension and Assurance Scheme, to explain what we have done during the year ending 31 December 2023 to achieve certain policies and objectives set out in the Statement of Investment Principles (“SIP”). It includes:

1. How our policies in the SIP about asset stewardship (including both voting and engagement activity) in relation to the Scheme’s investments have been followed during the year; and
2. How we have exercised our voting rights or how these rights have been exercised on our behalf, including the use of any proxy voting advisory services, and the ‘most significant’ votes cast over the reporting year.

### Our conclusion

**Based on the activity we have undertaken during the year, we believe that the policies set out in the SIP have been implemented effectively.**

In our view, most of the Scheme’s underlying investment managers (chosen by Aon as our fiduciary manager) were able to disclose adequate evidence of voting and/or engagement activity. We believe that the engagement activity carried out by Aon as our fiduciary manager aligns with our stewardship priorities and that our voting rights have been implemented effectively on our behalf.

## How voting and engagement policies have been followed

The Scheme is invested in pooled funds, and so the responsibility for voting and engagement is delegated to the Scheme's investment managers, which is in line with the policies set out in our SIP. We reviewed the stewardship activity of the material underlying investment managers carried out over the Scheme year and in our view, most of the underlying investment managers were able to disclose adequate evidence of voting and/or engagement activity. More information on the stewardship activity carried out by the Scheme's investment managers can be found in the following sections of this report.

Over the reporting year, we monitored the performance of the Scheme's investments on a quarterly basis and received updates on important issues from our investment adviser, Aon. In particular, we received quarterly ESG ratings from Aon for the funds the Scheme is invested in where available.

During the year, we received training on stewardship regulations and guidance, and agreed our policies in relation to these to be included in Statement of Investment Principles.

Each year, we review the voting and engagement policies of the Scheme's underlying investment managers to ensure they align with our own policies for the Scheme and help us to achieve them.

The Scheme's stewardship policy can be found in the SIP:  
<https://eatonwilliams.com/pdf/SIP.pdf>

## Our Engagement Action Plan

Based on the work we have done for the EPIS, we have decided to take the following steps over the next 12 months:

1. While LGIM did provide a comprehensive list on fund level engagements, which we find encouraging, it did not provide detailed engagement examples specific to the fund in which we are invested, as per the Investment Consultants Sustainability Working Group ("ICSWG") best practice industry standard, and also did not provide overall firm level engagement information. Our fiduciary manager will continue to engage with LGIM to encourage improvements in its engagement reporting.
2. We will invite our fiduciary manager to a meeting to get a better understanding of how it is monitoring voting practices and engaging with underlying managers on our behalf, and how these help us fulfil our Responsible Investment policies.

### What is stewardship?

Stewardship is investors using their influence over current or potential investees/issuers, policy makers, service providers and other stakeholders to create long-term value for clients and beneficiaries leading to sustainable benefits for the economy, the environment and society.

This includes prioritising which Environmental Social Governance ("ESG") issues to focus on, engaging with investees/issuers, and exercising voting rights.

Differing ownership structures means stewardship practices often differ between asset classes.

*Source: UN PRI*

## Our fiduciary manager's engagement activity

We delegate the management of the Scheme's defined benefit assets to our fiduciary manager, Aon. Aon manages the Scheme's assets in a range of funds which can include multi-asset, multi-manager and liability matching funds. Aon selects the underlying investment managers on our behalf.

We delegate monitoring of ESG integration and stewardship of the underlying managers to Aon. We have reviewed Aon's 2022 annual Stewardship Report and we believe it shows that Aon is using its resources to effectively influence positive outcomes in the funds in which it invests.

Over the year, Aon held several engagement meetings with many of the underlying managers in its strategies. Aon discussed ESG integration, stewardship, climate, biodiversity and modern slavery with the investment managers. Aon provided feedback to the managers after these meetings with the aim of improving the standard of ESG integration across its portfolios.

Over the year, Aon engaged with the industry through white papers, working groups, webinars and network events, as well as responding to multiple consultations.

In 2021, Aon committed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, with a 50% reduction by 2030 for its fully delegated clients' portfolios and defined contribution default strategies (relative to baseline year of 2019).

Aon also successfully renewed its signatory status to the 2020 UK Stewardship Code, a set of high stewardship standards for asset owners and asset managers which is maintained and assessed by the Financial Reporting Council.

### What is fiduciary management?

Fiduciary management is the delegation of some, or all, of the day-to-day investment decisions and implementation to a fiduciary manager. But the trustees still retain responsibility for setting the high-level investment strategy.

In fiduciary management arrangements, the trustees will often delegate monitoring ESG integration and asset stewardship to its fiduciary manager.

## Our managers' voting activity

Good asset stewardship means being aware and active on voting issues, corporate actions and other responsibilities tied to owning a company's stock. We believe that good stewardship is in the members' best interests to promote best practice and encourage investee companies to access opportunities, manage risk appropriately, and protect shareholders' interests. Understanding and monitoring the stewardship that investment managers practice in relation to the Scheme's investments is an important factor in deciding whether an investment manager remains the right choice for the Scheme.

Voting rights are attached to listed equity shares, including equities held in multi-asset funds. We expect the Scheme's equity-owning investment managers to responsibly exercise their voting rights.

### Voting statistics

The table below shows the voting statistics for the Scheme's material funds with voting rights for the year to 31-Dec-2023. Please note the Scheme has now disinvested from the BlackRock Emerging Markets Equity Fund. However, information relating to this Fund has still been included within this Statement as the Fund was still material over the Scheme year.

<b>Funds</b>	<b>Number of resolutions eligible to vote on</b>	<b>% of resolutions voted</b>	<b>% of votes against management</b>	<b>% of votes abstained from</b>
BlackRock – Emerging Markets Equity Fund	23,247	98.7%	9.6%	2.8%
Legal & General Investment Management ("LGIM") – Multi-Factor Equity Fund	12,217	99.9%	21.3%	0.1%

*Source: Managers. Please note that the 'abstain' votes noted above are a specific category of vote that has been cast, and are distinct from a non-vote.*

### Use of proxy voting advisers

Many investment managers use proxy voting advisers to help them fulfil their stewardship duties. Proxy voting advisers provide recommendations to institutional investors on how to vote at shareholder meetings on issues such as climate change, executive pay and board composition. They can also provide voting execution, research, record keeping and other services.

Responsible investors will dedicate time and resources towards making their own informed decisions, rather than solely relying on their adviser's recommendations.

The table below describes how the Scheme's investment managers use proxy voting advisers.

### Why is voting important?

Voting is an essential tool for listed equity investors to communicate their views to a company and input into key business decisions. Resolutions proposed by shareholders increasingly relate to social and environmental issues.

*Source: UN PRI*

### Why use a proxy voting adviser?

Outsourcing voting activities to proxy advisers enables managers that invest in thousands of companies to participate in many more votes than they would without their support.

Managers	Description of use of proxy voting adviser(s) <i>(in the managers' own words)</i>
BlackRock	We use Institutional Shareholder Services' (ISS) electronic platform to execute our vote instructions, manage client accounts in relation to voting and facilitate client reporting on voting. In certain markets, we work with proxy research firms who apply our proxy voting guidelines to filter out routine or non-contentious proposals and refer to us any meetings where additional research and possibly engagement might be required to inform our voting decision.
LGIM	LGIM's Investment Stewardship team uses ISS's 'ProxyExchange' electronic voting platform to electronically vote clients' shares. All voting decisions are made by LGIM and we do not outsource any part of the strategic decisions. To ensure our proxy provider votes in accordance with our position on ESG, we have put in place a custom voting policy with specific voting instructions.

Source: Managers

### Significant voting examples

To illustrate the voting activity being carried out on our behalf, we asked the Scheme's investment managers to provide a selection of what they consider to be the most significant votes in relation to the Scheme's funds. A sample of these significant votes can be found in the appendix.

## Our managers' engagement activity

Engagement is when an investor communicates with current (or potential) investee companies (or issuers) to improve their ESG practices, sustainability outcomes or public disclosure. Good engagement identifies relevant ESG issues, sets objectives, tracks results, maps escalation strategies and incorporates findings into investment decision-making.

The table below shows some of the engagement activity carried out by the Scheme's material investment managers. The investment managers have provided information for the most recent calendar year available.

Please note the Scheme has now disinvested from the BlackRock Emerging Markets Equity Fund. However, information relating to this Fund has still been included within this Statement as the Fund was still material over the Scheme year end.

Funds	Number of engagements		Themes engaged on at a fund level
	Fund level	Firm level	
Aberdeen ("Abrdn") – Climate Transition Bond Fund	101	2,008	Other - Climate; Environment; Corporate Governance; Labour Management; Corporate Behaviour
Aegon Asset Management ("Aegon") – European Asset Backed Securities (ABS) Fund	127	528	Environment - Climate Change Governance - Brd Eff. - Diversity; Leadership - Chair/CEO; Remuneration Other - General Disclosure
BlackRock – Emerging Markets Equity Fund	396	<i>Not provided</i>	Environment - Climate Risk Management Governance - Corporate Strategy; Board Composition & Eff.; Business Oversight; Remuneration
LGIM – Multi-Factor Equity Fund	296	<i>Not provided</i>	Environment - Climate Impact Pledge; Climate Change Social - Gender Diversity Governance - Remuneration; Board Composition
Robeco – SDG Credit Income Fund	17	319	Environment - Climate Change; Natural Resource Use/Impact Social - Human and Labour Rights Governance - Brd Eff. - Other Other - SDG Engagement

Source: Managers. Brd Eff. refers to Board Effectiveness.

## Data limitations

At the time of writing, LGIM and BlackRock did provide fund level engagement information but not in the industry standard Investment Consultants Sustainability Working Group ("ICSWG") template. Additionally, the investment managers did not provide any firm level engagement information.

As the Scheme has now disinvested from BlackRock no further engagement with the manager will occur hence BlackRock has not been included within our Engagement Action Plan.

This report does not include commentary on certain asset classes such as liability driven investments, gilts or cash because of the limited materiality of stewardship to these asset classes. Further, this report does not include the additional voluntary contributions ("AVCs") due to the relatively small proportion of the Scheme's assets that are held as AVCs.

## Appendix – Significant Voting Examples

In the table below are some significant vote examples provided by the Scheme’s investment managers. We consider a significant vote to be one which the investment manager considers significant. Investment managers use a wide variety of criteria to determine what they consider a significant vote, some of which are outlined in the examples below in their own words:

<b>BlackRock – Emerging Markets Equity Fund</b>	<b>Company name</b>	Banco de Chile SA
	<b>Date of vote</b>	23-Mar-2023
	<b>Approximate size of fund's/mandate's holding as at the date of the vote (as % of portfolio)</b>	<i>Not provided</i>
	<b>Summary of the resolution</b>	Elect Francisco Perez Mackenna as Director
	<b>How you voted?</b>	Votes against resolution
	<b>Where you voted against management, did you communicate your intent to the company ahead of the vote?</b>	We endeavour to communicate to companies when we intend to vote against management, either before or just after casting votes in advance of the shareholder meeting. We publish our voting guidelines to help clients and companies understand our thinking on key governance matters that are commonly put to a shareholder vote. They are the benchmark against which we assess a company’s approach to corporate governance and the items on the agenda to be voted on at the shareholder meeting. We apply our guidelines pragmatically, taking into account a company’s unique circumstances where relevant. Our voting decisions reflect our analysis of company disclosures, third party research and, where relevant, insights from recent and past company engagement and our active investment colleagues.
	<b>Rationale for the voting decision</b>	Nominee serves on an excessive number of public company boards, which we believe raises substantial concerns about the director’s ability to exercise sufficient oversight on this board.
	<b>Outcome of the vote</b>	Pass
	<b>Implications of the outcome eg were there any lessons learned and what likely future steps will you take in response to the outcome?</b>	BlackRock’s approach to corporate governance and stewardship is explained in our Global Principles. Our Global Principles describe our philosophy on stewardship, including how we monitor and engage with companies. These high-level principles are the framework for our more detailed, market-specific voting guidelines. We do not see engagement as one conversation. We have ongoing direct dialogue with companies to explain our views and how we evaluate their actions on relevant ESG issues over time. Where we have concerns that are not addressed by these conversations, we may vote against management for their action or inaction. Where concerns are raised either through voting or during engagement, we monitor developments and assess whether the company has addressed our concerns.
	<b>On which criteria have you assessed this vote to be most significant?</b>	<i>Not provided</i>

<b>LGIM – Multi-Factor Equity Fund</b>	<b>Company name</b>	Alphabet Inc.
	<b>Date of vote</b>	02-Jun-2023
	<b>Approximate size of fund's/mandate's holding as at the date of the vote (as % of portfolio)</b>	0.7
	<b>Summary of the resolution</b>	Resolution 18 - Approve Recapitalization Plan for all Stock to Have One-vote per Share
	<b>How you voted?</b>	Votes supporting resolution
	<b>Where you voted against management, did you communicate your intent to the company ahead of the vote?</b>	LGIM publicly communicates its vote instructions on its website the day after the company meeting, with a rationale for all votes against management. It is our policy not to engage with our investee companies in the three weeks prior to an AGM as our engagement is not limited to shareholder meeting topics.
	<b>Rationale for the voting decision</b>	Shareholder Resolution - Shareholder rights: A vote in favour is applied as LGIM expects companies to apply a one-share-one-vote standard.
	<b>Outcome of the vote</b>	Fail
	<b>Implications of the outcome eg were there any lessons learned and what likely future steps will you take in response to the outcome?</b>	LGIM will continue to monitor the board's response to the relatively high level of support received for this resolution.
<b>On which criteria have you assessed this vote to be most significant?</b>	High profile meeting: This shareholder resolution is considered significant due to the relatively high level of support received.	

Source: Managers