

"Empowering Change"

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This blog by Karen Shackleton is part of a weekly series from the Pensions for Purpose team.

Last week I attended DG Publishing's [DC Summit Live](#), a virtual online event that was well attended with over 100 participants. I was speaking on a panel discussion on impact investment with Jamie Broderick, Evita Zanuso and John Ditchfield. The discussion was wide ranging, from the type of impact investments that DC funds can consider, to reasons why some DC funds had not yet considered intentional, purposeful investment approaches.

One of the interesting discussions was around member engagement. The [Make My Money Matter](#) campaign is targeting members and encouraging them to approach their pension fund to find out what investments are being considered, and then asking them to switch to a more sustainable investment approach. I made the point that DC providers should anticipate a wave of enquiries over coming months. By being proactive, they have the potential to engage in a positive way with their members.

This point was reinforced over the weekend by a question posed by my niece (repeated here with her permission). My niece is an articulate, highly intelligent 30-year-old working in the museum sector. She is passionate about climate change and social disadvantage and wants to live her life knowing she has done all she can personally to align with her beliefs. Yet she knows little about her pension fund other than the fact that Nest is her provider. This was why she asked me how she could ensure that her investments were more sustainable, having a positive contribution on society and the world.

First of all, I reassured her that Nest were one of the leaders in this space. I had heard Mark Rowlands of Nest speaking about their platform and how they were continuing to develop their focus on ESG, sustainable and impact investment. I encouraged her to approach them for more information.



But this discussion led me to think: DC funds could do so much more by engaging positively with their members to explain HOW they can become more aligned with their sustainable investment beliefs. That might mean explaining how they are changing their default fund to take environmental, social and governance risks into account. Or it might mean explaining the range of sustainable and impact self-select funds that are on offer, and how an individual member can go about changing their investments into those funds. As my niece put it: "I'd love my pension fund to empower me to change how I invest".

So my question to the DC providers is: how are you engaging with members on this topic? I'd love you to share examples of best practice so that others can learn – Pensions for Purpose has a [case study](#) section on our platform and we would love to share examples so that others could learn from you. I'd still like to hear from you, even if you would prefer to remain anonymous at this stage.

Please, let us all consider how we can empower change to those in their twenties and thirties who will be contributing to their pension funds for many years to come. My niece, and others like her, will be extremely grateful.

Karen Shackleton

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