



Work/life balance

➤ **Legal & General (L&G) global head of defined contribution (DC), Lesley-Ann Morgan, sits down with *Pensions Age* to discuss her time at British Aerospace before starting in pensions, her sewing projects and a typical week in her life**

Work:

➤ **What was your dream job as a child?**

When I was very young, I wanted to be a TV presenter on *Blue Peter* because I love making things, travelling, meeting interesting people and talking about it. By the time I was 15 or 16 and had to pick somewhere to do a week's work experience, I had decided I wanted to be an actuary, so I went to a local insurance company and was hooked.

➤ **Do you have any unusual job experience outside of working in the industry?**

Despite the early plan to be an actuary, I was sponsored through university by British Aerospace, where I spent every holiday from university working in various divisions. Most unusual was working alongside the teams making the Airbus wings – I was terrified of the huge acid tanks where the wings are dipped.

➤ **How did you end up working in the pensions sector?**

After British Aerospace, I moved to Australia with little intention of coming back to the UK. But I did come back (with a slightly Aussie accent) and went to train as an actuary with Watsons.

➤ **What path did your pensions career take, that led you to your current role?**

Within a few months of starting at Watsons, all the new graduates were told that they had to choose an office to move to. I researched all the departments and realised that investment was my natural home. Thankfully (with a bit of behind-the-scenes navigation), I landed the role in the investment consulting team. I have been involved in pension investing for 33 years.

➤ **What's one thing about your job that you particularly enjoy or are proud of?**

Two things: I love working with clients

to help solve their investment problems alongside my creative L&G colleagues, and second (going back to that early desire to be a TV presenter) doing vodcasts for L&G.

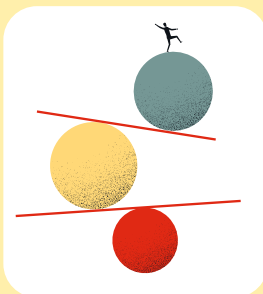
➤ **If you weren't working in pensions now, what would you be doing?**

I worked in a dive school in Thailand many years ago. I loved the diving but not the monotony of teaching students the same techniques every few days when a new class came through. I would probably be scuba diving somewhere exotic, most likely volunteering on a marine conservation project.



➤ **What's the best piece of career wisdom you've been told, or acquired yourself?**

From *The Squiggly Career*: "Challenge your limits, don't limit your challenges" and "there is no such thing as a straight line to success".



➤ **Monday**

I start the day running through activity for the week ahead with my teams, which will likely include meetings with consultants and trustees (including the master trust), new business pitches and seeing existing clients to discuss all aspects of our DC investments.

The defaults are often a focus – these include a wide array of impactful assets such as affordable housing and clean energy, making a tangible contribution to the UK economy.

➤ **Tuesday**

I spend at least one day of the week with our clients to understand their needs and what matters for the members, ensuring our offering aligns with what they expect from their pensions manager. That might be in 1-2-1 meetings or attending a conference.

➤ **Wednesday**

Expanding L&G's DC offering beyond the strong base we have in the UK is a priority for me, and this will often involve meeting with potential clients and industry stakeholders in new markets overseas. I'm currently preparing for a trip to Asia and Australia, where I'll meet with pensions leaders,

Life:



➤ What do you like to do in your spare time? Any hobbies?

When at home I love to make clothes, spend time with my family and dog, and playing pickleball. When I am on holiday, I love scuba diving, travelling to new places.

➤ If you had to choose one favourite book, which would you recommend people read?

I read a lot of books so it's hard to put my finger on one. My taste is quite varied – I love Thomas Hardy (I grew up in the West Country), murder mysteries, comedy, satire, romance, contemporary. I often have a 'worky' book and a fiction on the go at the same time. I just finished *Die with Zero* and I am currently reading *Remarkably Bright Creatures*.

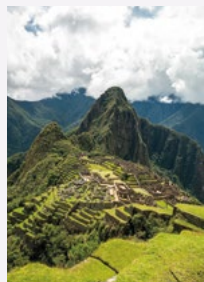
➤ What film/boxset do you most enjoy?

Despite not loving football, I loved *Ted Lasso*. I love Ted's genuine care for others, Hannah Waddingham (as Rebecca) for being a resilient female

boss with authentic support for Ted, and the overall sense of personal growth that runs through the series.

➤ Do you have any music/band/song suggestions?

My desert island discs playlist on Spotify is long. Picking one song is really difficult. It would have to be one from INXS's *Kick* album (one of the best albums ever) – probably *Never tear us apart*, *Need you tonight* or *Devil inside*. It evokes memories of starting a new 'grown up' life at sixth form college.



➤ What's one of the most interesting places you've travelled to?

I dragged my children to lots of countries when they were small, so it would have to be Machu Picchu.

➤ What's your go-to comfort food?

Cauliflower cheese.

➤ Who would be your dream dinner party guests?

It's a cliché, but George and Amal Clooney.

➤ If you could meet any historical figure, who would it be and why?

Thomas Cromwell. He was a brilliant politician and was massively influential in the transformation of England's religious and political landscape over many years. But he was complicated – spurred on by money and power, he was both corrupt and brilliant. And how ironic that his ultimate downfall came because he picked an unsuitable bride for Henry VIII.



➤ Do you have a favourite quote or saying?

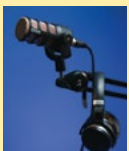
Michelle Obama provides so many quotes that resonate with me. If

I was to pick one, it would be: "When you've worked hard, and done well, and walked through that doorway of opportunity, you do not slam it shut behind you. You reach back, and you give others the same chances that helped you succeed".

➤ Finally, what's the most random fact you know?

Heard recently on Professor Hannah Fry's podcast, *The Rest is Science*: "There are more raindrops in clouds than data in the cloud". Probably by a factor of about 1,000 times.

sharing lessons from the UK and learning what we might apply in the UK. We'll also discuss how we can help them solve the issues they are facing in their DC markets.



➤ Thursday

Communicating what we do to our audiences is an important part of the job, and I enjoy demystifying pensions for the savers we ultimately serve. This will involve creating

video content (I am the host of our vodcast called *DC Close Up*), overseeing research, and speaking to government, regulators, media and industry partners.

➤ Friday

I'll typically spend Fridays reading research, thinking about

our longer-term investment strategy and reviewing papers. I'll also review progress with overseas target prospects by providing support on product innovation. Friday night is exercise night – two hours of pickleball with my husband at our local sports centre.

➤ Saturday

My husband loves to windsurf so if it's a windy day, we spend it at the beach with our dog.

➤ Sunday

I always have a sewing project on the go – so I'll spend a few hours on this (I love making an original garment and sewing is also great for your mental health). Inevitably I'll do some work to prepare for the busy week ahead.