

# Communications Policy

## Introduction

This document has been produced in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (Regulation 61). These require authorities that administer the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to prepare, maintain and publish a Statement of Policy concerning communications with members, representatives of members, prospective members and scheme employers.

The Statement must set out the policy with regard to:

- the provision of information and publicity about the Scheme to members, representatives of members and scheme employers;
- the format, frequency and method of distributing such information or publicity; and
- the promotion of the Scheme to prospective members and their employers.

In fulfilling its role under the legislation the Fund endeavours to ensure that its communications:

- are timely and relevant, easy to read and understand, and are clear and brief
- enable the employee and employer obtain full value from the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Derbyshire Pension Fund's (the "Fund") Communications Policy has been prepared to meet the Fund's objectives about how it communicates with its key stakeholders. The Fund currently has around 150 employers and around 90,000 members.

Your comments on how the Fund communicates with its stakeholders are welcome. If you would like to get in touch with the Fund about the way in which it communicates, please contact us using the details set out later in this document.

This Communications Policy is split into two parts. The first part covers the Communication Policy for the Pensions Administration Team and the second part covers the Communications Policy for the Investments Team. The Pensions Administration Team looks after the records of the Fund's 90,000 members, and calculates and arranges the payment of pension benefits, whereas the Investments Team looks after the Fund Assets, to ensure that there are sufficient funds to meet pension obligations.

## **1. Statement of Policy on Communications – Pensions Administrations**

At its meeting on 9 September 2015 the Pensions and Investment Committee approved the following Communications Policy Statement for the Pension Administration Team.

### **Communications Strategy**

The Pensions Administration Team prepares a communication strategy on an annual basis with progress on delivery being reported back to the Pensions and Investment Committee. The key themes for 2015/16 are as follows:

- a) continuing to communicate the benefits of the scheme amongst stakeholders and potential members, whilst going into greater detail with those Fund members who are approaching and planning their retirement;
- b) establishing a communications framework in collaboration with employers to provide timely, pertinent messages which are meaningful for their employees;
- c) using electronic communications whenever appropriate, as well as continuing to promote the web-pages as the 'hub' for providing communications material and supporting employing authorities with employee processes (e.g. auto-enrolment and switching to and from the new 50/50 scheme);
- d) developing channels for Fund member access and feedback;
- e) monitoring the cost-effectiveness of all communication and developing the Fund's activities accordingly, including taking a pragmatic approach to estimate requests; and
- f) developing our commitment to regional and national initiatives, taking advantage of partnership working and innovative communication methods developed and tested elsewhere, and sharing the Fund's experience in return.

### **Communication with Scheme Members**

The objectives of the Fund's communications with scheme members include: highlighting the benefits of the LGPS, encouraging and retaining membership, allowing members to keep up-to-date with LGPS development, reducing the level of questions and queries and encouraging members to use the website to carry out 'self-service' calculations.

The Fund's employers should provide access to details of the LGPS on appointment within:

- The letter of appointment
- The Membership Information form

A statutory notification of admission to the LGPS is issued by the Administering Authority to all new members within 12 weeks of receiving notification from their employer.

An annual benefit statement is provided by the Administering Authority to all active and deferred scheme members.

The Fund promotes its website which is maintained by the Administering Authority (Derbyshire County Council – [www.derbyshire.gov.uk](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk)) as the principal means of communicating with those who have an interest in the LGPS, including active, deferred members and pensioners. Details of the scheme, access to calculating an estimate of pension entitlement and the Fund's policies are all available. The website also provides links to other related sites such as the LGA and DCLG.

In the case of those who do not have access to the internet or, where paper copies are required, the Fund's Pension Administration Team and the Derbyshire County Council contact centre, Call Derbyshire, can provide booklets and factsheets on request.

In addition to showing changes on the website, any significant scheme changes are notified to scheme members through collaboration with employers. Greater collaboration allows the employers to communicate key messages to members through internal emailing facilities, chief officer messages, pay-slips and e-magazines.

Deferred pensioner members receive an annual benefit statement together with details of any changes insofar as they are affected.

### **Communication with Representatives of Members**

Information on the LGPS is available on the Fund's website to representatives of LGPS members to assist with enquiries from trade unions, Independent Financial Advisors and Solicitors.

### **Communication with Prospective Members**

The objectives of the Fund's communications with prospective members include encouraging membership and ensuring that prospective members have sufficient information to understand the nature of the LGPS.

Prospective members have access to the website and can request a copy of the scheme guide and factsheets.

## **Communication with Scheme Employers**

The objectives of the Fund's communications with scheme members include: improving relationships, ensuring scheme employers are up-to-date with LGPS developments (including their obligations), working together to maintain accurate data, ensuring scheme employers understand the benefits of LGPS and exploring opportunities to reduce costs through greater collaboration.

Scheme employers are informed of changes to the scheme, policies and procedures by an Employers' Newsletter. These are issued as and when required in both electronic and paper format. This is increasingly supported by more regular email alerts to key employer contacts. In addition, information is available to employers on dedicated "employer pages" of the Fund's website, along with the provision of training events as required.

### **Others**

Non-scheme employers are made aware of the provisions of the LGPS by the Fund's website.

## **2. Statement of Policy on Communications - Investments**

At its meeting on 9 September 2015 the Pensions and Investment Committee approved the following Communications Policy Statement for the Investment Team.

It is the Pensions and Investment Committee's policy to provide the Fund's stakeholders, including Scheme Members, Representatives of Members, Prospective Members and Scheme Employers with as much information as possible to understand the investment strategy, funding levels and risk strategy.

This is achieved by the following means:

### **a) Policy documents**

The following investment-related documents are available to the Fund's stakeholders on the Fund's website and in hard copy form (on request):

#### **Statement of Investment Principles**

The Statement of Investment Principles describes the broad principles adopted by the Pensions and Investment Committee in carrying out its duties and how it complies with best practice (Myners' Principles).

## **Pension Fund's Annual Report**

The Committee's Annual Report provides background information relating to investment markets in the previous year, extracts from the Fund's accounts and its performance details over the longer term.

## **Funding Strategy Statement**

The Funding Strategy Statement looks at the Pension Fund's liabilities and how these are to be met over the longer term.

## **b) Pensions and Investment Committee meetings**

Pensions and Investment Committee meetings are held quarterly. The Committee comprises members representing Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Council. Trades Union representatives attend as observers. The meetings are open to members of the public, other than for exempt reports (e.g. those dealing with contractual arrangements). Copies of reports and minutes are available on request and are published on Derbyshire County Council's website.

## **How to contact the Fund**

Telephone the helpline number: 01629 538900

Or write to:  
Pensions Section  
Derbyshire County Council  
County Hall  
Matlock  
Derbyshire  
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