

Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 Regulation 61

Policy Statement on Communications with Scheme Members and Employers

Effective communication between Haringey Council, the scheme members, and the employers within the fund is essential to the proper management of the LGPS on a transparent and accountable basis.

This document sets out a policy framework within which the Council will communicate with :-

- Members of the scheme and their family units.
- Representatives of members
- Employing bodies and
- Prospective members

It identifies the format, frequency and method of distributing information and publicity. It also outlines the processes for promoting the scheme to prospective members and employing bodies.

Members of the scheme:

A. Points of Contacts:

- i. Pension Team for day-to-day contact and visits.
- ii. Ad hoc briefings and workshops
- iii. Harinet
- iv. Pensions Web Page

A pensions page is maintained on Harinet and on the Haringey Web Site which provides:-

- Guides to the LGPS including Pension Sharing on Divorce, Increasing Pension Benefits and the Appeals Process
- Forms which allow members to :-
 - Join or leave the scheme or opt to join the 50/50 scheme.
 - Indicate to the Council how any death grant should be disbursed.
- Policy Statements on the use of the Council's Discretionary Powers, Investment Principles. The Financial Strategy Statement and the Communications Strategy
- Annual Reports and Pensions Bulletins

- Notice of events
- Contact details for the Pensions Team
- Links to other useful sites including the scheme regulations and on-line to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The information held on the Harinet and Pensions Web Pages is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Although the web page mirrors the information held on Harinet, it extends to a wider audience and allows the family unit to access pensions information relevant to them.

B. Levels of Communication:

- i. General day to day administration of the scheme
- ii. Annual payslips and annual newsletter to Pensioner Members
- iii. Statutory notices and statements e.g : individual notices regarding entry to the scheme or hours changes and Annual Benefits Statements .
- iv. Formal notice of significant proposals to change the scheme
- v. Life certificates to Pensioners living abroad.

C. Medium of communication

- i. Telephone and e-mail
- ii. Hard copy dispatches
- iii. Workshops/ Employee Briefings
- iv. Face to face meetings

D. Timing

- i. General policy is to issues statutory notifications and statements within the prescribed limits and to respond to written enquiries within 10 working days.
- ii. An Annual Report on the Fund is published annually.
- iii. Pension Bulletins on items of significance are issued as the need arises.
- iv. The Pensions Newsletter is published in April of each year to coincide with pensions increase awards.
- v. The Deferred Members Newsletter is published each year and coincides with the distribution of the Deferred Members Annual Benefits Statements

We are proposing to introduce a new online feature in 2015 called Member Self Service (MSS). Member Self Service will allow Local Government Pension Scheme members to access their pension records via a secure portal, update certain personal information and perform their own bespoke calculations.

Representatives of members

A. Points of Contact

- i. The Corporate Industrial Relations Group
- ii. Council and Staff Joint Consultative Committee
- iii. Pensions Committee and General Purposes Committee
- iv. Face to face meetings or issues raised in correspondence or by telephone.
- v. Ad hoc presentations to Trade Union Officers and work place representatives.

B. Levels of communication

- i. Consultation on proposed scheme changes and significant policy issues on the use of employer discretions.
- ii. Joint meetings with staff affected by TUPE transfers
- iii. Response to employee complaints or queries via their representatives.
- iv. Semi- formal meetings to brief employee representatives on scheme changes or to explain existing scheme rules.

C. Medium of communication

- i. Telephone and e-mail
- ii. Hard copy dispatches
- iii. Group meetings at Officer level
- iv. Committee meetings at Elected Member level
- v. Face to face meetings

D. Timing

Formal meetings are dictated by pre determined dates. Informal meetings as an when required.

Employers

A. Points of contact:

Day to day contact falls into three categories:-

- i. Pensions Team for day to day administration
- ii. Pay Support (where the Council provides a payroll service)

iii. Finance for FRS 17 disclosure and funding issues.

B. Levels of Communication:

- i. General day to day administration of the scheme
- ii. Formal notification of discussion documents and consultation papers
- iii. Employer briefings on issues affecting the scheme including an Employers Guide to the LGPS
- iv. Pre and post fund valuation meetings.

C. Medium of communication

- i. Telephone and e-mail
- ii. Site visits
- iii. Hard copy dispatches

D. Timing

The general policy is to keep employers informed of issues as they arise or are expected to arise in good time for the appropriate action to be taken or comments considered.

We are proposing to improve the data quality from the employers through the implementation of iconnect which is a system to interface between employer payroll systems and the pension systems and should improve data quality at source.

Prospective Members and promoting the LGPS

- i. All new starters are issued with a leaflet Important Pensions Information as part of their new starter packs. This gives a brief outline of the scheme benefits and the alternative choices available.
- ii. An Annual Benefits Statement are issued yearly. This ensures that members appreciate the value of being a scheme member which they can share with colleagues.
- iii. Promotions of the Additional Voluntary Contributions Scheme are held in conjunction with the Council's AVC providers. These events are open to all staff and act to attract non members to the LGPS.