



Norfolk Pension Fund



Employer Newsletter April 2024

Welcome to our Employer Newsletter

At the start of a new financial year, with everyone's focus on various reconciliation and tidying-up tasks, in this issue we ask for your cooperation in providing us with the timely and regular supply of accurate information. This is essential in ensuring our records are up to date and correct, so that we all meet our mutual LGPS responsibilities. Please help us by:

- Providing timely submission of member leaving and opt out forms
- Checking your employees home address and National Insurance number details are correct
- Sending us your March data submission (and any other months outstanding) via i-Connect by 30 April 2024
- Letting us know as soon as possible of any changes to the Norfolk Pension Fund point of contact at your organisation.

Many thanks for your support - it's appreciated by everyone here at the Fund.

Best wishes,

Glenn Cossey
Director of the Norfolk
Pension Fund



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Important - members leaving the LGPS

Please remember you must complete the Member Leaving Scheme (L45) form for any of your employees who are leaving the LGPS.

This is a requirement for all scheme employers, as stated in the Pension Administration Strategy. The policy requires you to notify the Norfolk Pension Fund of any leavers, retirements, deaths, opt outs within one month of the event and to also provide all relevant paperwork and certificates.

It's also your responsibility to ensure that you, or your payroll provider, complete and return the form to us as soon as possible. Any delay can hold up the processing of a member's retirement benefits or informing the member of their pension options.

We are currently processing a number of cases requiring leaver forms and will be contacting you soon to request outstanding documentation.

Please also bear in mind that in preparation for approaching 2025 Valuation year and the introduction of Pensions Dashboards, we will be completing an ongoing cleansing exercise of member data. The more of your data we can tidy



now, including the processing of leavers, will prevent us chasing you with last minute queries as we get closer to the delivery deadlines.

It is also a requirement of the Pensions Regulator (tPR) for employers and pension schemes to keep records of opt-outs.

To meet this obligation, please send us the Employer Notification of Employee Opting Out (SR88) and Notice to Opt Out of Pension Saving (SR97) forms for any member opting out of the LGPS. Again, this will save us having to contact you to request these.

30 April 2024 data submission deadline

Now we use i-Connect to upload data to your member's records on a monthly basis, we do not need to complete the old year-end exercise.

However, we still need to reconcile pensionable pay and the contributions paid over in the year to finalise the accounts and start preparing data for the member Annual Benefit Statement.

In order to do this we will need you to send us any outstanding submissions, along with your March submission, no later than 30 April 2024.

If your payroll provider carries out this function on your behalf, please ensure that they are aware of this deadline so they can meet this responsibility for you.

Data quality

In accordance with The Pension Regulator we have to review the data we hold for your members and produce an annual report to show our scheme data scores.

Two of the areas we would ask you to check for us are that the member's **home address** and **National Insurance numbers** are correct.

Again, this will be an important aspect of our Member Matching process when we connect to the Pension Dashboards Programme. The earlier this data can be tidied will reduce matching queries in the future.



Updating your contact details

It's important for us to have up to date contact details for all our employers, so we can send you important information affecting you or your employees.

If you're leaving your organisation, or moving to a new role, and will be passing on your engagement responsibilities with the Norfolk Pension Fund to a colleague, please let us know as soon as possible or ask your replacement to contact us as soon as they can.

Please either confirm the changes to us at pensions.technical@norfolk.gov.uk or complete and return the **Employer Contact Details (MISC91)** form to us at the same email address.

Please can you review your current contact details with us and let us know any out-of-date contacts or where new contacts are required.



Likewise, if you are changing your payroll provider at any time, please let us know. The earlier we are involved in the process, the smoother the transition will be for your members.

Additional Pension Contributions - Recalculation

As part of the changes to the Superannuation Contributions Adjusted for Past Experience Discount Rate in March 2023, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has completed its review of factors used in LGPS calculations.

One of the changes is to the factors used to purchase Additional Pension Benefits.

The change in factors is effective for existing contracts which commenced before 2 October 2023 and the new factors applied from 1 April 2024.

The change does not affect Additional Service Contracts which commenced before 1 April 2008.

We will shortly be advising you, or your payroll provider, of the revised Additional Pension Contribution (APC) that you need to deduct from 1 April 2024.



Please look out for this notification by email and ensure that you implement the changes in your April 2024 payroll run for any LGPS members you have with APC contracts.

We will also be writing to members shortly to advise them of the change to the amounts that will be deducted from their pay each month.

If you have any questions, please contact us at pensions.technical@norfolk.gov.uk

Pensions Increase and Revaluation

The Government has issued a written ministerial statement concerning the increases to apply to public service pensions in April 2024.

As expected, this confirms that:

- LGPS pensions will increase by 6.7% from 8 April 2024 (a lower, pro-rata increase will apply to pensions that started after 23 April 2023)
- Active LGPS pension accounts will be revalued by 6.7% from 6 April 2024.



The increase is in line with the increase in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for the year up to September 2023.

Funding level and the approach to the 2025 Valuation

Although the gap between formal valuations of the Fund is three years, it can sometimes feel shorter!

The next valuation of the Fund is due at 31 March 2025. This will set the employer contributions payable from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029.

The purpose of the valuation is to carry out a health check of the funding position and to calculate and certify the next three years of employer contribution requirements.

The year before the valuation date is inevitably filled with work around planning and testing of data and funding policies, while our governing regulations allow twelve months after the valuation date to complete the calculations; prior to the implementation of the new employer contribution rates arising.

The complexity of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and the risk management approaches have undoubtedly increased over the last few decades. This has made the work undertaken by the Fund Actuary, the Pensions Committee and Fund officers more important than ever.

Some of you will be aware that funding levels have improved significantly since the last valuation at 31 March 2022.

Although overall investment returns have been positive, this improvement has primarily been driven by the fall in the value of liabilities as real interest rates have increased over the last couple of years and discount rates have moved up with them (an increase in discount rate reduces the future value of a liability).

It should be recognised that we are still just under

twelve months out from the actual valuation date, but this is a positive background as we approach the final run-in to the valuation date.

It is worth noting that few employers are exposed directly to the underlying funding position in the calculation, when their contribution rate is calculated.

Most long term secure employers benefit from the Employer Contribution Rate Stabilisation Mechanism (ECRSM), which limits the increase in employer rates when the pension funding environment is less favourable but equally controls the pace at which rates will fall as that environment improves.

It is designed to reduce the overall volatility of employer contribution rates and acknowledges the regulatory desirability for stability of employer contributions. In addition, the majority of contractors currently in the scheme have the reassurance of pass-through admission arrangements, which fix the employer contribution rate payable for a period of up to seven years.

Between now and the end of the financial year, we will be working with the Fund Actuary to review contribution strategy and carry out checks on the stabilisation provisions for the various groups of employers.

As usual for employers subject to ECRSM, we expect to be able to provide budgetary clarity on the employer contribution stabilisation parameters for April 2026 onwards by 31 March 2025.

The Fund Actuary will be discussing the outlook and approach to the 2025 Valuation in more detail at our Employer Forum event on Wednesday 10 July.

Update to Statement on Divestment / Exclusion & ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) Aspects of Investment Strategy

In order to assist those considering the ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) approach taken by the Fund, in March 2022 we published a statement on these aspects of investment strategy. This is intended to provide a clear explanation of our policy approach in this area and assist members, stakeholders and other interested parties.

At the last meeting of the Pensions Committee (March 2024) the Committee members considered and approved an update to this statement.

The updates concentrated on reinforcing the explanation of the fiduciary framework in which decisions relating to investments must be made.



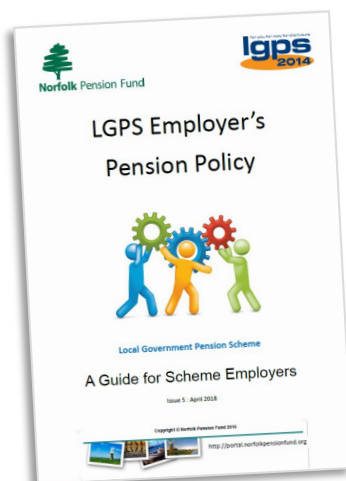
This is in accordance with the sole purpose of the Fund to pay and secure the pension benefits promised to our current and former members.

[You can read a copy of the updated statement on our website.](#)

Employer's Pension Policy and Internal Disputes

Just a reminder of the importance of keeping your Employer Pension Policy up to date. Your Employer Pension Policy should be sent to graham.trussell@norfolk.gov.uk within one month of joining the scheme and as soon as possible after making any update.

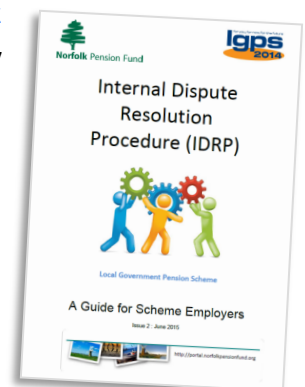
For more information, please see the [Employer Pensions Policy Guide \(G060\)](#) available on the Employers section of our website www.norfolkpensionfund.org under 'Forms and documents/Guides'.



The Policy usually specifies the person that your employees should contact in the first instance of any dispute.

For more information about managing Internal Disputes, please refer to the [Employer IDRPs Guide \(G070\)](#) which can be found on the Employers section of our website www.norfolkpensionfund.org under 'Forms and documents/Guides'.

There is also the [Scheme Member Guide to Disputes \(G071\)](#) available at www.norfolkpensionfund.org/help/complaints-complaints-and-disputes/



Employer Forum

Wednesday 10 July

Please join us on Wednesday 10 July for our next hybrid Employer Forum which you can attend either:

- In person at **The Space, Roundtree Way, Norwich, NR7 8SQ** or;
- Virtually online via MS Teams.

The Forum offers an excellent opportunity to keep up to date with scheme developments, which is an important part of your responsibility as an LGPS employer.

AGENDA

The Agenda includes the following items:

- **Update from the Fund Actuary, Hymans Robertson**
- **Overview of the Pensions Dashboard**
- **Administration update with the latest on i-Connect**

- **Session on TUPE and strain costs**
- **Ask the Panel Q&A session** – your chance to put questions to the Fund Actuary and the Norfolk Pension Fund team.

The meeting will commence at 10.00am. If you plan to attend at The Space, you're welcome to register and join us for a coffee from 9.30am.

We aim to finish by 12.30pm, followed by a buffet lunch, giving you the opportunity to speak 1:1 with Hymans Robertson and our team members, and chat to other employer colleagues.

**If you would like to join the Forum
virtually, or in person,
please email:**

pensions@norfolk.gov.uk

or call 01603 222824



Employee Contribution Bands 2024-25

Employee Contribution Bands for 2024-25 are shown in the table below. For more information, please see the Contributions Guide G020, which is available on the *Employers* section of our website www.norfolkpensionfund.org under *Forms and documents/Guides*.

Band	Pensionable pay	Main Section	50/50 Section
1	Up to £17,600	5.50%	2.75%
2	£17,601 to £27,600	5.80%	2.90%
3	£27,601 to £44,900	6.50%	3.25%
4	£44,901 to £56,800	6.80%	3.40%
5	£56,801 to £79,700	8.50%	4.25%
6	£79,701 to £112,900	9.90%	4.95%
7	£112,901 to £133,100	10.50%	5.25%
8	£133,101 to £199,700	11.40%	5.70%
9	£199,701 or more	12.50%	6.25%

Staff transfers

Just a reminder that if you are considering options for reshaping and/or reorganising your service delivery, such as outsourcing, please let us know at the earliest stage of your planning.

What you are considering could have significant pension implications...

We can help you understand these and take account of them upfront, for example, considering what pension information you may need to include in tender documentation.



If you are considering making any changes to your service delivery, please contact
Alex Younger at
alexander.younger@norfolk.gov.uk

Member Self-Service

Please tell your employees that Member Self-Service (MSS) offers a great way for them to view their pension details online.

Member Self-Service can be used to :

- View pension account benefits
- Amend personal details
- Update Death Grant nomination details
- Calculate pension benefits with the Benefit Projectors
- View the Annual Benefit Statement
- Upload documents and queries
- Contact us securely

The service can be accessed from the homepage of our website at www.norfolkpensionfund.org by clicking *Member Self-Service* on the menu bar or on the *Member Self-Service* icon.



For support, we have a dedicated Member Self-Service helpline on **01603 222132** and email address pensions.mss@norfolk.gov.uk

To help you promote Member Self-Service to your employees, we have produced a *Keep in touch with your pension online* PDF, which can be [downloaded here](#) to print or email.

New Member Joiner Pack

When you have a new employee, please provide them with New Joiner Pack items which can be downloaded from the *Employers* section of www.norfolkpensionfund.org under *Forms and documents/Joiner Pack*.

You can also download the documents by clicking on the item names below.

- [A Brief Guide to the LGPS](#)
- [Membership Form \(SR95\)](#)
- [Non LGPS Benefits Transfer-In Request \(SR96\)](#)
- [Death Grant Form \(SR81\)](#)

The forms can be completed electronically, so you can email a copy to the employee and submit the completed form via i-Connect.

The screenshot shows the Norfolk Pension Fund website. The top navigation bar includes links for 'About', 'Your pension', 'Governance and Investment', 'Resources', 'Help', and 'News'. The main heading is 'Employers' with a sub-heading 'Welcome to the section of the website for employers.' Below this, there is a list of 'Forms and documents' with a search icon. The items listed are: Forms, Guides, Joiner Pack (circled in red), Newsletters, and Posters.

The image shows a stack of documents. The top document is 'A brief guide to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for employees in England and Wales' dated May 2022. Below it are several forms, including the 'Membership Form (SR95)' and the 'Non LGPS Benefits Transfer-In Request (SR96)'. The forms are partially overlapping and show various fields for completion.

Norfolk Pension Fund governance

Norfolk County Council, as Administering Authority of the Norfolk Pension Fund, delegates its pensions functions to **Pensions Committee** to administer the scheme on behalf of all participating employers and scheme members. All public sector pension schemes are also required to have a Local Pension Board (known in Norfolk as the **Pensions Oversight Board**), to assist the

Administering Authority in ensuring the effective and efficient governance and administration of the scheme.

The Governance Strategy Statement details our governance arrangements. It can be viewed on our website www.norfolkpensionfund.org under the 'Resources' section.

Pensions Committee news

The Pensions Committee met on 12 March 2024 and 5 December 2023 with the usual contributions from Norfolk Pension Fund officers and advisors.

Items reviewed by Committee included an administration and operational update, an update from the Pensions Oversight Board, the Risk Register Report and an ACCESS (A Collaboration of Central, Eastern and Southern Shires) investment pooling update.

Pensions Committee also approved the 2024-25

Norfolk Pension Fund budget as well as updates to the Investment Strategy Statement (ISS)

You can watch a recording of the public section of the meeting on the [Norfolk County Council YouTube channel here](#).

Pensions Committee papers can be viewed on the Norfolk County Council website [here](#).

Pensions Committee next meets on 11 June 2024.

Norfolk County Councillors

Judy Oliver (Chairman)

Alison Birmingham

William Richmond

Martin Storey

Brian Watkins



District Councillors

John Fuller

Paul Hewett

Staff representative

Steve Aspin



Pensions Oversight Board employer vacancy

A reminder that there is an opportunity to join our Pensions Oversight Board (POB) as a non-precepting (non-tax raising) Employer Representative.

We would very much welcome expressions of interest for this important and interesting role from our employer colleagues.

There is information below about the Board and the role, and on our [website](#), but of course please contact us directly if you have any questions.

Terms of appointment are typically for four years.

What is the Pensions Oversight Board?

The Norfolk Pension Fund Pensions Oversight Board is a regulatory body established in 2015 under the Public Services Act 2013.

It is an important part of the governance of the Norfolk Pension Fund, sitting alongside Pensions Committee.

Its role is to assist Norfolk County Council as the Administering Authority of Norfolk Pension Fund to secure compliance with regulations and the requirements of The Pensions Regulator, and to ensure the scheme is effectively and efficiently governed and managed.

Pension Boards are required to have an equal number of Scheme Employer and Scheme Member representatives.

The Norfolk Pension Fund Pensions Oversight Board has three Employer Representatives (one from Norfolk County Council, two from other employers) and three Scheme Member representatives (one nominated by the trade unions and the rest drawn from the total Norfolk Pension Fund membership). An independent chair oversees the smooth running of the Board.

The Board usually meets four times a year



(currently it meets once a year in person and the rest of the meetings are virtual). Meetings typically last for approximately 2.5 hours.

You can find more information about the Board on our [website here](#), and view the Board's [Terms of Reference here](#), and also in the [Pensions Oversight Board Role Description](#).

New Board members have access to full training and support for the role, including on the LGPS scheme, the law relating to pensions and other relevant regulations to give them the appropriate knowledge and understanding to fulfil the role.

If you would like to know more, to propose someone or nominate yourself for the vacant position, please contact Jo Quarterman, Head of Governance at jo.quartermen@norfolk.gov.uk

A reminder on scams

Criminals are working harder than ever to target public sector organisations, businesses and individuals, particularly with flexible working and more people working from home.

The Norfolk Pension Fund never shares personal information in emails and requires employers to use i-Connect to send us data and submit forms.

We also encourage scheme members to use Member Self-Service to notify us of any changes to their personal details or circumstances.

National Trading Standards have a Friends Against Scams scheme which provides the following key messages, which you might find helpful when reminding employees on identifying and preventing criminal activity.

STOP - Be aware of suspicious communications such as:

- Email or text messages claiming to be from a senior person in your organisation asking for business information or to make a payment
- Emails claiming to be from a regular or new supplier asking for Direct Debit instructions to be changed
- Phone calls offering technical support for home IT network or equipment
- Government offering to help you claim for grants or tax relief

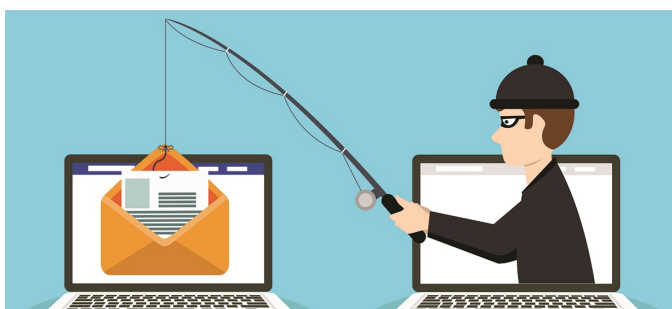


CHALLENGE - Encourage your employees to question communications

- Take time to think about what people are asking of you
- Understand that emails and texts can be spoofed to make them look genuine
- If you are in doubt speak to a colleague or line manager to get a second opinion
- Report all suspicious activity to Action Fraud
- Check requests have come from a genuine source by using contact information you know to be correct
- Only use your trusted IT support desk

PROTECT - Report all suspicious activity

- To report a scam, call **Action Fraud** on **0300 123 2040**.



For more information on

Friends Against Scams,

please visit:

www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk

Contact details

**Norfolk Pension Fund
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DH**

**Pensions Administration
pensions@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 495923**

**Investment, Accountancy and Actuarial Services
pensions.finance@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 222139**

**Online, Technical and i-Connect Queries
pensions.technical@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 222132**

www.norfolkpensionfund.org



Norfolk Pension Fund



Local Government
Pension Scheme



If you would like this newsletter in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please call 01603 222824 or email pensions@norfolk.gov.uk