



Norfolk Pension Fund

Customer Care and Communication Strategy Statement November 2024

**The Norfolk Pension Fund
is committed to delivering
a consistently high level of
performance and customer service.**

**Good communication is core
to this commitment.**

**This document sets out how
we do this.**

Customer Care and Communication Strategy Statement

This Customer Care and Communication Strategy Statement aims to ensure that the Norfolk Pension Fund:

- provides clear, relevant, accurate, accessible and timely information
- listens, considers and responds appropriately to communication we receive
- uses plain English wherever possible, and avoids unnecessary jargon
- uses communication channels which best fit the audience and the information being passed on

Communication is 'to share or exchange information or ideas'

Our Core Customer Care Standards

- To answer the telephone within 15 seconds, and respond to enquiries within five working days
- To respond to letters within five working days
- To respond to email enquiries within three working days
- To meet visitors within five minutes of appointment time
- When visiting, to agree a time in advance and show an identity card

Who are we in regular communication with?

- Pensions Committee (the Trustees)
- Pensions Oversight Board
- Participating employers
- Scheme members
- Prospective members
- Scheme member representatives
- Norfolk Pension Fund staff
- Other bodies, including
 - Investment managers
 - The media
 - Actuaries
 - Other pension funds
 - Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and The Pensions Regulator (regulators of the scheme)

How does the Norfolk Pension Fund communicate?

When deciding how to communicate, we consider the audience, the message and the cost to the Fund.

We want to get our messages over and to make ourselves available to hear queries, opinions and concerns.

We make use of telephone, email, surface mail, internet, social media, paper publications, face to face conversations and meetings, seminars, road shows, attendance at conferences and other forums.

Our website meets accessibility guidelines and our Accessibility Statement can be found on our website www.norfolkpensionfund.org.

Data Protection Statement

Norfolk County Council on behalf of Norfolk Pension Fund is a Data Controller under the General Data Protection Regulations. This means we store, hold and manage your personal data in line with statutory requirements to enable us to provide you with pension administration services. To enable us to carry out our statutory duty, we are required to share your information with certain bodies, but will only do so in limited circumstances. For more information about how we hold your data, who we share it with and what rights you have to request information from the Fund, please visit www.norfolkpensionfund.org.

Pension Committee Trustees

The Pensions Committee act as trustees and oversee the management of the Norfolk Pension Fund. The Members of the Committee are committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes for the Norfolk Pension Fund, its participating employers and scheme members. Their knowledge is supplemented by professional advice from Norfolk Pension Fund staff, professional advisers and external experts.

The Trustees

Norfolk County Councillors

Tom FitzPatrick (Chair)

Alison Birmingham

William Richmond

Martin Storey

Brian Watkins

District County Councillors

The Lord Fuller OBE

Paul Hewett

Staff representative

Steve Aspin



Sharing information

Committee Meetings

The Pensions Committee meets quarterly, to consider all investment and administration (the calculation and payment of benefits) issues related to the Norfolk Pension Fund. It monitors performance, discusses significant issues and makes all decisions related to the Fund. The Director of Strategic Finance, Norfolk Pension Fund staff and other professional advisers prepare reports, briefings and make recommendations for the Committee to consider and act upon.

Observers

People who would like to see the Pensions Committee in action can view meetings on the Norfolk County Council Democratic Services www.youtube.com channel.

Internet

Pensions Committee reports, agendas and minutes are available via the Norfolk County Council internet and intranet sites at www.norfolk.gov.uk under **Council and Democracy** then **Meetings**.

Pensions Oversight Board

The Pensions Oversight Board helps ensure that the Norfolk Pension Fund continues to be well run and properly managed. The purpose of the Board is to assist Pensions Committee and Officers with responsibilities for managing the Norfolk Pension Fund by helping to:

- Secure compliance with the Regulations, any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the scheme, and requirements imposed by The Pensions Regulator in relation to the scheme and;
- Ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the scheme

The full **Terms of Reference** for the **Pensions Oversight Board** are on the Norfolk Pension Fund website at www.norfolkpensionfund.org.

Board Members

Independent Chair	Brian Wigg
Scheme Member Representative	Frances Crum (Active/Deferred member)
Scheme Member Representative	Peter Baker (Pensioner member)
Scheme Member Representative	Vacancy (Trade Union)
Scheme Employer Representative	Julie Brown (Levying/precepting employers)
Scheme Employer Representative	Vacancy (Non levying/precepting employers)
Scheme Employer Representative	Sally Albrow (Norfolk County Council)

Sharing information

There are at least two **Pensions Oversight Board** meetings a year. Papers, agendas and minutes of these meetings are published on the Norfolk Pension Fund website at www.norfolkpensionfund.org.

In addition, the **Pensions Oversight Board** produce an annual report in accordance with any regulatory requirements.

Scheme members

Norfolk Pension Fund scheme members come from a range of private, public and quasi-public organisations across the county.

It is essential that scheme members are provided with detailed information about the scheme and be able to understand what pension and benefits they may be entitled to in the future.

Communication with members reflects the varying interests and concerns of the different groups of scheme members:

Active members (33,301)

People currently in the employment of a participating employer.

Deferred members (42,933)

People who have left the employment of a participating employer, but who have not yet retired.

Pensioner members (30,849)

People in receipt of a pension from the Norfolk Pension Fund.
(Membership numbers as at 31 March 2024)

Telephone Helpline

A dedicated helpline for scheme members is operated by our experienced Pension Administration Team.

The team gives advice to active, deferred and retired members on scheme membership and benefits.

01603 495923

Phone lines open

Monday to Thursday 8.45am - 5.00pm

Friday 8.45am - 4.00pm

Scheme members

Sharing information with scheme members...

Active

Deferred

Pensioner

Internet

The Norfolk Pension Fund website provides advice, information and news as well as **direct and secure access to members personal data**, including a pensions calculator for active members at www.norfolkpensionfund.org

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Scheme guide

A scheme guide is supplied to all members and published on the website.

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Annual Benefit Statement and newsletter

Annual Benefit Statement booklets are sent to members' home addresses.

The booklet also gives information on changes to the scheme and other topical issues, including a summary of the accounts and a general review.

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Annual Meeting and Pension Clinics

Scheme members can raise questions directly with Pensions Committee at the Annual Meeting or discuss their LGPS pension face to face at a Pension Clinic.

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Pay Advice and Pensions Increase Notification

Payslips are posted to all pensioners when the pension payment after tax is more that £1.00 different to the last monthly payment. Members can view their monthly payment details on our website. We write to members about the annual pensions increase and other important messages. We also send them a P60 Tax Form each year.

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Pensions roadshows

Roadshows are run as, when and most importantly where they are needed.

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Pre-Retirement Planning Course

The Pension Fund supports a Pre-Retirement Planning Course, to help members approaching retirement prepare for the financial and lifestyle changes retirement brings. The course is delivered virtually via MS Teams.

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Retired members newsletter

Primetime, our newsletter for retired members (currently published twice a year) is posted to home addresses and covers the latest information about pensions and the Fund.

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Prospective and new scheme members

Most people coming to work for any of the employers participating in the Norfolk Pension Fund are able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

An up-to-date list of all the employers who participate in the scheme is posted on our website at:

www.norfolkpensionfund.org

Most employers automatically enrol eligible new employees into the LGPS. They then have the right to 'opt out' of the Fund and cease to be a member.

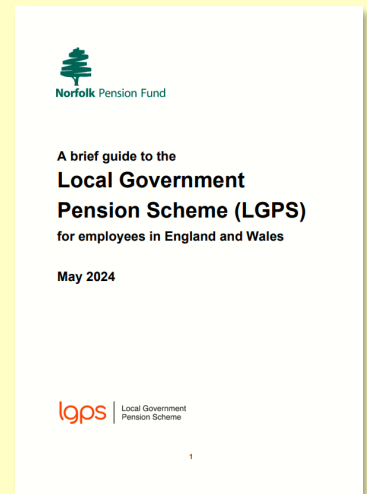
Some members will have circumstances that may make it appropriate to opt out of the Fund.

We want people to make well informed decisions. We work closely with employers to help prospective members understand the wider benefits of membership and to encourage new members not to give up scheme membership without careful consideration.

Sharing information with prospective/new scheme members

New joiner information

A number of items are published on our website with information for new scheme members including the *A brief guide to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)*.



Online

The Norfolk Pension Fund website has an area for joiners with details of the scheme benefits, costs, who can join and how to join. www.norfolkpensionfund.org

Induction courses

The benefits of membership are highlighted by scheme employers during their induction procedures.

Recruitment

Recruitment exercises highlight the opportunity of joining the scheme to potential employees.

Member representatives

The staff representative member of the Pensions Committee is also a representative of UNISON.

We maintain positive relations with member representatives and meet as requested or needed.

Employers

At the end of March 2024, the Norfolk Pension Fund had 434 contributing employers. This included Norfolk County Council, non-uniformed police authority and fire service staff, district councils, parish councils and drainage boards, a range of charities and quasi-government organisations such as the Citizens Advice and housing associations, increasingly some private companies delivering services on behalf of local authorities, and a growing number of academy schools.

Sharing information with our employers

Employer Forum and webinars

All employers are invited to regular hybrid Employer Forums (delivered face to face and virtually) and webinars. These offer a great opportunity for employers and Norfolk Pension Fund colleagues to get together, to exchange news and views. Norfolk Pension Fund staff update employers with the latest news affecting the Norfolk Pension Fund, and external speakers provide insights into the wider pensions world. Webinars and virtual Employer Forums are recorded for colleagues unable to attend the live events.

Employer Manual

Our interactive Employer Manual is provided via the Norfolk Pension Fund website, and aims to provide all the information needed to take part effectively in the pension scheme.

Employer Newsletter

The Fund publishes a regular newsletter, aimed specifically at employers. It covers topical issues under debate, technical changes that need their attention and changes to regulations that impact on their duties and responsibilities.

Annual Report and Accounts

The audited accounts of the Norfolk Pension Fund are prepared as at 31 March each year and published on our website.

Specialist advice

Professional advice can be provided/arranged, related to specific pensions activities undertaken by employers, for example transfer of staff, external contracts, etc.

Internet - www.norfolkpensionfund.org and i-Connect (employer portal)

The Fund's website hosts an area for employers. It has lots of information about the scheme and the Norfolk Pension Fund. The employer manual, information, forms and employer newsletters are all available online. Our employer portal, i-Connect, gives employers access to view their own data, securely exchange data and submit requests and changes online.

Contacts database

We maintain an employer contact database.

Email

Updates on relevant topics are emailed to employer contacts as appropriate.

Fact sheets

Pension Fund fact sheets are maintained on issues such as early retirements.

Individual employer meetings

Pension Fund staff arrange virtual meetings with employers on request.

Other bodies we communicate with

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government: We have regular contact with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, as regulator of the scheme, and participate in a number of working groups where new developments are discussed.

The Pensions Regulator (TPR): to ensure good governance and standards of administration and compliance with Public Service Code of Practice 14.

ACCESS (A Collaboration of Central, Eastern and Southern Shires): The Norfolk Pension Fund is one of 11 LGPS Funds in the ACCESS investment pool.

The Society of County Treasurers

Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA): The Norfolk Pension Fund takes part in the annual CIPFA Pensions Administration Benchmarking Club.

Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF): The Norfolk Pension Fund is a member of the LAPFF, which was established to help local authority funds share information and ideas about how we can be socially responsible owners of the companies in which we invest.

Pensions and Lifetime Savings Association (PLSA): The Norfolk Pension Fund is a member of the PLSA, which helps us be a part of the national pensions debate. Jo Quarterman, Head of Governance, sits on the PLSA Local Authority Committee.

South Eastern Counties Superannuation Officers Group: Pension Officers from administering authorities in the region meet regularly to share information and ensure uniform interpretation of the rules governing the scheme.

Investment Managers, Professional Advisors and Actuaries: We have regular meetings with fund managers who invest the monies belonging to the Fund. We also meet the Fund's actuaries who measure and value the assets and liabilities of the Fund, and calculate the necessary employer contribution rates to keep the Fund solvent.

Heywoods CLASS and Payroll User Groups: We are active members of the Heywood's Administration CLASS (Computerised Local Authority Superannuation System) and Payroll system users groups.

Pension Fund Custodian: The Fund's custodian is Northern Trust, who ensure the safekeeping of the Fund's investment transactions and all related share certificates, etc.

Barclays Bank: provide banking services to the Fund.

The Press: The Fund has a good working relationship with professional pension publications and the local media.

Seminars and conferences: Norfolk Pension Fund staff regularly attend and speak at seminars and conferences, to continue their professional development, maintain knowledge levels and to contribute to pensions development.

Norfolk Pension Fund staff

The Norfolk Pension Fund is administered by Norfolk County Council.

Administrator of the Norfolk Pension Fund Norfolk County Council Director of Strategic Finance,
Harvey Bullen



Head of Service Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund,
Glenn Cossey, leads the Service.



Administration Management Head of Pensions Services, Debra Keeling, and her team provide benefit administration services to scheme members and participating employers.

Investment Management Head of Funding and Investment, Alex Younger, and his team manage the pension fund investments and accounts, as well as providing support to employers and the Trustees in their stewardship of the Fund.

Governance Head of Governance, Jo Quarterman, supports the Fund's governance, communication, service development and project management.

Sharing information

Management meetings

The Management Team meets regularly, for strategic and development planning and review, as well as operational performance issues and monitoring.

Team meetings and weekly newsletter

Team meetings take place regularly, and are supplemented by additional or informal meetings for specific issues as required.

A weekly newsletter is also circulated to the team.

Service Plan

The Fund maintains a three year service plan, which sets out the agenda for the future. All the team share the plan, and discuss at team meetings.

Team development

A budget is allocated for training and development. A combination of formal and informal training and development is maintained.

Performance development framework

The performance development framework includes conversations between managers and team members to establish clear goals in work aligned to organisational plans; maximising the strengths of contribution to the service; and reviewing performance and future development plans.

Intranet, internet and email

All staff have access to the Norfolk County Council intranet, the internet and email.



Norfolk Pension Fund

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County Hall

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Norwich

NR2 1AD

Telephone: 01603 495923

Email: pensions@norfolk.gov.uk

www.norfolkpensionfund.org

Norfolk Pension Fund publications

Communication material	Paper based	Online	Large sight copy	Braille/ Audio	When published	When reviewed
Website: www.norfolkpensionfund.org		✓	Help available	Help available	Constantly available	Ongoing
Scheme Booklet	✓	✓	On request	On request	Constantly available	Ongoing
A Guide to the LGPS	✓	✓	On request	On request	Constantly available	Ongoing
Annual Benefit Statement, members newsletter and accounts	✓	✓	On request	On request	Annually	Annually
Pay advice slip	✓	✓	On request	On request	Online - Monthly Paper - only if payment changes	Monthly
Retired members newsletter	✓	✓	On request	On request	Twice yearly	Twice yearly
Information sheets (various)	✓	✓	On request	On request	As required	Ongoing
Employer Manual	✓	✓	On request	On request	Constantly available	Ongoing
Employer Newsletter	✓	✓	On request	On request	3-4 times a year	3-4 times a year
Report and Accounts	✓	✓	On request	On request	Annually	Annually
Pensions Committee Papers	✓	✓	On request	On request	Quarterly	Quarterly
Pensions Oversight Board Papers	✓	✓	On request	On request	3-4 times a year	3-4 times a year
Press articles	✓	✓	On request	On request	As required	As required



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

Norfolk Pension Fund Events

Pensions Committee	Four times a year
Pensions Oversight Board	Four times a year
Employer Forum and webinars	Approximately four a year
Annual Meeting and Pension Clinics	October/November
Pre-Retirement Planning Course	Bi-monthly
Norfolk Pension Fund member roadshow	As requested
Induction sessions for employers (new HR and Finance staff)	As requested

Visit the Norfolk Pension Fund at
www.norfolkpensionfund.org

For information on

- Benefits
- Fund performance
- Fund literature and guides
- Events
- Latest news
- Contact information

Register for online services for

- Personal details
- Annual Benefit Statement
- Pension payments
- Online requests

