

Surrey Pension Fund Administration Strategy

1. Legislative Framework

- 1.1 This strategy statement has been prepared by Surrey County Council as the administering authority to the Surrey Pension Fund in accordance with Regulation 65 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008.

2. Review

- 2.1 This strategy will be kept under review and will be revised, after consultation with scheme employers, following any material changes in legislation or policies that relate to the strategy.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of the strategy is to establish levels of performance and procedures for liaison and communication for both the administering authority (AA) and the employers participating in the fund with a view to maintaining good working relationships, transparency and efficient administration.

4. Employer Duties & Responsibilities

- 4.1 The employer should nominate a person or persons to liaise with the AA on pension administration matters.
- 4.2 The employer should ensure that any information passed on behalf of the employer to the AA or any requests for information made on behalf of the employer to the AA are undertaken by a duly authorised officer of the employer.
- 4.3 The employer should notify the AA in respect of the following changes in a scheme member's status and within the required timescale by completing the appropriate pension form or secure on-line submission:
- New Joiner
Within one month of joining
 - Change in member's details e.g. hours, maternity etc
Within one month of the change
 - Retirements
Two months prior to the date of retirement. It is however recognised that there will be occasions where this time limit cannot be met, for example, because the member has retired with little or no notice or details of pensionable pay cannot be provided until the member has left employment.
 - Death in Service
Within five working days of the member's death

- Leavers
Within one month of the member leaving
- TUPE transfer of scheme members
At least two months before the transfer date. This is to allow adequate time for pension protection to be put in place as appropriate.

- 4.4 The employer must determine the pension contribution rate at which its employees should contribute to the scheme from 1 April each year and, where there is a change to the member's pensionable pay during the year, from that date. Where an employee holds more than one post, the employer must determine the rate applicable for each post.
- 4.5 The employer will ensure that member and employer pension contributions are deducted at the correct rate, including contributions due on leave of absence with reduced or no pay, maternity leave and any additional contributions the member has requested to pay.
- 4.6 The employer will ensure that pension contributions are paid to the AA within seven days of the end of each month.
- 4.7 The employer will ensure that additional voluntary contributions are paid to the relevant provider within seven days of being deducted from the member's pay.
- 4.8 The employer must, no later than 30 April each year, provide the AA with year-end information to 31 March in an approved format in respect of each post the member holds.
- 4.9 The employer is responsible for exercising the discretionary powers given to employers by the LGPS regulations. The employer is also responsible for publishing its policy in respect of these discretions to its employees and forwarding a copy to the AA.
- 4.10 The AA is not required to verify the accuracy of any information provided by the employer for the purpose of calculating benefits under the provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Therefore, employers should ensure that all information provided is accurate.
- 4.11 Any over-payment resulting from inaccurate information supplied by the employer may be recovered from the employer if it cannot be recovered from the scheme member.
- 4.12 In the event of the AA being fined by The Pensions Regulator, this fine may be passed on to the relevant employer where that employer's action or inaction resulted in the fine.
- 4.13 The employer must nominate a person to hear complaints made under Stage 1 of the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure and should provide this person's name, job title, and office address. When an amendment to these details is made, a notification of the change should be sent to the AA immediately.

- 4.14 The employer must obtain the approval of the AA as to its choice of registered medical practitioner for the purposes of awarding ill health retirement under the Scheme regulations.
- 4.15 The employer must pay to the AA any cost identified by the AA as a result of the employing authority's decision to release any pension benefits prior to a member's normal retirement age. Such payments should be made within 30 days from the date of receipt of an invoice issued by the AA or such longer period as agreed by the AA.
- 4.16 The employer must also pay to the AA any charge identified by the AA as a result of the employing authority's decision to award any additional benefits to a scheme member in accordance with its statement of policy regarding the exercise of certain discretionary functions. Such payments should be made within 30 days from the date of receipt of an invoice issued by the AA or such longer period as agreed by the AA.

5. Administering Authority Duties & Responsibilities

New Joiners

- 5.1 *Confirmation letter of scheme admittance to all members.*
Within 20 days
- 5.2 *Transfers from previous pension schemes.*
Within 20 days

Existing Active Members

- 5.3 *Annual Benefit Statement*
By 30 September providing year end data has been received from the employer
- 5.4 *Benefit estimates to employers*
Within ten days of receipt of request
- 5.5 *Retirements*
Within ten days of retirement
- 5.6 *Death in Service*
Death Benefits and dependants' pensions
Within five days

Early Leavers

- 5.7 *Deferred Benefit statement*
Within one month of leaving
- 5.8 *Refunds*
Within ten days
- 5.9 *Transfer to new pension scheme*
Within 20 days

Deferred Benefit Members

- 5.10 *Annual Benefit Statement*
By 30 June

5.11 *Benefits put into payment*
Within ten days

5.12 *Death Benefits and dependants' pensions*
Within five days

Pensioner Members

5.13 *Changes in personal details*
Payroll record updated before next payroll run

5.14 *Death benefits and dependants' pensions*
Within five days

*The timescales for completing the tasks above are measured from the date the AA is in receipt of all the relevant information required to complete the task is expressed in "working days"

Communication

5.15 The AA will provide employers with the necessary forms and documents for it to carry-out its pension administration responsibilities. These forms to be available in paper and electronic format, where appropriate.

5.16 The AA will provide a guide to the Local Government Pension Scheme for scheme members for employer to issue.

5.17 The AA will provide a joiner pack to new scheme members.

5.18 The AA will issue a newsletter for active scheme members at least once a year

5.19 The AA will issue regular employer newsletters and provide training at County Hall for employers to comply with their pension administration responsibilities.

5.20 The AA will enable scheme members and employers to visit Pension Services during normal working hours from 8.30am to 5.30pm.

5.21 The AA will maintain a Pension Fund Website which will include:

- General information on the LGPS
- Copies of all the publications of the pension fund including newsletters, scheme guides, strategy statements, annual reports and accounts.
- Standard forms to be used by employers when providing information to the pensions team

5.22 The AA will arrange a Pension Fund Annual General meeting for employers and produce an annual report.

Data Quality and Security

5.23 The AA will ensure that the data held on the systems used to administer the scheme will be secure and regularly backed up to an off-site location. The AA will apply year end data quality control and review processes.

6. Unsatisfactory Performance by an Employer

- 6.1 Where an employer materially or consistently fails to operate in accordance with the standards laid down in this strategy, which results in additional administration costs being incurred by the AA, the AA may issue a written notice to the employer requiring that these extra costs are met by the employer. Steps to recover additional administration costs would normally only be pursued after support and training had been offered by the AA to address the underperformance.

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