



**West Midlands Pension Fund**  
**Communications Policy Statement 2016**  
**November 2016**

## **Background**

The West Midlands Pension Fund is one of the largest pension funds in the United Kingdom with over 290,000 accounts, in excess of 570 individual employers and over £12bn invested. To maintain a high level of customer service success, it is vital for the Fund to understand the needs of our customers as well as their views on the services and products that we provide. This will assist in maintaining the good reputation that the Fund holds within the industry. The Fund achieves this understanding by ensuring regular dialogue with our stakeholders is established and maintained as part of day-to-day business.

In April 2006, the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) regulations were amended to state that each pension fund administering authority is required to prepare, publish and review regularly its communications policy statement, the regulations outline what Funds are required to publish.

This document outlines the Fund's communications policy in line with that requirement and covers the following categories in our regular communication activity:

1. Communicating with scheme members;
2. Member self-service (the web portal);
3. Communicating with members' representatives;
4. Communicating with prospective members;
5. Communicating with employing authorities;
6. Customer engagement strategy.

### **1. Communicating with scheme members**

#### **Annual Benefit Statement**

An annual benefit statement is made available online for all active and deferred members who are contributing to the Fund or have not received payment of their deferred benefits at the previous financial year end. These statements are made available through the Fund's web portal self-service facility. Benefit statements can be issued in paper form on written request.

If there is an instance where a benefit statement cannot be made available, due to incomplete or inaccurate data, we will notify members of this by letter.

#### **wmpfonline.com**

The Fund maintains an extensive online resource at [wmpfonline.com](http://wmpfonline.com) containing information about the scheme and the details about the current activities of the Fund. There are also links to other relevant partner organisations.

The website is under constant review to ensure we provide up to date information to members about their pension benefits.

#### **Scheme literature**

An extensive range of scheme literature is produced including members' brochures detailing how to use our online facility Web Portal, information on taking a reduced salary, as well as required

policies such as our Statement of Investment Principles. These are reviewed and updated by the Fund each year and when any scheme changes have been implemented. Copies of scheme literature are made available at the Fund's website, [wmpfonline.com/corporateinformation](http://wmpfonline.com/corporateinformation).

### **Telephone helpline – 0300 111 1665**

A dedicated low-call rate telephone customer service telephone line is provided for scheme members and is publicised in all outgoing communications.

### **Email Contact**

The Fund has a dedicated email address for our members to contact us at [pensionfundenquiries@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:pensionfundenquiries@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

### **Pension roadshows**

The Fund holds a number of information events across the region in or close to members' places of work. In addition to the roadshows, additional events are held on request, particularly when there may be organisational changes occurring which have pensions implications.

### **Pensioner pay advice slip**

All fund members in receipt of a pension receive a combined pay advice slip and P60 in April of each year. In the months of May through to March. The Fund sends a pay advice slip when there is a variance of £10 in gross or net payment. For scheme pensioners that are paid quarterly and annually, the Fund will issue a pay advice every time a payment is made (June, September, December and March).

Scheme pensioners can also register to use the Fund's web portal application where pay advice information can be viewed electronically and printed at any time following the payment date.

## **2. Member self-service (the web portal)**

An online portal gives members secure access to their Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) records.

The facility provides members with the opportunity to update their personal details, ask questions about their benefits, view annual benefit statements and run pension estimate calculations. Members in receipt of pension are also able to view and change UK bank details via the portal.

## **3. Communicating with members' representatives**

Materials available to members are also available on request to their representatives or through [wmpfonline.com](http://wmpfonline.com).

## **4. Communicating with prospective members**

### **Scheme booklet and website**

The Fund produces a scheme booklet for all prospective scheme members which provides a link to the Fund's website where they can access scheme booklets and frequently asked questions about the LGPS. The website also provides information to enable members to make an informed decision about contributing to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and how to opt-out of the scheme.

### **Corporate Induction Courses**

Fund officers attend corporate induction events to present to prospective scheme members the benefits of LGPS membership.

## **Trade Unions**

The Fund works with the relevant trade unions to ensure the scheme is understood by all interested parties. Training days for branch officers are provided upon request, and efforts are made to ensure that all pension-related issues are communicated effectively with the trade unions.

## **5. Communicating with scheme employers**

### **eNewsletter**

An electronic newsletter, entitled Employer's Briefing Note is issued on a bi-monthly basis to all employers. This is used to communicate the activities of the Fund and inform of any administration or regulatory changes which may impact on the employer's function or their members' pension benefits.

### **wmpfonline.com and web portal**

The Fund maintains a dedicated area of its website for scheme employers containing news, learning materials and other electronic resources.

Each employer can request to join the Fund's web portal. This allows them secure access to the membership details of their current employees. The portal provides employers with the ability to make changes to member records including working hours and personal details. The web portal also provides the facility to calculate early retirement estimates and any associated early retirement costs.

### **Dedicated Telephone Helpline - 0300 111 6516**

The Fund has a dedicated low-call rate employer customer service line which enables the Fund to respond to employer specific queries.

### **Annual General Meeting and Mid-Year Review for Employers**

The Fund invites each employer to our annual general meeting each winter. This event is used to communicate strategic issues, performance, legislation changes and triennial valuation matters. In addition to this the Fund also holds a similar employer event each summer informing employers of important issues through presentations and roundtable discussions.

### **Employer Peer Group**

A group consisting of a cross-section of Fund employers meet quarterly to provide feedback on the communication initiatives planned by the Fund for fellow employers.

In addition, the Fund offers additional meetings for employers where there have been significant changes in the scheme regulations or the way the Fund operates, for example its move to monthly returns.

These groups have been utilised throughout 2016 as the Fund moves through its valuation year.

## **6. Customer Engagement Strategy**

In addition to this communication policy, the West Midlands Pension Fund also publishes a Customer Engagement Strategy.

The document outlines:

- our customers?
- what customer engagement means to the West Midlands Pension Fund

- when customer engagement is considered?
- what types of engagement activities we undertake
- how we use the outputs from customer engagement activities
- how we feedback results to our customers and actions from their engagement with us

The document provides the principles for customer engagement and how the West Midlands Pension Fund tailors its strategy to a wide range of customers. The document should be viewed as a guide and not as an exhaustive list of engagement activities.

The Customer Engagement Strategy is updated annually and is available from [wmpfonline.com](http://wmpfonline.com).