



Communication Policy Statement

For the

Dorset County Pension Fund

February 2017



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Introduction

The Dorset County Pension Fund currently has 258 scheme employers and 27,688 active members as at 31 March 2016. We are continuously looking at ways to improve communications with the various stakeholders in the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Dorset County Council.

The Fund aims to use the most appropriate communication medium for the audiences receiving the information. This may involve using more than one method of communication.

This document explains our existing methods of communication and describes some of our future plans.

Minimum Standards

Under the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information Regulations) 2013, administrators of the Local Government Pension Scheme are required to:

Provide a copy of the scheme regulations and any overriding legislation, on request, within two months of the request - either through providing a personal copy, a copy for inspection or details of how to obtain a copy; members, prospective members, their spouses, beneficiaries and recognised trade unions are entitled to this information.

Automatically provide basic information about the scheme to every prospective member before starting, or, if this is not practical, within two months of joining. This information must also be provided on request (unless issued within the previous 12 months) to current members, prospective members, spouses, beneficiaries and recognised trade unions within two months of receipt of a written request.

Notify any material changes to the LGPS to all members and beneficiaries (except excluded persons i.e. deferred pensioners whose present address is unknown) where possible before or as soon as possible after (and in any event within three months after) the change.

Compulsorily provide an annual benefit statement to all active, deferred and pension credit members.

This Communication Policy Statement will be reviewed annually and a revised version will be republished following any material change.

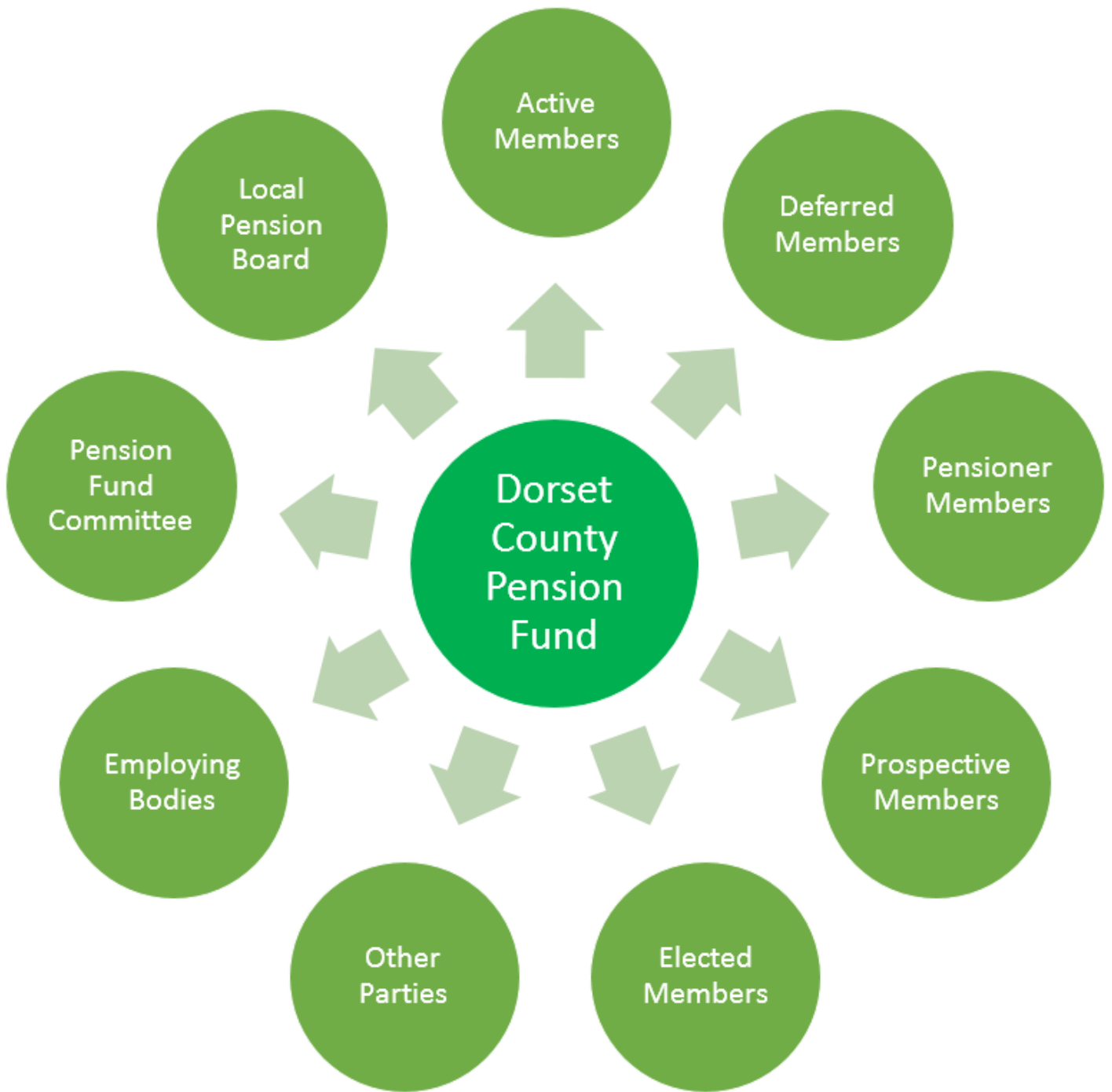
Key Objectives

To communicate Pensions Legislation and policies in a clear informative style to ensure that key stakeholders are well informed about current and future changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Communication Objectives

- To use the most appropriate ways of communicating with stakeholders, and to seek continuous improvement in the way we communicate
- To keep all stakeholders informed about the management and administration of the pension fund
- To inform stakeholders to enable them to make the decisions they need to make regarding pensions and the pension fund
- To promote the pension scheme as an important tool in recruitment and as a benefit to scheme members
- To consult, where possible, with key stakeholders about proposed changes in policies and procedures, in relation to the administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme
- To aim to communicate technical pensions legislation in plain English
- To engage where possible in face-to-face communication.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of our communication objectives:
 - o Feedback questionnaires
 - o Monitoring complaints and compliments
 - o Customer surveys

Our Key Audience Groups



Methods of Communication

We communicate with our current and former scheme members, and their representatives, through various means and aim to provide a high quality service.

Active Scheme Members

Annual Benefit Statements

These are issued to our members by 31 August. Feedback from our members about our statements has helped us improve our procedures for this process.

All active members are entitled to one further estimate of benefits per rolling year, in addition to the Annual Benefit Statement. If the member requests a further estimate with a 12 month period there will be a charge of £50 + VAT levied.

Employee Newsletters

A newsletter is issued annually to keep members up to date with proposed changes to the scheme and any other relevant details. Further newsletters are sent to members highlighting issues of importance, such as forthcoming changes in scheme regulation or operation as any issues arise.

Pension Fund Publications

Information guides, leaflets and forms are available on request covering different aspects of the LGPS; these can also be found on our website.

Annual Report

An Annual report containing information on the management, administration and performance of the pension fund and pension benefits is published annually. This report can be found online at our pensions website.

Pension Fund Website

Our pension fund website can be found at www.yourfund.org.uk/Dorset and is available to view at all times. It is regularly updated and revised.

Pensions Helpline

The pensions helpline is a dedicated telephone number and email address for queries. Telephone lines are open 8:40am to 5:20pm Monday to Thursday and 8:40am to 4:00pm Friday (except bank holidays). We also receive and send communications by post and by fax.

Tel: 01305 224845

Email: pensionshelpline@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Presentations and roadshows

We are available for presentations throughout the county by arrangement with employers. Our aim is to explain existing, proposed and new legislation; the information may be presented in one of the following formats;

- LGPS presentations, including new scheme information
- face to face education sessions
- pre-retirement seminars

Pensioner Members

Pensioner Newsletters

An annual newsletter is sent to our pensioners. This newsletter is used to inform pensioners of the annual pensions increase and also any other relevant information.

Pensioner's Payslips

A payslip is sent annually to all pensioners. If the monthly amount alters by more than £5.00 a payslip will also be sent.

Pension Fund Website

Our pension fund website can be found at www.yourpension.org.uk/Dorset and is available to view at all times. It is regularly updated and revised.

Deferred Scheme Members

Deferred Annual Benefit Illustration

These are issued to our deferred members annually.

Pension Fund Website

Our pension fund website can be found at www.yourpension.org.uk/Dorset and is available to view at all times. It is regularly updated and revised.

Prospective Scheme Members

New Starter Pack

On commencement of employment a pensions pack is issued. This pack is sent to all new starters and includes a Scheme short guide, membership form, death grant expression of wish forms, transfer forms, nomination of cohabiting partner form and contact details for further information.

Pension Fund Website

Our pension fund website can be found at www.yourpension.org.uk/Dorset and is available to view at all times. It is regularly updated and revised.

Elected Members

All the provisions we have made for Scheme Members are also available for Elected Members, including information and forms specifically aimed at Councillor Members. The LGPS is now closed to Elected Members.

Scheme Employers

Employers Website

The Dorset Pension Fund maintains a section of their website dedicated to the scheme employers. This forms our online Employer Guide and holds all relevant up to date forms and publications along with useful information on a variety of subjects.

Employers Section: www.yourpension.org.uk/Dorset/Employers

Email Contact List

The Dorset Pension Fund has set up an email contact list for the scheme employers. This enables us to circulate technical advice and guidance to our pensions liaison officers around the county.

There is a dedicated email address (lgpsemployers@dorsetcc.gov.uk) for employers to use when contacting the Employer Relationship and Communications Team.

Your Fund

This is Dorset County Pension Fund's secure internet portal which allows employers to upload files and submit pension forms on-line.

Your Fund Home Page: <https://dorset.yourfund.org.uk>

Employer's Newsletters

A newsletter is sent to all employers, at least once a year, containing a variety of information of interest to LGPS employers.

Pension Liaison Officer Group Meetings

These meetings are held a minimum of three times a year. All scheme employers are invited to attend. During the meeting any changes to scheme regulations or our administrative procedures are discussed. There is also a presentation on a relevant topic.

Individual Employer Meetings

Meetings can be arranged on an individual basis for an employer to discuss individual requirements. These meetings are available at the employer's request by contacting the Dorset County Pension Fund.

Presentations

Throughout the year the Dorset Pension Fund offer a variety of presentations to employers in different locations.

Employer Meeting

An employers meeting is held annually in autumn and there are a variety of presentations provided in the meeting.

Annual Report

The Dorset County Pension Fund Annual Report is published and distributed to all employers. It is also made available to members of the public and all stakeholders and can be found on our website.

Fund Staff

Pensions Staff

Individual training is provided, as required, to all members of staff. Staff are able to attend training events and conferences both internally and externally. Members of staff are encouraged to take, and helped with, qualifications in pension administration.

Employer Relationship and Communications Team

There is a team dedicated to employers and communications, this team consists of a manager and an officer. It is their responsibility to ensure relevant communications are sent to the correct audience.

Team Meetings

Meetings are held once a month to update all staff on any changes to regulations or practice.

Senior Management Meetings

The Chief Treasury and Pensions Manager is a member of the Financial Services Management Team and attends regular meetings convened by the Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Treasury and Pensions Manager is able to bring any matters of concern / importance to the attention of the Chief Financial Officer through this mechanism.

Other Parties

South West Area Pensions Officer Group (SWAPOG)

The SWAPOG which meets regularly to discuss and share information on pensions administration. Sub groups of the SWAPOG meet to discuss specific topics such as communications or pensions software.

South West Investment Managers (SWIM) Group

The SWIM group meets twice a year, and communicate regularly in connection with all Investment related matters. The group regularly has guest speakers keeping the members up to date with market developments.

Pension and Lifetime Saving Association (PLSA)

The Fund is a member of the PLSA, and officers regularly attend national and regional events to keep up to date with all pension related matters.

Trade Unions

We will work with the relevant Trade Unions to ensure the Scheme is understood by all interested parties.

Others

We regularly exchange information with Government bodies such as HMRC, the Pensions Regulator, Secretary of State and DCLG and will respond to Freedom of Information requests from external parties and members of the public.

Pension Fund Committee

The Pension Fund Committee meets formally at least quarterly, and has the following terms of reference:

To exercise all functions of the Council as Scheme Manager under Local Government Superannuation Act and Regulations and deal with all matters relating thereto.

Members of the Committee receive regular training on a bespoke basis, as well as attending a number of national conferences and seminars to ensure that they are fully informed to fully undertake their responsibilities.

The Chief Treasury and Pensions Manager is in regular contact with the Committee outside of the formal meetings, and ensures that the Committee are kept informed of issues that affect the Fund.

The Committee set and regularly review a number of Pension Fund Policies and Strategies. These are published on the Fund's website, and can be found at:

www.yourpension.org.uk/Dorset/Investments/Strategy-Valuation

The current membership of the Pension Fund Committee is as set out below:

- Five County Council members - appointed by the County Council (not more than one being a member of the Council's Cabinet)
- Two Unitary Authority members - one appointed by Bournemouth Borough Council and one nominated by the Borough of Poole.
- One District Council representative
- One Scheme Member representative

Pension Board

With effect from 1 April 2015 Dorset County Pension Fund (DCPF) has created a Local Pension board.

The function of the Local Pension Board as defined by sections 5 (1) and (2) of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 is to:

- assist the Scheme Manager
- to secure compliance with the LGPS regulations and any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the LGPS;
- to secure compliance with requirements imposed in relation to the LGPS by the Pensions Regulator;
- in such other matters as the LGPS regulations may specify;
- secure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS for the DCPF; and
- provide the Scheme Manager with such information as it requires to ensure that any member of the Local Pension Board or person to be appointed to the Local Pension Board does not have a conflict of interest.

The Local Pension Board also help ensure that the DCPF is managed and administered effectively and efficiently and complies with the Public Service Pension Act 2013 on the governance and administration of public pension schemes and with due regard to guidance issued by government, The Pensions Regulator and the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board.

The Local Pension Board of the Dorset County Pension Fund consists of 3 member representatives and 3 employer representatives and meets at least 2 times a year.

Publications Matrix

Communication Material	Paper-based	Electronic Form	Website	When Published	When Reviewed
Scheme Guide	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
New Starter Pack	✓	✗	✗	Constantly available	Annually
Councillors' Guide	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Scheme Information Leaflets	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Scheme Member Newsletter	✓	✓	✓	Annually	n/a
Pensioner Newsletter	✓	✓	✓	Annually	n/a
Scheme Member's Annual Benefit Statement	✓	✗	✗	Annually	Annually
Deferred Member's Annual Benefit Statement	✓	✗	✗	Annually	Annually
Member Forms & Factsheets	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Pensioner Forms & Factsheets	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Opt Out Form	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Deferred Benefits Guide	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Funding Strategy Statement	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Communication Strategy Statement	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Administration Strategy	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Investment Strategy	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Annual Report and Accounts	✓	✓	✓	Annually	Annually
Employer's Guide	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Employer Forms & Factsheets	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Employer Newsletters	✓	✓	✓	3 per year	n/a
Employer LGPS Updates	✓	✓	✓	As required	n/a

Improving Our Standards

We aim to achieve continuous improvement in our communications with all stakeholders and aim to deliver the following in the future to further improve our communications;

- Internet 'self service' facilities - allowing scheme members to view their pension record on the internet at any time.
- Improved general information on the pension scheme on our website.

We are continuously seeking ways for stakeholders to provide feedback on the service they have received from the Dorset County Pension Fund. We are now providing the following methods of feedback;

- online feedback form
- paper based feedback form provided at presentations
- tear out form in all Annual Benefit Illustrations.

Data Protection

To protect any personal information held on computer, Dorset County Council is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. This allows members to check that their details held are accurate. The fund may, if it chooses, pass certain details to a third party, if the third party is carrying out an administrative function of the Fund, for example, the Fund's AVC provider. Members who wish to apply to access their data on Data Protection grounds should contact the Dorset County Pension Fund on 01305 224845 or via email at pensionshelpline@dorsetcc.gov.uk.

This authority is under a duty to protect the public fund it administers, and to this end may use information for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies administering public funds solely for these purposes.

Contact Details

Write to us at:

Dorset County Pension Fund
County Hall
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1XJ

Tel: 01305 224845
Fax: 01305 224049

Email: pensionshelpline@dorsetcc.gov.uk
Web: www.yourpension.org.uk/Dorset

