The Local Government Pension Scheme

Dorset County Pension Fund
administered by Dorset Council

Dorset County Pension Fund Newsletter 2026

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Welcome to your 2026 LGPS newsletter

Welcome to the 2026 newsletter for members who are actively contributing into the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) with the Dorset County Pension Fund (DCPF).

This newsletter provides you with important information about your pension. If you have a query regarding any of the topics in this newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the DCPF team by email at **pensionshelpline@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk**

Changes to authorised unpaid leave

Authorised unpaid leave in the LGPS has changed from 1 April 2026. You should have received a letter from us with full details of the changes.

- ☑ **Authorised unpaid leave of less than 15 days** is now automatically pensionable, so you will not lose any pension growth.
- ☑ **Authorised unpaid leave of 15 days or more** will affect your pension. Your employer will write to you and ask whether you would like to buy back the lost pension. They will provide information about how much you need to pay and the payment options available.
- ☑ **Maternity, paternity and adoption leave** is pensionable for up to 52 weeks. This means that if you are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave from 1 April 2026, your pension will not be affected. For the first 52 weeks your pension benefits will continue to build up as though you were at work.

Further information can be found here: **www.lgpsmember.org/your-pension/paying-in/if-you-are-away-from-work/**

Feedback form

DCPF would welcome feedback on your Annual Benefit Illustration. This will help the fund plan for the future. Please visit: **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XCKQWGM**

Early Retirement reductions

The government have changed the early retirement factors from 1 August 2026. These are applied to your pension if you start taking it before your Normal Pension Age. The early retirement factors can be found here: **www.lgpsmember.org/your-pension/planning/taking-your-pension/**

Please contact us: Dorset County Pension Fund, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset. DT1 1XJ
Email: pensionshelpline@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Online Pension Portal: https://mypension.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Using AI for pension information

Using AI for LGPS Information

Using AI tools to obtain information about the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) can produce mixed results. AI-generated responses are not always accurate, as they can confuse different pension schemes, miss important details, or rely on outdated information and resources.

For this reason, you should not rely on AI-generated information when making decisions about your pension benefits. Instead, please refer to the official sources below:

- The national LGPS member website: **www.lgpsmember.org**
- Dorset County Pension Fund website: **https://dorsetpensionfund.org**
- Contact DCPF if you require further assistance.

When AI Goes Wrong!

An AI powered chatbot created by New York City, called MyCity, was discovered providing advice that contradicts local policies and advising companies to violate the law. For example, according to the chatbot, restaurants could serve cheese eaten by a rodent, and it is important to "inform customers about the situation."

In a New York federal court filing, one of the lawyers was caught citing non-existent legal cases. The attorney had used ChatGPT to conduct legal research, and the AI tool provided fake case references, which the lawyer included in his filing.

Protecting Your Personal Information

To help protect yourself from fraud and identity theft, do not upload or paste personal information into AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, or similar services. Information entered into these tools may be stored, processed, or used in ways that you do not control. This includes information such as your date of birth, National Insurance number, payslips, email address and annual benefit illustration.

Need Help Understanding Your Benefits?

If you would like help understanding your pension benefits, please use the information available on our website or through your online pension account. If you cannot find the information you need, please contact the Pension Fund directly and we will be happy to help.

Retirements with AVCs

If you are planning to retire and are paying into an Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) arrangement, please be aware that there may be a delay in the payment of your pension benefits. This is often due to the final AVC contribution. Your employer's payroll team has until the 19th of the month following your retirement to send the final AVC payment to the AVC provider. Until this payment has been received, the provider cannot close your AVC account or confirm your final fund value.

DCPF cannot issue your retirement options or final retirement paperwork until the AVC provider has supplied the final fund value. As a result, this may delay the payment of your pension benefits. If you are contributing to an AVC and are planning to retire in the near future, please contact DCPF for further information and guidance.

Changes to Inheritance Tax from April 2027

Currently, any Death Grant paid by the LGPS is not in scope for inheritance tax. However, from 6 April 2027, any death grant paid to a Deferred or Pensioner member will be included in the member's estate for inheritance tax purposes. This change does not impact death grants paid to members who die in service as an active member of the scheme.

As an LGPS member, it is now even more crucial to ensure you keep your Expression of Wish (death grant nomination) up to date. A death grant may be payable after retirement for up to 10 years. This change also adds to the importance of writing, and keeping up to date, a Will.

Please remember that the Administering Authority has ultimate discretion over who to pay a death grant to. Your Expression of Wish, and your Will, are key documents in assisting with the decision.

Financial Advisors

For most people, their pension will be one of the largest financial assets they ever own, often second only to their home. Making the right decisions about your pension can have a significant impact on your financial security in later life. If you are using a financial adviser, it is essential to choose one with the right expertise to help guide those decisions. While financial advisers are regulated and qualified to provide advice, not all have the same depth of experience across different types of pension schemes.

There are two types of pension schemes, defined benefit or defined contribution. The LGPS is a defined benefit pension scheme. A brief overview of the key difference in these two types of pension scheme.

Key Difference	Defined Benefit (DB) Pension	Defined Contribution (DC) Pension
Retirement Benefit	Guaranteed income for life.	Pension value depends on the size of the fund.
How Benefits Are Calculated	Based on salary and service history.	Based on contributions and investment returns.
Investment Risk	Carried by the employer/scheme.	Carried by the member.
Income Certainty	Known and predictable.	Variable and dependent on market performance.
Advice Complexity	Requires specialist DB pension expertise due to guarantees and scheme specific benefits.	Generally less complex and focused on investments and retirement income planning.

Advisers who primarily work with Defined Contribution arrangements may not always have extensive experience dealing with Defined Benefit pension schemes in general and specifically the LGPS. This can potentially lead to misunderstandings about the true value of Deferred Benefits pensions or recommendations that do not fully work within the LGPS.

DCPF has email and telephone helplines to assist you with any queries regarding the LGPS.

LGPS pension contributions bands from 1 April 2026

The amount of pension contributions a member pays into the LGPS is adjusted each year in line with cost of living.

The amount of contributions you pay is based on the pay band your employer decides is correct for you. If you have more than one job, your employer will set your contribution rate separately for each job. If your pay changes in the year, your employer may decide to review your contribution rate.

You can find the pay bands and contributions rates that apply from April 2026 at **www.lgpsmember.org/your-pension/the-essentials/your-contributions/**

Join the MoneyHelper Pensions Dashboard Research Panel

Millions of people in the UK find it hard to keep track of their pensions, making it difficult to plan for retirement. The new MoneyHelper Pensions Dashboard will bring information about them together in one secure place – including the State Pension and any that you may have lost touch with. It will show you the value of your pensions today and at retirement, so you can get a clearer picture of your future finances.

You have been invited to join the testing panel and can earn vouchers for your time, from quick surveys to guided sessions. Sign up now at the link below and help improve the dashboard.

https://portal.participantkit.com/e2a317b8-e9dd-4699-a2f3-94d08c8a4f84

Annual Benefit Illustration presentations

Do you understand your Annual Benefit Illustration?

Dorset County Pension fund is holding presentations to help members understand their illustration. These 30 minute presentations will explain what your illustration contains and highlight the information you need to check.

Please use the Eventbrite links below to register to attend one of the two sessions being offered on Microsoft Teams online.

- Friday 11 September at 12:30

Booking link: **https://DCPFannualbenefitillustration110926.eventbrite.co.uk**

- Wednesday 16 September at 17:00

Booking link: **https://DCPFannualbenefitillustration160926.eventbrite.co.uk**

LGPS member presentations

During the year, there are several general LGPS member presentations available for people who are active members of the Dorset County Pension Fund.

The presentation will cover the following points

lgps | Local Government Pension Scheme

- ☑ Understanding your LGPS pension and how it builds up
- ☑ Paying more or less into your pension
- ☑ Types of LGPS retirements
- ☑ Survivor benefits

The one hour LGPS member presentations are held on Microsoft Teams online and can be booked using the Eventbrite links below.

- Thursday 24 September at 12:30

Booking link: **https://DCPFmemberpresentationseptember.eventbrite.co.uk**

- Tuesday 10 November at 17:00

Booking link: **https://DCPFmemberpresentationnovember.eventbrite.co.uk**

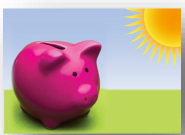
- Friday 15 January at 12:30

Booking link: **https://DCPFmemberpresentationjanuary.eventbrite.co.uk**

- Wednesday 12 May at 12:30

Booking link: **https://DCPFmemberpresentationmay.eventbrite.co.uk**

Please remember:



! Check the pay used in your Annual Benefit Illustration leaflet.

! Let us know about any change of address.

! Ensure your death grant nomination (expression of wish) is up to date.

Disclaimer

Information in this leaflet is correct at the time of printing and is provided for information purposes only. We cannot cover personal circumstances and any advice given does not affect your statutory rights or over-ride existing legislation.

August 2026