

Communications policy statement

This is the Communications policy statement of the London Borough of Hounslow, the Administering Authority for the Hounslow Pension Fund.

The Administering Authority has over 60 employers in to the fund, including the London Borough of Hounslow itself, academies and new free schools and admitted bodies.

The effective provision of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) benefits is dependent on effective communications.

The LGPS 2013 Regulations (61) instructs the Administering Authority to publish and periodically review a written statement setting out its policy concerning communications with:

- Members;
- Representatives of members;
- Prospective members; and
- Scheme Employers

Members, representatives of members and prospective members

The aims of the Administering Authority in its communications with its members, representatives of members and prospective members are:

- To enhance the way that the LGPS is valued by employees and potential employees as an integral part of employee remuneration;
- For the number of pension administration queries and complaints to be reduced;
- To reduce the number of opt-outs from the LGPS;
- To provide an effective channel for members to feedback their views of the Administering Authority;
- To ensure the message meets as large and diverse an audience as possible.
- Comply with guidance issued by the Pensions Regulator
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In order to meet these aims the Administering Authority will communicate an accurate, clear and easy to understand message in a variety of ways:

Method	Communication message
Electronic	Electronic: all members have access to the Administering Authority website delivered in partnership with our pension administrators West Yorkshire Pension Fund, www.wypf.org.uk . The website provides scheme information and access to individual member details via the MyPension facility. WYPF host a number of fund specific and shared services policies.
Newsletters	The Administering Authority issues an annual newsletter to all members in the scheme providing the latest information on the LGPS

Annual Benefit Statements	Active and deferred members are issued with an annual benefit statement which provides the current value of the benefits with the Hounslow LGPS
Annual General Meeting	The Administering Authority AGM includes presentations regarding the fund performance and administration matters. The Fund will decide on the format and media of the AGM annually.
Annual report and accounts	Available on the Hounslow pension website. Provides information on the annual management of the Administering Authority
Pension Fund Panel Reports	Public reports available on the Hounslow website, www.hounslow.gov.uk . This provides information on decisions made by the Pension Fund Panel
Pension increase note	Provided annually to pensioners, this provides information on any pension increase due to their benefits
Pension surgeries	Allows members to meet with the administrator representatives to discuss their specific queries either face to face or online
Dedicated information sessions	Dedicated information sessions will be presented on an ad hoc basis to provide information on relevant pension issues
Hounslow pensions website	www.wypf.org.uk
Dedicated email	pensions@wypf.org.uk
Dedicated telephone helpline	01274 434 999

Scheme Employers

The aims of the Administering Authority in its communications with Scheme Employers are:

- To enhance the understanding of Scheme Employer responsibilities in the LGPS;
- To improve the accuracy of data flows between Scheme Employers and the Administering Authority ;
- To ensure Scheme Employers comply with the LGPS Regulations;
- To enable Scheme Employers to view the LGPS as a valuable recruitment and retention tool;
- To provide an effective channel for Scheme Employers to feedback their views of the Administering Authority.

In order to meet these aims the Administering Authority will communicate an accurate, clear and easy to understand message in a variety of ways:

Method	Communication message
The Administering Authority Pension Administration Strategy (and appendices)	Information regarding the policies of the Administering Authority and Scheme Employer responsibilities in the LGPS
Electronic	Electronic: Scheme Employers have access to an employer section of Administering Authority website delivered in partnership with administrators, www.wypf.org.uk . The

	website provides scheme information specific to scheme employers. WYPF host a number of fund specific and shared services policies.
Employer meetings	Held annually to provide Scheme Employers with a forum to address queries regarding the Administering Authority
Dedicated contact	Scheme Employers are provided with a dedicated contact in the Administering Authority who will provide a phone and email advisory service. Employer visits and online surgeries may be available on request via contact to: The Strategic Pensions Manager: 020 8583 5635 hitesh.sharma1@hounslow.gov.uk
Dedicated information sessions	Dedicated information sessions will be presented on an ad hoc basis to provide information to scheme employers on relevant pension issues

Public Statements made about the Pension Fund

In order to promote the Pension Fund in a consistent and positive manner, the Administering Authority will follow the guidelines below in making all public statements. This includes interviews, publications, awards & nominations, press releases and responding for public calls for information (eg consultation responses).

- Statements must be reviewed and authorised by the Section 151 Officer
- Where relevant, advice from Corporate Communications will be sought.
- Notification to the Pension Fund Panel if required in the view of the s151 Officer.