



SHROPSHIRE COUNTY
PENSION FUND

Shropshire County Pension Fund **Training Policy**

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Version 1.0

Introduction

This is the Training Policy of the Shropshire County Pension Fund, which is managed and administered by Shropshire Council. The Training Policy is established to aid all to whom this Policy applies in having the sufficient knowledge and understanding ensuring that all decisions, actions and other activities are carried out in an informed and appropriate way. This means that advice and guidance from external bodies can be challenged and tested appropriately and that the Funds operational and strategic direction is in accordance with best practice and guidance. The Training Policy has the ultimate aim of ensuring that the Shropshire County Pension Fund is managed by individuals who have the appropriate levels of knowledge and skills.

Aims and objectives

Shropshire Council recognises the importance of its role as Administering Authority to the Shropshire County Pension Fund on behalf of its stakeholders which include:

- Over 40,000 current and former members of the Fund
- Over 140 employers

In relation to training, the Administering Authority's objectives are to ensure that:

- Those persons charged with the financial management and decision-making with regard to the LGPS Fund are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills required to discharge the duties and responsibilities allocated to them;
- Those persons responsible for the day-to-day administration and running of the Fund are appropriately equipped with the knowledge and skills required to discharge their duties and responsibilities in relation to the Fund;
- Those persons responsible for providing governance and assurance of the Fund have sufficient expertise to be able to evaluate and challenge the advice they receive, to ensure their decisions are robust and soundly based, and to manage any potential conflicts of interest

All to whom this Policy applies are expected to continually demonstrate their own personal commitment to training and to ensuring that these objectives are met.

To assist in achieving these objectives, the Fund will aim to comply with:

- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) knowledge and skills frameworks;
- Section 248a of the Pensions Act 2004 (as amended by the knowledge and skills requirements of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013);
- The Pensions Regulator's (TPR) Code of Practice No 14, Governance and Administration of Public Service Pension Schemes 2015

By adhering to a Training Policy the Fund will be able to demonstrate a high level of governance and standards, and report against peer group Funds in the Scheme Advisory Board KPI program.

To whom this Policy applies

This Training Policy applies to all individuals that take on a decision making, scrutiny or oversight role in the Fund. This includes:

- Officers of the administering authority involved in the management and administration of the Fund

- Members of the Pension Fund committee, including scheme member and employer representatives
- Members of the pension board, including scheme member and employer representatives.

CIPFA knowledge and skills framework

The CIPFA knowledge and skills framework identifies eight areas of knowledge and skills as the core technical requirements for those working in public sector pensions finance. They are:

- Pensions legislation
- Public sector pensions governance
- Pensions administration
- Pensions accounting and auditing standards
- Financial services procurement and relationship management
- Investment performance and risk management
- Financial markets and product knowledge
- Actuarial methods, standards and practices

James Walton (Head of Finance, Governance & Assurance (s151 Officer & Scheme Administrator) at Shropshire Council is the Fund's designated named individual responsible for ensuring that this Training Policy is implemented. This is in line with principle five of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Public Sector Pensions Finance Knowledge.

Shropshire County Pension Fund Training Plan

The Fund recognises the importance of training in ensuring pension fund committee members, pension board members and officers attain, and then maintain, the relevant knowledge and skills.

The Fund's approach to training will be supportive with the intention of providing pension fund committee members, pension board members and officers with regular sessions that will contribute to their level of skills and knowledge. The Fund will develop a rolling Training Plan, which takes account of the following:

Individual training needs

A training needs analysis will be developed for committee members, pension board members and officers to identify the key areas in which training is required. This evaluation will be undertaken on an annual basis. Training on the identified areas will be provided as necessary and on an ongoing refresher basis.

Topic based training

The need for appropriately timed training in relation to current topics, such as when decisions are required in relation to complex issues or in new areas not previously considered will be provided as required.

General awareness

There is an expectation on those to which this policy applies that they should maintain a reasonable knowledge of ongoing developments and current issues, and have a good level of general awareness of pension related matters appropriate for their roles.

How training will be provided

Training will be delivered through a variety of methods including:

- in-house training days provided by officers and/or external providers;
- shared training with other LGPS Funds or framework arrangements
- training at meetings (e.g. committee or pension board) provided by officers and/or external advisers;
- external training events, such as those organised by the Local Government Association (LGA), CIPFA, or Pensions and Lifetime Saving Association (PLSA), previously NAPF.
- attendance at seminars and conferences offered by industry-wide bodies, such as those organised by the LGA, LGC Pension Investment Seminars, CIPFA, Local Authority Pension Fund Forum or PLSA
- circulation of reading material, including Fund committee reports and minutes from attendance at seminars and conferences;
- attendance at meetings and events with the Fund's investment managers and advisors
- links to on-line training such as that provided by the TPR;
- the Funds website www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk and national LGPS websites where Scheme information is available.
- fund policies and documents such as the Annual Report and the Governance Compliance Statement

Induction process

An evaluation will be undertaken in the form of a short self-assessment questionnaire to develop an appropriate individual training plan.

Monitoring knowledge and skills

In order to identify whether the objectives of this policy are being met, the fund will maintain a training log which records attendance at training and compare this to the Training Plan.

Key risks

The key risks to the delivery of this Policy are outlined below. The pension fund committee members, with the assistance of the Pension Board and Officers, will monitor these and other key risks and consider how to respond to them.

- Changes to the committee and/or pension board membership and/or officer's potentially diminishing knowledge and understanding.
- Poor attendance and/or a lack of engagement at training and/or formal meetings by committee members, pension board members and/or other officers resulting in a poor standard of decision making, administration and/or monitoring.
- Insufficient resources being available to deliver or arrange the required training.
- The quality of advice or training provided not being of an acceptable standard.

Success measures

Knowledge gaps will be identified in annual assessment with success measured against the previous year and whether the knowledge gap has been fulfilled. A training log which records attendance at training throughout the year will also be kept.

Reporting

A report will be presented to the committee and the pension board on an annual basis setting out:

- the training provided/attended in the previous year at an individual level;
- commentary on how this compares to the Training Plan; and
- any actions required, such as a review of the Training Plan.

This information will also be included in the Fund's Annual Report and Accounts. The Funds committee members and pension board members will be provided with details of forthcoming seminars, conferences and other relevant training events.

Costs

Where there is a cost involved in providing the training this will be met directly by the Fund. However, Investment Managers and some of the training events are provided at no cost.

Degree of knowledge and understanding required

To ensure all individuals to whom this policy applies work towards what is required a knowledge matrix has been developed, shown below. The matrix determines the level of knowledge required of the eight core technical areas highlighted by the CIPFA guidance for officers, committee and the pension board. The core areas listed below have been identified as the key skills that lie at the core in the training for those involved in public sector pension's finance. The knowledge matrix is not exhaustive and other technical or non-pensions related skills will be identified on an individual basis within job descriptions or via annual assessment.

Knowledge Matrix

Core technical area	Officers (Job description)	Pensions Committee	Pension Board
Pensions Legislation LGPS Regulations	C	BK	BK C*
Public Sector Pensions Governance	C	BK	C*
Pensions Administration	E	BK	C*
Pensions Accounting and Auditing Standards	E	C	C
Financial services procurement and relationship management	E	C	BK
Investment performance and risk management	E	C	BK
Financial Markets and Product Knowledge	C	C	BK
Actuarial methods, Standards and Practices	C	C	BK

BK = Basic knowledge

C = Conversant (i.e. working knowledge)

E = Expert

*Statutory requirement (Paragraphs 34-36 of the Pensions Regulator's Code of Practice state that: *A member of the Pensions Board of a public sector pension*

scheme must be conversant with the rules of the scheme, any document recording policy about the administration of the scheme which is for the time being adopted in relation to the scheme and must also have a knowledge and understanding of the law relating)

Further information

For further information about anything in or related to in this policy please contact: Rebecca Purfit, Communications Officer, Pension Services, Shropshire County Pension Fund, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

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