



SHROPSHIRE COUNTY
PENSION FUND

PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION STRATEGY STATEMENT

January 2020



1. Introduction

Shropshire County Pension Fund (“the Fund”) is responsible for the administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme (“the Scheme”) within the geographical area of Shropshire. The Fund also administers the Scheme on behalf of a number of qualifying employers who are not situated within the Shropshire area. The service is carried out by Shropshire Council (“the administering authority”) on behalf of qualifying employers and ultimately Scheme members.

This document is the Pensions Administration Strategy Statement which outlines the policies and performance standards towards providing a cost-effective, inclusive and high quality pensions administration service.

Delivery of such an administration service is not the responsibility of one person or one organisation, but rather the joint working of a number of different stakeholders, who between them are responsible for delivering the pensions administration service to meet the diverse needs of the membership and the regulatory requirements.

2. Compliance

Developed in consultation with employers within the Fund, this statement seeks to promote good working relationships, improve efficiency and ensure agreed standards of quality in delivery of the pension administration service amongst Scheme employers and the Fund. A copy of this strategy is provided to all employers.

In no circumstances does this strategy override any provision or requirement of the regulations, nor is it intended to replace the more extensive commentary provided by the employer information on the Shropshire County Pension Fund website and administration guides provided by the Local Government Association (LGA).

3. Review

The undertakings set out within this Pensions Administration Strategy Statement will be reviewed annually by the Fund. Additionally, the Fund will review this policy statement and make revisions as appropriate, following a material change to the Fund policies in relation to any of the matters contained in the strategy. Employers will be consulted and informed of any changes.

4. Regulatory Framework

Regulation 59-(1) of the LGPS Regulations 2013 enables an LGPS administering authority to prepare a document (“the pension administration strategy”) detailing administrative standards, performance measures, data flows and communication with employers.

In addition, Regulation 70.-(1) of the LGPS Regulations 2013 allows an administering authority to recover costs from an employing authority where costs have been incurred because of that employing authority’s level of performance in

carrying out its functions under these Regulations. See section on Poor Performance.

This document has been presented, considered and ratified by the Pensions Committee on 27 July 2018 and, as such, the contents of which apply to all existing and future employers of Shropshire County Pension Fund from this date.

5. Scheme Employer Duties and Responsibilities

The delivery of a high quality cost effective administration service is not the responsibility of just the administering authority, but depends on the joint working of the administering authority with a number of individuals employed in different organisations to ensure Scheme members and other interested parties receive the appropriate level of service, and that statutory requirements are met.

Monthly/annual data transfer

The Fund's method of data collection is by way of electronic data transfer using the i-Connect service. All employers will be provided with the training and guidance on how to use i-Connect.

Response to queries

There are times when the Pensions Team may need to contact employers with queries on the data provided, or to request additional information in order to provide Scheme members with details of their pension entitlement. From time to time, employers may also require information from the Pensions Team regarding the Scheme. Timescales for dealing with specific requests are listed in this document and where a timeframe is not provided, either party should be responded to within 10 working days of receipt of the request. Timescales for dealing with bulk queries from either party should be agreed separately.

Appointing a main contact

Each employing authority must designate a named individual to act as the main point of contact with regard to any aspect of administering the LGPS, and to be responsible for ensuring the requirements set out in this strategy are met.

Their key responsibilities are:

- to act as a conduit for communications to appropriate staff within the employer - for example, Human Resources, Payroll teams, Directors of Finance;
- to ensure that standards and levels of service are maintained and regulatory responsibilities are complied with.
- to ensure that details of all nominated representatives and authorised signatures are correct and to notify the Fund of any changes immediately;
- to arrange distribution of communications literature as and when required;
- to inform the Fund of any alternative service arrangements required;
- to assure data quality and ensure the timely submission of data to the Fund; and
- to assist and liaise with the Fund on promotional activities.

Authorised signatories

Each employer must nominate individuals to act as authorised signatories, whose names and specimen signatures will be held by the Fund, and who must sign all employer documents or instructions. In signing a document, an authorised officer is not merely certifying that the form comes from the employer stated, but also that the information being provided is correct.

Consequently, if an authorised signatory is certifying information that someone else has compiled, for example leaving information including a final salary pay, career average pay, assumed pay they are authorising to confirm that the information is correct.

It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that details of the authorised signatures are up-to-date, and to notify the Fund of any changes.

Employer Training

The Fund holds annual training for employers where officers of the Fund provide information on finances, investment performance, regulatory changes and also administration performance. Attendance by each employer's nominated contacts is actively encouraged. In most instances the training is filmed and hosted on the Pension Fund website, to enable individuals unable to attend on the day to watch afterwards.

Discretions Policy

Each employer is required by statute to prepare and publish a written statement as to how they wish to exercise the discretionary powers available to them as a Scheme employer under the LGPS regulations. The policy statement must be kept under review and, where revisions are made, the revised policy statement must be sent to the Fund and made readily available to all employees within the employing authority within one month of the effective date. The LGA has produced a list of all the discretions participating employers have in relation to the LGPS. This document can be found on the website: www.lgpsregs.org.

Notification of employee's rights

Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP)

Under Regulation 72 of the LGPS 2013 regulations, any decisions made by an employing authority affecting an employee's rights to membership, or entitlement to benefits must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable and notified to the employee in writing including a reference to their right of appeal in line with Regulation 73 of the LGPS regulations. Every notification must;

- Specify the rights under stage 1 and stage 2 of the appeals procedure quoting the appropriate regulations;
- Specify the time limits within an appeal, under either stage, which apply and;
- Specify to whom an application for appeal must be made to.
 - For first stage appeals this must be the nominated person of the employer who made the decision. For 2nd stage appeals this will be the appointed person at the administering authority

The Fund has guidance for employers to provide to individuals who raise an issue under the IDR procedure.

Nominated person

Each employing authority is required to nominate and name the person to whom applications under Stage 1 of the IDR should be made. Employers must also notify the Fund of any first stage appeals they receive.

Computer links

The Fund can provide the links to the Pensions Administration System, where appropriate, to large employers for employing authority staff to view certain areas of their employees' records of membership. There is a charge for this access. The most current data protection legislation will be considered when providing this access.

The Fund will ensure that the pensions administration system is available for use during normal office hours except for any necessary scheduled maintenance of the system. Employers must notify the Fund when registered users leave the organisation, or no longer require access.

6. Service Standards to Scheme Members

Overriding legislation dictates the standards that pension schemes and employers should meet in providing certain pieces of information to various associated parties – not least of which includes the scheme member. The LGPS Regulations also identifies a number of requirements for the Fund and employers, which may not have all been covered in this document. It is important that employers make themselves familiar of the HR and Payroll guides available on www.lgpsregs.org

An online employers guide is available on the Fund's website www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk which includes template forms and guidance for all Scheme employers.

The levels of performance and procedures which the Fund and employers are expected to achieve to ensure compliance with the overriding legislation are outlined in the below tables:

NEW STARTERS

EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To ensure that pensions information is included as part of any new employment induction process, including in contracts of employment and appointment letters.</p> <p>To ensure that all employees subject to contractual admission are brought into the Scheme from their relevant start date, and provide the Pensions Team with accurate member data, using the monthly data submission i-Connect, within four weeks of the members start date.</p> <p>To provide each new employee with a Brief Scheme Guide and New Member Form with their contract of employment. This may be in the form of issuing a paper copy or by directing all new members to the Fund's website where the information can be viewed or downloaded. The most up to date versions of forms and guides can always be found on the Fund website.</p> <p>To determine the appropriate contribution rate (whether individually or by an automated process on payroll) and (as soon as is reasonably practicable), notify the employee of this contribution rate which is to be deducted from the employee's pensionable pay and the date from which the rate will become payable. It is for the employer to determine the method by which the notification is given to the employee, but the notification must contain a statement giving the address from which further information about the decision may be obtained. The notification must also notify the employee of the right to appeal, including the processes and timescales involved. Furthermore, the correct employee contribution rate according to the scheme the member is in – either the 50/50 or 100/100 scheme should be applied and (if appropriate) adjusted throughout the year according to the employer's discretionary policy on re-banding.</p> <p>To send the Fund notification through i-Connect of any eligible employees subject to automatic enrolment, who opt out of the scheme within six weeks of joining.</p>	<p>To accurately create member records on the pensions administration system following notification from an employer of a new entrant to the Scheme.</p> <p>To support employer requests to attend inductions.</p> <p>To update pension information in accordance with regulatory changes, and to keep PDF versions of forms and guides up to date on the Fund website. www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk</p> <p>The Fund will contact all new starters, providing them with an activation key for 'My Pension Online' and reissuing a New Member Form if one has not been received, within 8 weeks of notification of a new starter.</p> <p>To accurately record and update member records on the pension administration system within following the receipt of a completed New Member Form.</p>

<p>Where there is more than one contract of employment with the same employer, each membership shall be maintained separately and the Fund notified as above.</p>	
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CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To ensure that the Fund is informed of any changes in the circumstances of employees through i-Connect within four weeks of the change.</p> <p>Forms and guidance can be found in the employers' area of the Fund website at: www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk</p> <p>Changes may include:</p> <p>Personal information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of name • Marital status • National insurance number <p>Conditions of employment affecting pension such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractual hours (mandatory for members who meet the underpin requirements only) • Any remuneration changes due to promotion and down grading • Full-time equivalent pensionable pay according to the pre 2014 definition • Actual pensionable pay (including overtime/additional hours) in 100/100 and 50/50 schemes according to the post 2014 definition (CARE). • Employees contribution rate • Employee number and/or post number • Date joined scheme (if adjusted) • Confirmation of 50/50 or 100/100 scheme entry <p>NB. An Employee can easily exceed HMRC annual allowance if their pay increases. You therefore are asked to inform the Fund of:</p>	<p>To provide forms and spreadsheets for recording key changes in circumstance and to provide guidance on the secure submission of data through i-Connect.</p> <p>To accurately record and update member records on the pensions administration systems within four weeks of notification, or any shorter period as requested by the employer with regards to specific requirements.</p>

- Significant pay awards/pay increases
- Honorariums
- Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) contributions
- Shared Cost AVC contributions (if applicable)
- Shared Cost Additional Pension Contributions

For a full list of data items required, see the section FINANCIAL AND DATA OBLIGATIONS, or further information is available from the Fund directly. Employers can also visit the webpage on 'monthly data reports and end of year procedure' on the Fund website www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk

Absence

During periods of reduced or nil pay as a result of sickness, injury or relevant child related leave (i.e. ordinary maternity, paternity or adoption leave or paid shared parental leave and any paid additional maternity or adoption leave) assumed pensionable pay (APP) should be applied for pension purposes.

Employer contributions should be deducted from pay and any APP. If the employee receives no pay the employer contributions should still be deducted from APP.

Should an employee wish to purchase Additional Pension Contributions (APC) or a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contributions (SCAPC) contract to buy back the pension 'lost' during the absence, the APP amount will need to be calculated and provided to the member's employer. Employers must bring to the attention of the member, before a period of absence, that they can buy back the 'lost' pension. Employers should also direct members to the website www.lgpsmember.org where they can calculate the cost to buy back this 'lost' pension. As employees have a thirty day timeframe with which to buy back the lost pension, employers should be sure to mention this to the employee early on in the 30 day period.

Types of absences include:

- Maternity, paternity and adoption

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid & unpaid leave of absence • Industrial action (SCAPC not available) • Any other material/authorised period of absence <p>See section 'ADDITIONAL PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS (APCs) and SHARED COST APC's' for further information.</p>	
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ANNUAL RETURN, VALUATION & ANNUAL BENEFIT STATEMENTS	
EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To ensure the Fund receives accurate year to date information to 31 March through the month twelve i-Connect data submission.</p> <p>The information should be accompanied by a final statement (lgs121a); balancing the amounts paid during the year with the total amounts submitted via i-Connect for the year and to include leavers. A compliance statement (lgs121b) must also be submitted and both duly signed by an appropriate officer. Should there be any under/over payment discovered whilst reconciling, accompanying paperwork detailing this must be submitted together with payment or a formal request for a refund. Year end reconciliation must be completed and forms sent by 30 April each year.</p> <p>To provide any additional information that may be requested to produce annual benefit statements for service up until the 31 March in each particular year by the 30 April each year.</p> <p>To provide the Fund with up to date and correct information as and when requested in accordance with agreed timescales and the regulations.</p> <p>To ensure that all errors highlighted from the annual contribution and pensionable pay posting exercise are responded to and corrective action taken promptly.</p>	<p>To process employer year end contribution returns within three months of receipt i.e. 30 April, or within three months of receipt of the information if later.</p> <p>To produce annual benefit statements for all active members by 31 August.</p> <p>To highlight annually if an individual has exceeded their annual allowance and issue a pensions saving statement by 5 October.</p> <p>Annual benefit statements will also be produced for deferred members, but no information from employers will be required.</p> <p>To provide data to the Fund Actuary and Government Actuary's Department to enable employer contribution rates to be accurately determined.</p> <p>To provide an electronic copy of the actuarial valuation report and contributions certificate to each employer.</p>

RETIREMENT AND TRANSFER IN/OUT ESTIMATES

EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To submit a request using form PEN010 by post, or attaching it to an email. Each form must be signed by an authorising officer.</p> <p>For larger bulk estimates, requests should be made via the spreadsheet template provided by the Pensions Team, and notice should be given in advance when any redundancy exercises are planned.</p> <p>To provide pay and other relevant information requested by the Pensions Team either on an individual basis within ten working days of the request, or for bulk/group requests by an agreed timescale with the Pensions Team.</p> <p>To help the Fund promote the 'My Pension Online' area for members when requested.</p>	<p>To issue the individual quotations/information within ten working days after all information required to process a quotation has been received.</p> <p>To provide information to the scheme member on any potential transfer in of benefits once all information required to process the quotation has been received (transfer estimate from other pension provider, contracting out, salary details etc) within ten working days. However, legally we do have up to two months to provide the transfer information following receipt of all information required to process the quotation.</p> <p>Separate agreed timescales and any additional cost will be put in place for bulk requests.</p> <p>To provide large employers with links to the appropriate software in order for employing authority staff to view certain areas of their employees' records of membership. (Employers should note there is a charge for this access).</p> <p>To maintain and promote the 'My Pension Online' area on the website for members to login and view their pension information.</p>

DIVORCE AND OUTSOURCINGS ESTIMATES

EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To provide pay and other relevant information requested by the Pensions Team either on an individual basis within ten working days of the request, or for bulk/group requests by an agreed timescale with the Pensions Team.</p> <p>Staff transfers e.g. outsourcings To ensure early notification/liaison with the Pensions Team when considering an outsourcing exercise which affects</p>	<p>Where a request for divorce information including a CETV is received from the member, or the Court, this will be issued three months from the date of receipt of the signed form request from the member, or receipt of the Court order. When a shorter timescale is requested/imposed the Pensions Team will provide the member with the schedule of charges.</p>

members/eligible members of the LGPS. See guidance on 'Becoming an employer or existing employer letting a contract' on the Fund's website.	To provide guidance to current employers participating in the Fund who are considering outsourcing.
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ACTUAL RETIREMENTS	
EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To submit the appropriate PEN007 leavers form to the Fund as soon as the information is available. The PEN007 form must be completed fully, and signed by an authorised signatory, as it confirms the information required to enable the benefits to be calculated and the employer's decision as to the type of benefit that is to be paid to the member. Evidence of the calculation of final pensionable pay may be requested so the Pensions Team can check the accuracy of the pay provided. The PEN007 form will be returned if it appears to be incorrect.</p> <p>Further information can be found in the Employers area of the Fund website via www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk</p>	<p>To issue the member with a letter and benefits information within five working days of correctly completed employer's notification via the PEN007 leavers form. However, from receipt of all information required to process, the regulations state that we do have up to one month following the date benefits become payable or two months if retirement is early.</p> <p>To issue the member with a letter notifying them of actual retirement benefits within five days following receipt of all documentation from the member</p> <p>To make payment of any lump sum within five working days of receipt of all relevant fully completed forms and certificates from the member, or retirement date if later.</p> <p>To pay any pension payment on the 29th of each month following retirement, unless this falls on a weekend or bank holiday when the payment will be made on the last working day before. Payment will also be made earlier in the month of December to take account of the Christmas period.</p>

ILL HEALTH RETIREMENTS	
EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To determine whether an ill health benefit award is to be made, based on medical evidence and the criteria set in the current LGPS regulations, and after obtaining an opinion from a Fund approved Independent Registered Medical Practitioner (IMRP) on the appropriate certificate. If an award is made, to then determine which tier 1, 2 or 3 is to be awarded.</p>	<p>To calculate and pay the required benefits in line with actual retirement timescales.</p> <p>To assist the employer in performing their legislative responsibility to review Tier 3 ill health cases at eighteen months.</p>

<p>Arrange for completion of the PEN007 form and then submit to the Fund with all related paperwork including IMRP certificate and a copy of the notice letter issued to the member confirming the level of ill health benefits awarded and the appeal information under IDPR</p> <p>To keep a record of all Tier 3 ill health retirements, particularly in regards to arranging the eighteen-month review. Arranging if necessary with an (IMRP) approved by the administration authority for a further medical certificate. To recover any overpayment of pension benefits following a discovery of gainful employment and notify the Fund, where appropriate.</p> <p>To review all Tier 3 ill health retirement cases at eighteen months. Further information on ill health retirements can be found on the employers' pages on our website www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk</p>	
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MEMBERS LEAVING EMPLOYMENT BEFORE RETIREMENT	
EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To notify the Fund using the PEN007 form, ensuring all relevant information is included on the form, within four weeks of the members leave date.</p>	<p>To accurately record and update member records on the pension administration system.</p> <p>The regulatory target to inform members the options available to them upon leaving the Scheme is two months following receipt of all the correct information from the employer via the PEN007 form.</p> <p>The Fund's best practice target to calculate notify a member of their deferred benefit entitlement is ten days following receipt of correct information from the employer via the PEN007 form. To process and pay a refund within five days to an eligible member following receipt of all relevant documentation from the member/employer.</p>

FORMER MEMBERS WITH DEFERRED BENEFITS

EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To keep adequate records of the following for members who leave the Scheme with deferred benefits, as early payment of benefits may be required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name & last known address • National Insurance number • Payroll number • Date of birth • Last job information including job description • Salary details • Date and reason for leaving <p>To determine, following an application from the former employee to have their deferred benefits paid early, as to whether or not they are eligible for early payment on ill health grounds in line with the criteria set in the relevant regulations and after seeking a suitable medical opinion from an (IRMP) approved by the administering authority, or to determine whether benefits should to be released early and in some cases any actuarial reduction waived on compassionate grounds.</p>	<p>To record and update member records on the pensions administration system.</p> <p>To provide former members with an annual benefit statement of their deferred benefits, updated by the annual pensions increase award when applicable.</p> <p>To provide estimates of benefits that may be payable and any resulting employer costs within ten working days of request upon request.</p>

DEATH IN SERVICE & TERMINAL ILLNESS

EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To inform the Fund immediately on the death of an employee via the PEN007 leavers form, or when a member is suffering from a potentially terminal illness and to provide details of the next of kin.</p> <p>Further information can be found on the employer pages of our website www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk</p>	<p>To provide an initial letter of acknowledgement to the next of kin/informant within 5 working days following a notification of death.</p> <p>To provide a letter notifying dependents of benefits within five days following receipt of identification/certificates and relevant documentation.</p> <p>To assist employer's, employees and their next of kin in ensuring the pension options are made available and that payment of benefits are expedited in an appropriate and caring manner.</p> <p>The Fund's policy regarding payment of benefits in such situations, can be viewed</p>

in the Governance Compliance Statement.

FINANCIAL AND DATA OBLIGATIONS

EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To pay the Fund all contributions deducted from payroll (not including AVCs) of its employees and employer contributions and any deficit lump sum payments due on a monthly basis, no later than the 19th day of the month following the period of deductions. Further information can be found in the Employer Guide via www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk</p> <p>Each payment must be accompanied by an i-Connect data extract providing the following data for each member;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Insurance number • Payroll reference 1 • Member address and postcode • Date of leaving • Payroll period end date • Additional contributions 1 • Additional contributions 2 • Surname • Forenames • Gender • Date of birth • Marital status • Title • Taxable earnings • Annual pensionable salary (only required at month 12) • Pensionable pay • Date joined LGPS • Job title • Part-time hours effective date • Part-time hours • Part-time indicator • Whole-time equivalent hours • Employee's main section contributions • Employer's contributions • Scheme contribution rate • Opt out date • Opt in date 	<p>To allocate correctly the contributions received to each employee record and to keep a log of contributions received from each employer.</p> <p>To charge interest for late payment in the following circumstances;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer contributions (including deficit payment) are overdue if they are received a month later than the due date specified. • All other payments are overdue if they are not received by the due date specified. <p>Inform each employer of any new contribution bandings tables in place from each April.</p> <p>Inform employers of any rechargeable items as they become due. Early Retirement Strain will be notified prior to benefits being put into payment.</p> <p>To keep the Fund's Privacy Notice up to date on the website for all members. To keep a Memorandum of Understanding which explains the relationship between the administering authority and participating employers when sharing personal data.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main section cumulative pensionable pay • 50/50 section cumulative pensionable pay • Full-time equivalent final pay • Cumulative employee's main section contributions • Cumulative employer's contributions • Reason for leaving • Cumulative employer Shared Cost APC's • Cumulative employee APC's • Employee's 50/50 section contributions • Cumulative employees 50/50 section contributions • Pay period Shared Cost APC's • Pay period employee APC's <p>Employers are required to pay all rechargeable items to the Fund immediately on receipt of the invoice. The Fund, in certain circumstances, may not commence the member benefits until the invoice has been paid.</p>	
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ADDITIONAL PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS (APCs) and SHARED COST APC's (SCAPCs)	
EMPLOYERS' RESPONSIBILITY	FUND'S RESPONSIBILITY
<p>To communicate to employees regarding the option of SCAPC's to cover periods of 'lost pension' and the timeframe they must elect to purchase a SCAPC. Members must elect within thirty days of returning to work following the absence, but employers have the discretion to extend this period. This should be laid out in the employer's Discretions Policy.</p> <p>To calculate and collect from the employee, payroll contributions and to arrange the prompt payment to the Fund, according to the published schedule and to be no later than the 19th of the month following the deduction. More information can be found in the employer area on www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk</p>	<p>To provide information on APCs to members/employers through www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk, and direct employees to the national LGPS member website where a modeller can be found.</p>

7. Standards of Data

Overriding Legislation in performing the role of administering the LGPS

The Fund and employers will comply with the overriding legislation, including:

- the Occupational Pensions Schemes
- (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2015;
- The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2015;
- the Pensions Act 1995, 2004 and 2014;
- any Transitional Regulations currently in place;
- the Discretionary and Compensation Regulations 2006;
- the Data Protection Act 1998;
- the Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- the Age Discrimination Act 2006;
- the Finance Act 2004;
- Health and Safety legislation;
- Employment Rights Act 2010;
- HMRC Legislation and Current GAD Guidance;
- Public Service Pensions Act 2013;

and any future amendments to the above legislation.

Data Protection Act 2018

The Shropshire County Pension Fund is a Data Controller as part of the Data Protection Act 2018 which incorporates the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This means we store, hold and manage personal data in line with statutory requirements to enable us to provide pension administration services. To enable us to carry out our statutory duty, we are required to share information with certain bodies, but will only do so in limited circumstances. More information about how we hold data and who we share it can be found in the Fund's Privacy Notice on www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk.

The Fund has introduced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The aim of the MOU is to set out that participating employers in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) can share data with the LG administering authority without a data sharing agreement being in place. (There is no legal requirement for employers to have a data sharing agreement with LGPS administering authorities as they are both data controllers.) A copy of the MOU can be found on the employers' area of the website www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk.

Secure Data Transfer

The Fund will follow Shropshire Council's as Administering Authority data security guidelines when sending any personal data, including its published data sharing policy. This means that members' personal data will only be transferred from one party to the other via an acceptable method specified by the Administering Authority which may include any of the following:

- (a) i-Connect data transfer service (Internet based application)
- (b) Secure email
- (c) Paper forms signed by an authorising officer from the employer
- (d) Password protected excel spreadsheet

All these measures start from the date of receipt of all relevant information. The annual performance of the Fund is reported each year in the Annual Report.

Audit

The Fund is subject to an annual audit of its processes and internal controls. Employers are expected to fully comply with any requests for information from both internal and approved external auditors. Any subsequent recommendations will be considered and where appropriate implemented with employing authority cooperation.

Benchmarking

The Fund will regularly monitor its costs and service performance by benchmarking with other administering authorities. Details of the costs of administration, quality measures and standards of performance will be published in the Annual Report.

8. Employer Performance Reporting

As part of this Pensions Administration Strategy the Fund will develop arrangements for reporting on key performance measures.

This approach to reporting will facilitate engagement with employers and provide a mechanism for service level review and recognition of best practice.

Poor performance/additional work

The Fund will seek, at the earliest opportunity, to work closely with employers in identifying areas of poor performance, provide the necessary training and development, and to put in place appropriate processes to improve the level of service in the future.

In the event of continued poor performance, or additional work imposed on the Fund as a result of employer poor performance and a lack of any evidence of any measures being taken to achieve improvement by an employing authority, the Fund will seek to recover any additional costs arising.

Any third party costs or regulatory fines incurred by the Fund as a consequence of administrative failures or poor performance by the employing authority will be recovered from the employer. These may include fines imposed by the Courts, the Pensions Ombudsman or the Pensions Regulator and additional charges in respect of actuarial fees, third party computer charges and additional printing and distribution costs.

In dealing with poor performance the Fund will:

- write to the main contact at the employer setting out the area(s) of poor performance;

- meet with the employing authority, where possible, to discuss area(s) of poor performance and how these can be addressed;
- contact the individual/body with overall authority for the Scheme employer (i.e. CEO/Chair of Trustee Board/Parish or Town Council)
- issue formal written notice, where no improvement is demonstrated by the employing authority or where there has been a failure to take agreed action by the employing authority;
- Make a claim for cost recovery, taking account of time and resources in resolving the specific area(s) of poor performance.
- Will report any claim for the cost of recovery to the Pension Committee/Pensions Board at the next available meeting and may form part of the administration report in the Fund's published Annual Report.

Reporting breaches

The Fund has a procedure to be followed by certain persons in relation to reporting breaches of the law to the Pensions Regulator. The breaches procedure applies, in the main to;

- all members of the Shropshire Pension Board and Committee;
- all officers involved in the management of the Pension Fund including members of the Treasury Team, Pensions Administration Team, and the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance (Section 151 Officer);
- any professional advisers including auditors, actuaries, legal advisers and fund managers; and
- officers of employers participating in the Shropshire County Pension Fund who are responsible for LGPS matters.

Breaches can occur in relation to a wide variety of the tasks normally associated with the administrative function of a scheme such as keeping records, internal controls, calculating benefits and making investment or investment-related decisions.

If a breach occurs the breaches policy must be followed. The most up to date breaches policy can be found on the Fund's website. If a breach occurs by an employer, the Fund will notify the employer to ensure improvements are made and will record and monitor the breach. If this failure to comply with the regulations is likely to be material, it will be reported to the Pensions Regulator.

9. Associated Policy Statements and Documents

Participating employers are advised to familiarise themselves with the other policies issued by the Fund.

Employer Events Policy

The purpose of this document is to describe the various "life stages" of an employer participating in the Fund. It summarises the events and possible outcomes from those events right through until it withdraws from the Fund.

Communications Strategy Statement

The statement outlines the Fund's policy on:

- information to members, representatives and employers;
- the format, frequency and method of distributing such information;

- the promotion of the Scheme to prospective members and their employing authorities

Governance Compliance Policy

Shropshire Council has delegated to the Pensions Committee various powers and duties in respect of the administration of the Fund.

This statement sets out the scheme of delegation and the terms of reference, structure and operational procedures of the delegation. It also includes information on how it will exercise certain discretions provided by the Scheme.

Employer Discretions Policy

Since 1997, the LGPS regulations have required every employing authority to:

- issue a written policy statement on how it will exercise the various discretions provided by the Scheme;
- keep it under review;
- revise as necessary.

A full list of employer discretions can be found on www.lgpsregs.org.

The Fund has purchased a template to assist employers when making their policy. A copy of the template can requested from the Pensions Team.

Contact Details

If you can read this but know someone who cannot, please contact us on (01743) 252130 so we can provide this information in a more suitable format.

If you wish to contact us on any issue regarding your pension, please contact Pension Services.

Office Hours:

Monday- Thursday 8.45am-5.00pm

Friday 8.45am- 4.00pm

We run a drop-in service on Monday to Thursday office hours.

If you would prefer to discuss your pension in person, you are welcome to come in and see us at the address below:

Pension Services, Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury,
SY2 6ND

Email: pensions@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 252130

Web: www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk

Administered by:

