

Wiltshire Pension Fund

Communications Strategy

Communications Policy

The following statement covers the policy of Wiltshire Council in its role as the administering authority for the Wiltshire Pension Fund as required by Regulation 67 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008.

The Communications Policy Statement must set out (a) the policies on the provision of information and publicity about the Scheme to members, representatives of members and employing authorities; (b) the format, frequency and method of distributing such information or publicity; and (c) the promotion of the Scheme to prospective members and their employers.

This specific policy document deals with the communication of all aspects of the scheme to individual LGPS members and employing authorities within the Fund. It explains our existing methods of communication and summarises some of our plans for the future.



Who do we communicate with?

- **Scheme Members**
 - Active
 - Deferred
 - Pensioners
- **Prospective Members**
- **Participating Employers**
- **Pensions Committee**
- **Other Bodies including**
 - Investment Managers
 - Actuaries
 - Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)
 - Other Funds

How does the Fund communicate?

When deciding how to communicate we take into account the message, our audience and the cost to the Fund. We aim to use the most appropriate communication means for the audiences receiving the information and this may involve using more than one method.



Scheme members

Scheme literature

A range of Scheme literature is produced by the Fund and supplied to employing bodies and Scheme members directly. Copies of this literature are also available on the Fund's website www.wiltshirepensionfund.org.uk. A list of communications material can be found in Appendix A.

Benefit statements

An annual benefit statement showing the current and prospective value of members' benefits is sent direct to the home address of all active members of the Scheme. A benefit statement is sent directly to the home address of all deferred members each year where a current address is known.

Website

The Fund has a website which provides advice, information and the latest Scheme news. It continues to evolve with information being added as it becomes available. Electronic copies of Scheme literature, policies and reports are available to download. We also provide a number of forms and secure areas on our website for both committee members and employers.

Telephone

A dedicated help line for Scheme members is operated by experienced staff of the Wiltshire Pension Fund administration team. The team offer information on all aspects of Scheme membership and benefits for all active, deferred and pensioner members. Lines are open from 8:30am – 5:20pm Monday to Thursday and from 8:30am to 5pm on Fridays.

Tel: 01225 713613

Pay advice/P60

The Fund issues pay slips to Scheme pensioners in March, April and May each year. The April advice shows the effect of the annual pension increase and the May advice shows any tax changes. We do not send pensioners a pay slip during the rest of the financial year unless their pension amount changes by £5 or more.

Early in the financial year pensioners will also receive their P60.

Newsletters

Pensioners receive an annual newsletter each year which includes information on the annual pensions increase and any changes to the LGPS.

An annual newsletter to our active members will be introduced soon.

Pension roadshows

Roadshows are run as and when they are needed and provide an opportunity for members to have their queries answered and for the Fund to communicate existing, proposed and new legislation.



Pre-retirement courses

Face to face meetings that aim to explain the options available for members approaching retirement.

Pension surgeries

Educational sessions that are available on request for small groups of members. For example, where an employer is going through a restructure it may be beneficial for the employees to understand the impact any pay reduction may have on their pension entitlement. Our aim is to introduce drop in sessions for members of the Scheme on an occasional basis.

Retirement packs

Useful letter and forms for members retiring, including a nomination form, bank account change form, a statement of pension and tax office details.

Prospective members

New starter pack

Each time a new employee begins employment with a Scheme employer a new starter pack is issued. This pack contains a Scheme guide and explains rights, benefits and options for the new employee, as well as information on opting out of the Scheme.

Website

The Fund's website contains information on joining the LGPS and information on opting out.

Promotional leaflet/posters

We intend to distribute a promotional leaflet/poster to employing bodies for distribution to prospective employees and existing non-members, and for display on notice boards.

Corporate induction courses

Fund officers attend corporate induction events in order to present the Scheme to prospective members and highlight the benefits of joining the LGPS.



Scheme employers

As at 31 March 2009, the Wiltshire Pension Fund has circa 65 contributing employers. They receive technical advice and guidance from us as they are the first point of contact for our members. We use various channels to share information with our employers...

Employers guide

An administration manual is issued to all employers and provides all the information needed to take part effectively in the pension scheme. Regular updates to this manual are provided as the Scheme rules change.

Technical newsletter

The Fund publishes a regular newsletter issued as and when necessary to keep employers informed of any regulation changes and changes to our administration procedures. It is also used to inform employers of what we are doing to improve relationships with them, such as surveys and the steps we will be taking as a result of the findings.

Individual employer meetings

Meetings can be arranged on an individual basis for an employer to discuss a particular issue and receive specialist advice from Fund staff. These meetings are available at the employer's request by contacting the Employer Relationship Manager. We visit all large / medium employers at least once a year and contact our small employers annually via telephone for a general troubleshooting / courtesy call.

Website

The Fund's website includes an area specifically for employers which provides guides to the Scheme and its administration. Newsletters and updates can also be viewed in this area and a number of forms downloaded.

Annual report and accounts

The audited accounts of the Wiltshire Pension Fund are prepared as at 31 March each year and every employer receives a copy. They are also published on the website.

Pension Liaison Officers Group (PLOG)

The Funds holds quarterly meeting for all employers to discuss Scheme regulations and administration as well as any other issues raised by the employers of the Fund. These meetings are an excellent opportunity for both parties to get together and exchange news and views.

Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee

The administration of the Fund is the responsibility of Wiltshire Council, which is designated as an "administering authority" in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations. The Council has delegated this function to the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee who meets four times a year for normal business, and will also meet on an ad hoc basis to consider specific matters.

Committee is made up of 5 Wiltshire Council members, 2 members from Swindon Borough Council, 1 representative from an admitted body, as well as 2 non-voting UNISON representatives. Policy intention is to add a pensioner representative to the committee.

The Fund's Investment Adviser and the Independent Pension Fund Advisor also attend most meetings. Members of the public are also welcome to attend Committee meetings as observers.

Committee reports, agendas and minutes are available via the Wiltshire Council website: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council/councillorcommitteemeetings/committees/pensionfundcommittee.htm

Communication with trade unions

While we currently have no formal meetings between the pension section and union representatives, we are available for consultation on technical issues, the provision of information about the scheme and the council policies relating to pensions. There are also 2 non voting trade union representatives on the Pensions Committee.

Business Plan

The Fund produces a regular Business Plan every 3 years outlining its goals and objectives, as well as providing an action plan of the key priorities over the plan period in order to further these objectives.

Accessibility

We recognise that individuals may have specific needs in relation to the format or language in which information is provided. We have already considered this for our website and have formatted it so that it is accessible by the visually impaired and our letters conform to the recommended font size and formatting. Demand for alternative formats/languages is not high enough to allow us to prepare suitable material automatically. However, all communications from the Wiltshire Pension Fund office can be produced in large print, audio, Braille or in another language on request.

For those with hearing difficulties, we can communicate by visual means, rather than using the telephone. We can also use the Typetalk facility and offer a hearing loop at the reception of our main offices.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a way of identifying any actual / potential impact (positive or adverse) of current or proposed policies (including strategies), practices and procedures across all areas of equality - race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion,

belief and age. The Fund has an EIA policy and this is consulted on when it is refreshed. A copy of the policy is available on request.

Future plans

We will continue to communicate with our stakeholders using the methods highlighted above. However, our future objectives include:

- Service Level Agreements for our employers
- Employer surgeries
- Improving our website
- Review of all publications / Scheme literature
- Possible introduction of Pension Clinics for members
- Pensioner annual meeting

Review

We will review our communication policy annually to ensure it meets audience needs and regulatory requirements. A current version of the policy statement will always be available on our website at www.wiltshirepensionfund.org.uk.

Data protection

Wiltshire Council has a duty to protect personal information and will process personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and any amendments to the act. 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.

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

The authority administering the Local Government Pension Fund within Wiltshire is Wiltshire Council. If you would like more information about the Scheme please contact us at the following address:

Write to us at:

Wiltshire Pension Fund
County Hall
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Tel: 01225 713613

Email: pensionenquiries@wiltshire.gov.uk

Web: www.wiltshirepensionfund.org.uk

Opening hours:

Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 5.20pm

Friday 8.30am – 5pm



Administered by

Wiltshire Council
Where everybody matters

Appendix A

Communication Material	Paper Based	Electronic Form (PDF)	Website	Frequency	When Reviewed
Brief guide to the LGPS	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
New starter pack	✓	✓	✓	Constantly available	Annually
Scheme members Annual Benefit Statements	✓	X	X	Annually	Annually
Deferred members Annual Benefit Statement	✓	X	X	Annually	Annually
Pensioners Newsletter	✓	✓	✓	Annually	Annually
Retirement packs	✓	X	X	Constantly available	Annually
Pay advice/P60	✓	X	X	March, April & May each year unless amount changes by £5 or more	Annually
Employers Guide	X	✓	✓	Annually	Annually
Technical Newsletter	X	✓	✓	Quarterly	Quarterly
PLOG Presentations	X	X	✓	Quarterly	N/A
Committee Members handbook	✓	✓	X	3 years	3 years
Pension Committee minutes	✓	X	✓	Quarterly	N/A
Business Plan	X	✓	✓	3 years	3 years
Annual report	✓	✓	✓	Annually	Annually
Valuation report	✓	✓	✓	3 years	3 years
Fund policies	✓	✓	✓	3 years	As required

