



Merseyside Pension Fund **Communications Policy**

Draft

This document has been presented, considered and approved by Pension Committee on xx xxx xxxx, following consultation with the Local Pension Board

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. General Communications	3
Telephone	3
Internet	4
Social Media.....	4
Public Enquiry Counter	4
Access to Communications	4
3. Communicating with Scheme Members	5
Members' Website – mpfmembers.org.uk.....	5
Annual Benefit Statement.....	5
Scheme Literature	5
Newsletters	5
Presentations & Courses.....	5
4. Communicating with Members' Representatives	6
5. Communicating with Prospective Members.....	6
Scheme booklet & Website.....	6
Trade Unions	6
6. Communicating with Scheme Employers.....	6
Employers' Website – mpfemployers.org.uk.....	6
Pension Liaison Officer	6
Employer News Alerts	7
Annual Report & Accounts.....	7
Annual Employers' Conference	7
Pension Liaison Officers Group.....	7
Practitioner Training	7

1. Introduction

Merseyside Pension Fund (the Fund) is one of the largest Local Government Pension Schemes in the UK and manages the pension records of over 135,000 members.

The Fund is committed to providing clear, accurate, comprehensive and timely information to all stakeholders, through the most appropriate and cost-effective communication medium.

Funds in England and Wales are required to publish a statement of policy under Regulation 61 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 relating to the communications with members and Scheme employers.

As required by the regulations, this policy will outline the Fund's activities in regard:

- Communications to members, representatives of members, prospective members and Scheme employers;
- The format, frequency and method of distributing such information;
- The promotion of the Scheme to prospective members and their employers;

This policy will be revised and republished following any material change in policy.

2. General Communications

For general communications, the Fund can be contacted at:

Merseyside Pension Fund
Castle Chambers
43 Castle Street
Liverpool
L2 9SH

Telephone: 0151 242 1390
Fax: 0151 236 3520
Email: mpfadmin@wirral.gov.uk

Telephone

All Fund communications to individual members have a published telephone number. The number may be a general enquiry number, a workgroup or helpline number (such as Pensions Payroll) or, in individual cases, a direct telephone number to the staff member responsible.

For training purposes and as part of its continual improvement programme, the Fund may monitor and record calls.

Internet

The Fund has two main websites:

<https://mpfmembers.org.uk>

<https://mpfemployers.org.uk>

...these can also be accessed via <http://merseysidepensionfund.org.uk>

Social Media

The Fund has a presence on Facebook and Twitter, where members can be notified of notices and news recently published on our main members' website. Members can also directly message the Fund via both these platforms.

<https://www.facebook.com/mpfmembers>

<https://twitter.com/mpfmembers>

Public Enquiry Counter

For those members who prefer 'face to face' communication, the Fund's offices are centrally situated in Liverpool city centre and are easily accessible by public transport from all areas of Merseyside.

A public enquiry counter is situated on the 7th floor of Castle Chambers, open from 9.00 to 5.00, Monday to Friday. A private interview room is available for members who wish to discuss confidential matters.

Appointments can be made to discuss specific pension options or problems and, if necessary, appropriate staff can visit a workplace or members at home in cases of special need.

Access to Communications

The Fund is committed to make all necessary and reasonable adjustments to help members who require assistance to access our communications. The Fund can arrange large print, audio or Braille versions of all literature.

All print and electronic communications are designed with full consideration for those with additional needs. This is to ensure that all members can access our services. All communications media is measured against accessibility standards. The Fund is assisted by various partner organisations in fulfilling the objectives of the Equality Act 2010.

3. Communicating with Scheme Members

Members' Website – mpfmembers.org.uk

The website has individual sections for active, pensioner and deferred members, reflecting the diverse needs of our membership. The site provides explanation, guidance and updates for all categories of member.

An important part of the website is given over to the governance of the Fund, its statutory responsibilities and investment performance. This demonstrates the Fund's commitment to transparency in our dealings with members and all stakeholders.

Scheme members also have the opportunity to securely access their own pension records via the secure **MyPension** online portal and to update home address information.

Annual Benefit Statement

An annual benefit statement is made available online for active and deferred members. These statements with supporting guidance notes are made available through the Fund's secure online portal. Annual benefit statements can be issued in paper form on written request to the Fund.

The distribution of statements to active & deferred members is also an opportunity to summarise any changes to the Scheme regulations or other changes in regard pensions.

Scheme Literature

Whilst the website contains detailed information and guidance for members, the Fund also maintains an extensive range of literature for all categories of member. Copies of scheme literature are made available on the members' website.

Newsletters

'Honeypot' is the Fund's in-house newsletter for pensioners. Published annually, the newsletter is produced on paper and posted to the home address of all members in receipt of pension benefits. It proves to be a useful way of providing updates on pension increases, relevant changes in legislation, topical news, competitions, letters and maintaining a dialogue with our pensioner members.

For general communications to active members, the Fund produces news items for use by Scheme employers on intranets, broadcast emails, staff newsletters and manager briefing publications.

The Fund on occasion will utilise newsletters to communicate major Scheme changes to active and deferred members; the format is particularly useful when explaining multiple, complicated changes. Because of their nature, these newsletters are not produced at fixed times, but rather in response to changes in the regulations; with reference to the time restrictions imposed by the Disclosure regulations.

Presentations & Courses

The Fund delivers standard or tailored presentations on a wide range of subjects for members. These presentations are provided on demand in conjunction with employers; although a minimum number of attendees will be required to justify Fund resources.

The Fund pro-actively arranges courses on wider topic areas and invites appropriate third parties to assist Fund staff in presenting relevant information, workshop activities and also to provide relevant support materials to take home. Courses can be delivered at employer sites or in Liverpool city centre.

Presentations & courses can be requested from the Communications team on **0151 242 1392** or **mpfcomms@wirral.gov.uk**

4. Communicating with Members' Representatives

Materials available to members are also available on request to their representatives or through the Members' website.

5. Communicating with Prospective Members

Scheme booklet & Website

Upon appointment with their employer, all prospective scheme members will be provided with a link to the Fund's website where they can access scheme booklets and the key forms for membership.

The website also provides information to help members make an informed decision about contributing to the LGPS and how to opt out of the scheme should they so wish.

The Fund's first contact to a new member, also reinforces the value of pension saving and provides once again the link to the Fund's website where they can access the scheme booklets.

Trade Unions

The Fund works with the relevant trade unions to ensure the scheme is understood by all interested parties. Training days for branch officers can be provided upon request.

6. Communicating with Scheme Employers

Employers' Website – mpfemployers.org.uk

A website for Scheme employer specific communications and guidance, the employer's website is secured by a username and password.

Referencing the Payroll and HR guides published by the Local Government Association, it details the processes, procedures and forms required to effectively discharge the duties of an employer participating in the Scheme.

Pension Liaison Officer

Each employer has a named member of staff who performs the duty of a Pension Liaison Officer. The primary contact for the Fund, this person is contactable by e-mail, telephone and in-person to assist the Fund in communication and supporting members.

The Pension Liaison Officer on appointment is given a username and password for the Employers' website and is also provided with the facility to request additional access for colleagues in their organisation.

Employer News Alerts

Regular news items, such as changes to legislation, consultations and general administrative updates are communicated regularly to all registered users of the Employers' website.

Annual Report & Accounts

The aim of the report is to highlight the important issues affecting the Fund over the previous twelve months, along with detail on both investment and administration performance.

Annual Employers' Conference

A conference is held annually for all Scheme employers at which detailed investment, financial and administrative reports are presented by Fund managers. Other speakers are invited from government agencies and organisations connected to the pensions industry.

Pension Liaison Officers Group

The Fund aims to hold three meetings each year with larger Scheme employers to discuss the topics of legislation, pension regulation, administration and other issues raised by the employers or the Fund. This dialogue proves useful in developing administrative processes and communications for the benefit of all Scheme employers and members.

Practitioner Training

The Fund provides training for staff at Scheme employers on the basics of LGPS administration. Sessions are structured along the lines of a typical membership of the LGPS, where delegates are shown the correct procedures which should be followed during various stages of an employee's membership.

Approved by: Pensions Committee

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