

Suffolk Pension Fund Communication Strategy

The Suffolk Pension Fund liaises with over 340 employers and around 75,000 scheme members in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The delivery of the administration of the scheme involves communicating with the many stakeholders and the Fund needs to be proactive in providing and delivering clear and timely communications.

This strategy sets out how the Suffolk Pension Fund communicates and how the Fund measures whether its communications are successful.

Strategy

Vision

Everyone with any interest in the Fund should have readily available access to all the information that they require.

Objectives

- To improve understanding of the Pension Scheme and the Fund's activities.
- To promote the benefits of the Scheme and increase membership of the LGPS
- To enable members of the Scheme to make informed decisions.
- To reassure stakeholders.

Principles

Format

All communications will:

- Have a clear purpose
- Have a clear message
- Be well written and presented
- Make an impact

Content

All content will be relevant, up to date and delivered on a timely basis.

Delivery

When deciding how to communicate, the Fund takes into consideration the audience and aims to use the most appropriate means of communication for the recipients of the information. The fund will:

- use the most efficient and effective delivery media for each communication
- make all communications available in another language upon request.
- Make use of digital communication methods wherever possible.

Development Priorities

The Pension Fund is committed to using technology to enhance services, improve accessibility and broaden inclusion and has made it a priority to increase and improve digital delivery of its communications.



General communication

The Fund has a public facing website (www.suffolkpensionfund.org), and the Engage member self-service facility (www.pensions.suffolk.gov.uk)

The website will provide scheme specific information, forms that can be printed or downloaded, access to documents (such as newsletters, policies and the accounts), frequently asked questions, links to related sites such as www.lgpsmember.org and contact information.

The website material is recorded and reviewed to ensure it is current and up to date.

The Engage self-service system for members allows them to access their pension information, update their contact details and nominations, obtain and upload documents and run various calculations in respect of their future predicted pension benefits. Pensioner members can also view their payslips and P60's.

Electronic means of communicating are complemented by paper-based communication where appropriate. In person and online meetings, either one-to-one or groups are also provided.

Key Deliverables

Information about the Scheme

The main point of reference for members to find out about the key aspects of the Scheme is the 'Guide to the LGPS.' This is supported by a range of Employer and Employee Guides that go into more detail on topics such as increasing benefits and making nominations. These guides are available to download off the website. Factsheets are produced as required on specific topics.

Annual Benefit Statements

For active members these include the current value of benefits as well as the projected benefits as at their earliest retirement date and at normal pension age. The associated death benefits are also shown as well as details of any individuals the member has nominated to receive the lump sum death grant. For deferred members, the benefit statement includes the current value of the deferred benefits and the earliest payment date of the benefits as well as the associated death benefits.

Retirement packs

The retirement packs contain useful information and forms for members retiring from the scheme, including a nomination form, bank account change form, a statement of pension benefits and tax office details.

Pension Helpdesk

The helpdesk has a dedicated email box pensions@suffolk.gov.uk and helpline for scheme members. The team support members on all areas of membership and benefits.

Lines are open from

9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday.

9.00am to 4.30pm Friday

Tel: 03456 053000



Active Members

There are close to 24,000 members currently contributing to the scheme. They span a wide range of ages, occupations and salaries and their communication needs are addressed using a mixture of generic and targeted approaches.

Key messages

- Their pension and other membership benefits are valuable.
- Careful consideration should be given before leaving or transferring benefits.
- They should understand how the Scheme works and the changes that are made to it.
- Is their pension benefit going to be enough – if not they can save some more.
- They need to keep their details up to date.

A biannual newsletter covers the key messages, relevant updates about the scheme and an update from either the Pension Board active member or union representative.

Deferred Members

There are around 30,000 members who are not currently contributing to the scheme but whose pension is being looked after until it becomes payable.

They include members who have moved to an employer who does not participate in the scheme and others who remain with a scheme employer but have stopped contributing themselves.

Key Messages

- Their pension is secure and keeping pace with inflation.
- They will be informed if they are affected by scheme changes.
- Careful consideration should be given before transferring benefits
- They need to keep their details up to date.

Pensioner Members

The Funds pays a pension to around 21,000 members, this includes retired members, spouses, eligible partners and children of deceased members.

Key Messages

- Their pension is secure and keeping pace with inflation.
- They will be informed if they are affected by scheme changes.
- They need to keep their details up to date.

A biannual newsletter covers the key messages, relevant updates about the scheme and an update from the Pension Board pensioner representative.



Communication with Scheme Employers and Promotion of the Scheme to Prospective Members

There are over 340 employers with the Pension Scheme. The Fund works with employers to promote and to improve their understanding of the Local Government Pension Scheme and to safeguard members' interests. The Fund also works with employers to encourage prospective members to join.

Key Messages

- A members pension is their most valuable benefit after their pay.
- Employers need to be aware of their role and responsibilities in administering the scheme, as well as the Pension Fund's.
- They need to understand how the scheme works.
- The Suffolk Pension Fund is open, transparent and accountable about how they manage the scheme and the Fund.

A biannual newsletter covers the key messages and relevant updates about the scheme to ensure employers are kept fully informed.

Employers are invited to attend an annual employers meeting, held either virtually or in person. This provides an opportunity to hear from and ask questions of pension fund officers, committee and board members, and advisers.

Employers are issued a valuation report every three years setting out the estimated assets and liabilities of the Fund as a whole and for the employer. This also provides them with the employer contribution rates for a three-year period commencing one year from the valuation date.

Other Interested Parties

There is a wide range of other parties who have a legitimate interest in the Fund. These include council taxpayers, suppliers and potential suppliers, and investment counterparties.

Key Messages

- The Suffolk Pension Fund is open, transparent and accountable about how they manage the scheme and the Fund.

The Fund will issue press releases or respond to questions setting out the Fund's position on matters raised by these parties as appropriate. The Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts is relevant to all interested parties as it provides details of the value of the Pension Fund during the financial year, income and expenditure. It also provides information about investments, scheme employers and membership numbers.