



# **The Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2014**

## **Communication Policy**

**May 2017**

## **1. Introduction**

Orkney Islands Council is the administering authority responsible for overseeing the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for Council employees and for employees of various other scheduled and admitted bodies who have been allowed to participate in the Scheme.

The Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2014 require each administering authority to prepare, publish and review its communication policy statement.

A policy statement must set out:

- The provision of information and publicity of the scheme to members, representatives of members and scheme employers.
- The format, frequency and method of distributing such information or publicity.
- The promotion of the scheme to prospective members and scheme employers.

This statement summarises how the Orkney Islands Council communicates with members, employers and other stakeholders.

## **2. Communications Objectives**

The key objectives of the Council's communication policy are to:

- Improve understanding of the scheme.
- Promote the benefits of scheme membership as an important part of the employment package.
- Keep members, employers and other stakeholders up to date with regulation changes.
- Allow members to make informed decisions.

In order to achieve these objectives, our aim is to ensure communications:

- Are factual and presented in plain language.
- Are designed to meet the needs of each target audience.
- Use the most efficient and effective means of delivery.

## **3. Key Audiences**

The Council has identified the following groups with whom it needs to communicate:

- Scheme members.
- Scheme employers.
- Prospective scheme members and employers.
- Trade unions.
- The Pension Sub Committee and the Pension Board.

## **4. Communication Tools and Strategy**

The following section outlines how the Council communicates with each group.

## **5. Active Scheme Members**

### **By post**

- Starter pack including scheme booklet and pension transfer form.
- Annual benefit statement.
- Correspondence relating to members' pension benefits.
- Newsletters updating members about scheme changes.

### **In person / phone**

- One-to-one meetings.
- Contact telephone number is publicised in scheme literature.

### **Email / Website**

- Dedicated email address for enquiries.
- Email used to send and receive correspondence where appropriate.
- Website providing a range of scheme literature including scheme guide, leaflets, policies, valuation report, Pension Fund Annual report and Funding Strategy Statement.
- Website has links to other useful websites including [www.scotlgps2015.org](http://www.scotlgps2015.org) which provides full details of LGPS 2015.
- Global emails promoting AVC seminars.

## **6. Pensioner Members**

### **By post**

- Correspondence relating to pension in payment.
- Payslip if net pay fluctuates by £2 or more in any month.
- Correspondence detailing pensions increase and lifetime allowance.

### **In person / phone**

- One-to-one meetings.
- Contact telephone number is publicised in scheme literature.

### **Email / Website**

- Dedicated email address for enquiries.
- Email used to send and receive correspondence where appropriate.
- Website providing a range of scheme literature including scheme guide, leaflets and policies.
- Website has links to other useful websites.

## **7. Deferred Pensioner Members**

### **By post**

- Annual benefit statement.
- Correspondence relating to deferred pension benefits.

### **In person / phone**

- One-to-one meetings.
- Contact telephone number is publicised in scheme literature.

### **Email / Website**

- Dedicated email address for enquiries.
- Email used to send and receive correspondence where appropriate.
- Website providing a range of scheme literature including scheme guide, leaflets and policies.
- Website has links to other useful websites.

## **8. Scheme Employers**

The Fund communicates with scheme employers in the following ways:

- Employer newsletters about scheme changes.
- Global emails provided for employers to cascade down to scheme members.
- Pension Administration strategy setting out the roles, responsibilities and service standards for the Council and employers.
- Triennial valuation report.
- Promotion of pension website. Guides/leaflets and forms can be downloaded from the site.
- Support provided by Pension Section members on technical, procedural and policy matters.

## **9. Prospective Members**

The Pension Section works closely with employers to promote the benefits of the scheme to new employees and to those who have previously opted out.

Upon appointment, prospective scheme members are provided with a link to the pension website where they can access a scheme guide.

## **10. Representatives of Members**

We will work with the relevant trade unions to ensure the scheme is understood by all interested parties and to promote the benefits of scheme membership.

The GMB, Unison and Unite are represented on the Council's Pension Board. The Pension Section assists Trade Union representatives with member queries.

## **11. Pension Sub Committee and Pension Board**

The Pension Sub-Committee and Pension Board members receive all meeting papers directly. The Pension Sub-Committee comprises 7 elected members. The Pension Board comprises 4 elected members, 3 trade union representatives and 1 employer representative who are all non-voting members. Details of the meetings and minutes are available on the Council's website.

The Council has on-going training programmes for the Sub-Committee and Board members. Training is provided by Council officers and external experts and advisers.

## **12. Development Priorities**

A key priority is the migration of the Council's manual pension records to the Altair Pension System. This will eventually allow members to access the member self-service module to update personal data, submit queries, access annual benefit statements and request pension estimate calculations.

The Finance Service is also working closely with the Council's Web Co-ordinator to enhance the Council's pension website.

## **13. Evaluation**

Comments on how the Council communicates with stakeholders are welcome. We are aware that in order for a communications strategy to be effective, we need feedback from all target groups.

If you wish to get in touch with us about how we communicate, please contact us using the details below.

## **14. Contact Details**

The Pensions Section  
Orkney Islands Council  
Council Offices  
School Place  
Kirkwall  
KW15 1NY

Opening Times: Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00.

Telephone: 01856873535.

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Website: <http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/S/pensions.htm>