



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Local Pensions Board

Subject Heading:

Policy Reviews 2024

OMT Lead:

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Policy context:

Local Government Pension Scheme
Regulations 2013

SUMMARY

There are a number of Pension Fund policies due for review this year. This report presents the drafts of those policies for noting or comment by Board members.

Final approval is delegated to the Pensions Committee at the meeting to be held on 5 November 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members note the policies, providing any feedback to be considered for incorporating into the final version for Committee approval in November 2024.

REPORT DETAIL

1. There a number of Pension Fund Policies due for review and update in 2024. It is good practice for the Local Pension Board to have sight of the draft policies prior to presentation to the Pensions Committee for approval.
2. The November Pensions Committee is generally used as a housekeeping meeting to ensure cyclical policy reviews are kept outside of the main meetings.
3. **Communications Policy 2024-2027**
 - 3.1 Regulation 61 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 requires an Administration Authority to prepare and publish a written statement covering communications with members and scheme employers.
 - 3.2 The statement must set out the following:
 - Communications with members, representatives of members, prospective members and scheme employers
 - The provision of information and publicity about the scheme to the above
 - Format, frequency and distribution method of the information or publicity
 - The promotion of the scheme to prospective members
 - 3.3 The policy has been updated this year to incorporate some new guides and factsheets that are available to members and employers and to simplify the layout with the introduction of a glossary of terms.

- 3.4 The policy has been reviewed in line with the Pensions Regulators new General Code of Practice and meets the relevant criteria. Pending information from the LPPA, some minor adjustments may be required regarding the availability of communications in alternative formats.
- 3.5 Appendix A to this report is the draft Havering Pension Fund Communication Strategy 2024 – 2027.

4. Policy regarding the overpayment of pension following the death of a pensioner or dependant member

- 4.1 It is good practice to ensure the Council has a policy in place regarding the treatment of overpaid pensions following the death of a pensioner or dependant member.
- 4.2 A policy was introduced in March 2019 enabling overpayments of pension of less than £250 net following the death of a pensioner or dependant member, where there is no ongoing dependant pension payable, to be automatically written off.
- 4.3 Based on research prior to the introduction of the policy, the levels of written off debt expected to be written off was no more than £5k per annum. No single year has exceeded this since the implementation of the policy.
- 4.4 The only change to the policy is to recommend the review takes place every three years, rather than annually.
- 4.5 Appendix B to this report is the draft Overpayment Policy for 2024 – 2027.

5 Policy for Reporting Breaches of the Law

- 5.1 It is a requirement of the General Code of Practice that the Fund has a Policy for Reporting Breaches of the Law. We have previously used the Council's Whistleblowing Policy but we are now introducing a Fund Specific Breaches Policy.
- 5.2 The policy will need formal approval by both the Strategic Director of Resources as the named Responsible Officer and then Pensions Committee in November 2024. If agreed the policy will be effective from December 2024.
- 5.2 A record of breaches is currently maintained and this will be presented to the Local Pensions Board for noting in the Q1 meeting for 2025 and annually thereafter. Material breaches will be reported as and when they occur.

5.3 Appendix C to this reports if the draft Reporting Breaches of the Law Policy

6 Other Policies for Review

6.1 The Pensions Administration Strategy and the associated Charging Policy are also due for review and presentation to the Pensions Committee in November.

6.2 Due to time restraints, these documents will be reviewed, taking account of the Pensions Regulator's General Code of Practice and circulated to Local Pension Board Members for review and comment outside of the meeting.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

There is a risk of breaching the Fund's statutory obligations policies are not in place and reviewed regularly

Legal implications and risks:

The legal duties are set out in the individual policy where relevant and there are no other apparent legal implications.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There appear to be no HR implications or risks arising directly as a result of this report.

Equalities implications and risks:

The policy states that requests for documents in alternative font, format and language can be accommodated.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

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The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants. We will ensure that disabled people with sensory impairments are able to access the strategy.