

# Pension Administration Strategy



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## Introduction

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is one of the largest public sector pension schemes in the UK. The Surrey Pension Fund (the Fund) is part of the LGPS and is the Administering Authority for 345 employers in the scheme.

The LGPS is a valuable element of the total remuneration package of employees working with employers in the scheme. Good quality administration and communication of the overall benefits of the LGPS aids in the confidence of membership towards the scheme and in their value of this employee benefit.

The LGPS Regulations 2013 enables the Administering Authority to prepare a written Pension Administration Strategy (the Strategy) of its policy in relation to communications between and levels of performance for both the Fund and employers within the scheme.

This Strategy replaces the current Pension Administration Strategy with effect from 1 April 2020 and applies to all existing employers in the Fund, and all new employers joining the Fund after the effective date of 1 April 2020. This Strategy has been reviewed in August 2023, with no material changes.

The Strategy sets out the expected levels of administration performance of both the Fund and the employers within the Fund, as well as details on how performance levels will be monitored and the action that might be taken where persistent failure occurs.

The Strategy is broken into 9 sections:

- Regulatory context of the Strategy
- Aims of the Strategy
- Service standards of the Fund
- Requirements for scheme employers
- Outline of additional administration charges
- Additional fees that may be charged by the Fund
- Additional penalties for poor performance by employers
- Penalties for poor performance by the Fund
- Consultation and review

Surrey County Council has delegated responsibility for the management of the Fund to the Surrey Pension Committee (the Committee), taking into consideration advice from the Surrey Local Pensions Board (the Board). The Committee and the Board will monitor the implementation of this Strategy. Any enquiries in relation to this Strategy should be addressed to:

Adele Seex - Governance Manager  
Surrey Pension Team  
PO Box 471  
Reigate  
RH2 2HA  
Email: [adele.seex@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:adele.seex@surreycc.gov.uk)

## The Regulatory Context of the Strategy

In accordance with the Public Sector Pensions Act 2015, the LGPS is regulated by the Pensions Regulator (tPR). The Fund and scheme employers and employers are also required to comply with regulatory guidance or Code of Practice issued by tPR.

The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (**Regulation 59(1)**) enables a LGPS Administering Authority to prepare a written statement of the Administering Authority's policies in relation to such matters mentioned in **Regulation 59(2)** that it considers appropriate. This written statement shall be known as the "Pension Administration Strategy" and shall include the following:

- Procedures for liaison and communications between the Administering Authority and Scheme Employers (its Scheme Employers)
- The establishment of levels of performance which the Administering Authority and its Scheme Employers are expected to achieve in carrying out their Scheme functions ("Service Level Agreements (SLA)"). These functions are:
  - (i) The setting of performance targets
  - (ii) The making of agreements about levels of performance and associated matters, or
  - (iii) Such other means as the Administering Authority considers appropriate.
- Procedures which aim to secure that the Administering Authority and its Scheme Employers comply with statutory requirements in respect of those functions and with any agreement about levels of performance

- Procedures for improving the communications by the Administering Authority and its Scheme Employers to each other of information relating to those functions
- The circumstances in which the Administering Authority may consider giving written notice to any of its Scheme Employers under these regulations (additional costs arising from the Scheme Employer's level of performance) on account of that employer's unsatisfactory performance in carrying out its Scheme functions when measured against levels of performance established under the SLA
- The publication by the Administering Authority of annual reports dealing with:
  - (i) The extent to which the Administering Authority and its Scheme Employers have achieved the level of performance established under the SLA
  - (ii) Such other matters arising from The Pension Administration Strategy as the Administering Authority considers appropriate.
- Such other matters as appear to the Administering Authority after consulting its Scheme Employers and such other persons as it considers appropriate, to be suitable for inclusion in The Pension Administration Strategy.

In addition, **Regulation 59(3 - 7)** requires that:

- Where the Administering Authority produces a Pension Administration Strategy, it is kept under review and revised where appropriate
- When reviewing or revising the Pension Administration Strategy the Administering Authority must consult with its Scheme Employers and such other persons it considers appropriate
- Where the Administering Authority produces a Pension Administration Strategy or revises that strategy it must send a copy of it to each Scheme Employer and to the Secretary of State
- The Administering Authority and Scheme employers must have regard to the Pension Administration Strategy when carrying out functions under the LGPS regulations.

**Regulation 60** requires each employing authority to publish its discretion on:

- Funding additional pension [16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d)]
- Flexible retirement [30(6)]
- Waiving actuarial reductions [30(8)]
- The award of additional pension [31]

In addition, Regulation 14 of the Local Government (Discretionary Payments)(Injury Allowances) Regulations 2011 requires employers to publish and keep under review its policy on these regulations.

There are also a number of discretionary discretions under the current regulations and some mandatory discretions under previous sets of regulations.

The Pension Fund Team can provide template discretion policies upon request.

**Regulation 70** of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 enables the Administering Authority to recover additional costs from a Scheme Employer when, in the opinion of the Administering Authority, it has incurred additional costs because of the poor performance of the Scheme Employer in relation to the Pension Administration Strategy SLA.

The Administering Authority may give written notice to the Scheme Employer stating:

- The Administering Authority's reasons for forming the opinion
- The amount the Administering Authority has determined the Scheme Employer should pay under **Regulation 69(1)(d)** in respect of those costs and the basis on which the specified amount is calculated
- The provisions of the Pension Administration Strategy which are relevant to the decision to issue the notice.

## Aims of the Strategy

In accordance with the Public Sector Pensions Act 2015, the LGPS is regulated by the Pensions Regulator (tPR). The Fund and scheme employers and employers are also required to comply with regulatory guidance or Code of Practice issued by tPR. [Guidance](#) is also available from the Local Government Association (LGA). The aims of the Strategy are to:

- Set out the quality and performance standards expected of the Fund and scheme employers
- Promote good working relationships and improve efficiency between the Fund and scheme employers
- Ensure scheme employers are aware of and understand their roles and responsibilities under the LGPS regulations
- Ensure the correct benefits are paid to, and the correct income collected from, the correct people at the correct time
- Maintain accurate records and ensure data is protected and has authorised use only
- Ensure that the administration costs attributable to scheme employers are charged proportionately.

The efficient delivery of the benefits of the scheme is reliant upon effective administrative procedures being in place between the Fund and scheme employers.

This Strategy sets out the expected levels of performance of the Fund and scheme employers and the action(s) that might be taken where standards are not met by employers and/or when non-compliance occurs. It also provides scheme employers with an outline of administration charges they may occur in addition to the administration allowance contained in the employer contribution rate.

## Service standards of the Fund

Overriding legislation, including the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2013 (as amended), dictates minimum standards that pension schemes should meet in providing certain pieces of information to the various parties associated with the scheme. Further, the LGPS itself sets out a number of requirements for the Administering Authority or employers to provide information to each other, to scheme members and to prospective scheme members, dependants, other pension arrangements or other regulatory bodies. In addition to the legal requirements, the Fund has performance standards which cover all aspects of the administration of the Fund.

The Fund service standards are reviewed by the Pensions Fund Committee, Local Pensions Board and are available for consideration by tPR. Regular reporting is undertaken, and performance is also shown in the Fund annual report and accounts. The following sets out the Fund key performance indicators.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Service Standards</b>	<b>Limits</b>
<b>New starter</b>	When the team receives electronic/paper notification of the new starter. They will verify the information, set up a new record and send confirmation to the new member.	30 working days	No
<b>Inter-fund adjustment in (aggregation) estimate</b>	Check previous service recorded on starter form and write to previous provider(s) if a transfer has been requested.	20 working days	No
<b>Transfer-in estimate</b>	Check previous service details and offer member the option to transfer and advise of timescales.	20 working days	No
<b>Transfer-in actual</b>	Check correct payment has been received, update database and issue statutory notice	20 working days	No
<b>Additional Pension Contributions Actual</b>	Update database and inform payroll of the additional pension contribution deduction to be made.	20 working days	No

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Service Standards</b>	<b>Limits</b>
<b>Additional Voluntary Contributions</b>	Provide information on the Fund's AVC schemes	10 working days	No
<b>Nomination Forms</b>	Update database and send acknowledgement.	20 working days	No
<b>Member correspondence</b>	Reply to member query.	20 working days	No
<b>Employer correspondence</b>	Reply to employer query.	20 working days	No
<b>Employee Estimates</b>	Estimate of deferred benefits and/or voluntary retirement for age 60 and over.	30 working days	No
<b>Employer estimate</b>	Provide employer with estimate as requested.	10 working days	No
<b>Refunds (Frozen Refunds)</b>	Calculate refund due and issue payment.	20 working days	No
<b>Opt-outs</b>	Provide a memo to payroll to cease contributions and inform the member accordingly.	20 working days	No
<b>Deferred</b>	Calculate final pay for surrey members, deferred benefits and issue confirmation to all members.	2 months	No
<b>Inter-Fund Adjustment Out Estimate</b>	Provide service and pay details to new employer.	20 working days	No



<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Service Standards</b>	<b>Limits</b>
<b>Inter-Fund Adjustment Out Actual</b>	Issue payment.	20 working days	No
<b>Provide estimate of transfer value</b>	Provide transfer details.	20 working days	No
<b>Make payment of transfer value</b>	Issue payment.	20 workings days	No
<b>Death in service</b>	Send condolence letter, request certificate, and enclose any claim forms.	5 working days	No
<b>Death in service final letter</b>	Provide details of deceased salary for Surrey members, monies due to/from the estate, calculation of any spouse's and dependants benefits, send letter and make payment of any death grant.	10 working days	No
<b>Death of deferred member initial</b>	Send condolence letter, request certificates and enclosed any claim forms.	5 working days	No
<b>Death of deferred member final</b>	Provide details of any benefits due and make payment of death grant.	10 working days	No
<b>Deferred into payment</b>	Send initial letter and forms to member.	10 working days	No
<b>Retirement</b>	Calculate final pay for Surrey members, retirement benefits and send initial letter and forms to all members.	15 working days	No
<b>Payment of retirement grant and initiate pension</b>	Issue payment of retirement grant and initiate payroll record.	15 working days	No

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Service Standards</b>	<b>Limits</b>
<b>Revised Payments including Guaranteed Minimum Pensions/Modifications</b>	Inform the member of any adjustments to the pension in payment and update payroll entry.	20 working days	No
<b>Death on pension</b>	Terminate payment, send condolence letter, request certificate and enclosed any claim forms.	5 working days	No
<b>Death on pension final letter</b>	Provide details of deceased's pension, monies due to/from the estate and spouse's/dependants benefits.	10 working days	No
<b>Complaints</b>	-	All complaints to be dealt with in line with the additional criteria	No
<b>Employer forums seminars</b>	Employer forum hosted by the Fund.	Annually	Yes – limited to one per year. Further seminars will be chargeable.
<b>Requests for legislative or regulatory advice</b>	Provision of technical advice and employer email bulletins.	15 working days	No
<b>Follow-up to all member queries not answered within SLA</b>	Email / letter to update member.	10 working days	-
<b>Pension payments</b>	Monthly payment of regular pensions.	Paid on the final Thursday of each month	-
<b>Annual benefit statements</b>	Provision of an annual benefit statement for all active and deferred pension members.	By 31 August following the end of year	-

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Service Standards</b>	<b>Limits</b>
<b>Pension Saving Statements</b>	Provision of an pension saving statement for active and deferred pension members who exceed the Annual Allowance limit.	By 6 October each year	-

## Requirements for scheme employers

Overriding legislation dictates minimum standards that pension schemes should meet in providing certain pieces of information to the various parties associated with the LGPS. In addition, regulatory guidance sets out a number of requirements for the Fund and scheme employers to provide information.

Under this Strategy scheme employers will be responsible for the following activities in the manner and timescale set out below and the potential consequence of failing to meet these service standards.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Potential consequence of breach</b>
<b>Dedicated employer contact</b>	The Scheme Employer should notify the Fund of a dedicated pension liaison contact within 1 month of the adoption of the Pension Administration Strategy.	The Fund will regularly check that contacts are up to date. The failure to appoint a dedicated employer contact will make failure of performance SLAs more likely.
<b>Discretions policy</b>	The Scheme Employer should provide the Fund with a copy of their Discretions Policy by 1 July 2014, or within 1 month of the date of the Scheme Employer's entry in the Fund.	The provision of a discretions policy is a legal requirement. The Fund will chase receipt of this policy and charge at the prevailing Fund officer rates.
<b>Payment of monthly contributions</b>	Correct payments should be made to the Fund by the 19 <sup>th</sup> (21 <sup>st</sup> for electronic payments) of the month following deductions of pension contributions by the scheme employer (monthly payroll run).	Late payments will incur a charge of £50 plus interest per day. Interest on late payments becomes due with effect from 1 month following the required payment date. Interest is calculated at 1% above the Bank of England base rate on a daily basis.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Potential consequence of breach</b>
<b>Payment of capital sums</b>	Correct capital sums should be made to the Fund within 30 days of being invoiced. These may relate to pension strain costs or fees for work in relation to the charges due to the Fund.	Late payments will incur a charge of £50 plus interest per day. Interest on late payments becomes due with effect from 1 month following the required payment date. Interest is calculated at 1% above the Bank of England base rate on a daily basis.
<b>Monthly contribution schedule</b>	A monthly contribution schedule should be sent to the Fund before or at the same time as the monthly contribution. The schedule should be sent electronically and in the format requested by the Fund.	The provision of a monthly contribution schedule is essential to the correct calculation of member benefits. The Fund will chase receipt of the monthly contribution schedule and charge at the prevailing Fund officer rates.
<b>End of year processing</b>	An end of year data return should be sent to the Fund within 30 days of the end of the scheme year (31 March). The schedule should be in the format requested by the Fund and be 100% accurate.	The provision of an annual statement is essential to the correct calculation of member benefits. The Fund will chase receipt of the end of year returns. Any additional administration work incurred by the Fund as a result of late or inaccurate submissions will be charged at the prevailing Fund officer rates.
<b>Correct admission of members into the Fund</b>	The Scheme Employer must ensure that members are correctly admitted to the Fund.	In cases where an employer has incorrectly admitted an employee into the Fund where they were not eligible to be in this Fund, the Fund will correct this error. Any additional administration work incurred by the Fund will be charged at the prevailing Fund officer rates.

Activity	Timescale	Potential consequence of breach
<b>Notification of new starters</b>	The Scheme Employer should notify the Fund of a new starter within 30 days of their joining the pension scheme.	The provision of new starter information is essential to the correct calculation of member benefits. Any additional administration work incurred by the Fund will be charged at the prevailing Fund officer rates.
<b>Notification of leavers</b>	The scheme Employer should notify the Fund of a new leaver within 30 days of their leaving the pension scheme.	The provision of leaver information is essential to the correct calculation of member benefits. Any additional administration work incurred by the Fund will be charged at the prevailing Fund officer rates.
<b>Notification of retirements</b>	The Scheme Employer should notify the Fund of a retirement initially in advance of the retirement date and provide final confirmation within 10 days of their last day of service.	The provision of retirement information is essential to the correct calculation of member benefits. Any additional administration work incurred by the Fund will be charged at the prevailing Fund officer rates.
<b>Notification of relevant changes</b>	The Scheme Employer should notify Fund of any relevant changes within 30 days of the change.	The provision of employment change information is essential to the correct calculation of member benefits. Any additional administration work incurred by the Fund will be charged at the prevailing Fund officer rates.
<b>Appoint an Independent Registered Medical Practitioner (IRMP) in order to consider all ill-health retirement applications</b>	The Scheme Employer should appoint an IRMP. The appointment must be approved with the Fund.	The nomination of an IRMP is a legal requirement.

Activity	Timescale	Potential consequence of breach
<b>Appoint a “nominated adjudicator” as part of the stage 1 internal dispute resolution procedure (IDRP)</b>	The scheme Employer should appoint a “nominated adjudicator” as part of the stage 1 IDRP within 1 month of the date of the Scheme employer’s entry in the Fund. Or within 1 month of the resignation of an existing “nominated adjudicator”.	The nomination of a “nominated adjudicator” as part of the stage 1 IDRP is a legal requirement.
<b>Comply with auto-enrolment legislation as required by the Pensions Regulator</b>	From the Scheme Employer’s auto-enrolment staging date.	Compliance with auto-enrolment legislation is a legal requirement, with non-compliance punishable by the Pensions Regulator.

## Outline of additional administration charges

The following scheme functions are outside of the work covered by the administration allowance as part of the employer contribution rate (this can often be because the charges relate to employers who are yet to be admitted to the Fund). These fees will be payable by scheme employers and are generally related to actuarial, legal or administration costs.

Activity	Description	Indicative charge	Comments
<b>New employer processing</b>	Assessment of contribution rate of the new scheme employer	According to the prevailing rates of the Fund actuary	Costs will increase if there are delays in providing data or date requires recalculation.
	Assessment of the bond value of the new scheme employer (if applicable)	According to the prevailing rates of the Fund actuary	Costs will increase if there are delays in providing data or date requires recalculation.
	Assessment of the cost attributable to pension risk (if applicable)	According to the prevailing rates of the Fund actuary	Costs will increase if multiple calculations are required.
	Drafting and executing of admission agreements (if applicable)	According to the prevailing rates of the Fund legal advisers	Costs will increase according to the complexity of the negotiated drafting of the admissions agreement.
	Admission administration costs	Charged at the prevailing Fund officer rates (estimated £1,000).	Costs will increase according to the complexity of the negotiated admission to the Fund. Costs will be incurred irrespective of whether or not the applying Scheme Employer abandons the application.
<b>Re-assessment of the bond value of the new scheme employer</b>	The Fund will re-assess bond values in line with the conditions laid out in the admissions agreement.	According to the prevailing rates of the Fund actuary	-



<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Indicative charge</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Reports for scheme employer FRS102/IAS19 returns</b>	The Fund will complete a pension data report required for scheme employer FRS102/IAS19 accounting returns	Administration charge of between £200 and £400 plus VAT.  Any further charge would be in accordance with the prevailing rates of the Fund actuary	-
<b>General actuarial queries</b>	Additional actuarial queries in relation to the scheme employer	According to the prevailing rates of the Fund actuary	-
<b>General legal queries</b>	Additional legal queries in relation to the scheme employer	According to the prevailing rates of the Fund legal advisers	-
<b>Pension strain costs</b>	A pension strain cost may be incurred by the scheme employer where a member retires early on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency or where an active member or deferred member chooses to retire early and the scheme employer elects to waive the actuarial reduction to their pension.	The Fund will calculate the strain cost. Payment will be due as a lump-sum payment within 30 days of being invoiced in line with this strategy's SLA.	Costs are based on age, gender, service and pay of the member
<b>Valuation of unfunded liabilities</b>	Calculation and invoicing of unfunded liabilities relating to additional pension benefits awarded to employees which do not form part of their entitlement under the LGPS Regulations.	Annual administration charge of £250.	-
<b>Costs of awarding additional pension</b>	The scheme employer may elect to award additional pension to a member. This will incur a charge	The Fund will calculate the cost. Payment will be due as a lump-sum payment within 30 days of	-

Activity	Description	Indicative charge	Comments
		being invoiced in line with the strategy's SLA.	
<p><b>Cessation costs</b></p> <p><i>These costs are in addition to any cessation deficit payment required in accordance with the Funding Strategy Statement</i></p>	The Scheme Employer will incur a cost if they cease membership of the Fund.	<p>Charged at the prevailing Fund actuary's rates (approximately £3,000 plus VAT)</p> <p>Further charge is according to the prevailing rates of the Fund actuary.</p> <p>The Fund approach to Scheme Employer cessation is laid out in the Funding Strategy Statement</p>	-
<p><b>Provision of stage 1 Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) adjudication</b></p>	The Scheme Employer will incur an administration fee if they nominate the SPF as their stage 1 IDRP adjudicator.	Charged at the prevailing Fund officer rates (not exceeding £500.00 except in the most complicated cases).	Costs will increase according to the complexity of the case.
<p><b>Establishment of security for the Fund</b></p>	The Scheme Employer will incur a cost of establishing a form of security required by the Fund; e.g. a legal charge, Bond or Escrow account.	<p>Administration charge of £500.</p> <p>Further charge in according to the prevailing rates of the Fund actuary and legal advisers.</p>	-
<p><b>Covenant assessment</b></p>	The Scheme Employer will incur a cost of the Fund carrying out a covenant assessment of the Scheme Employer to establish risk assurance.	Further charge is according to the prevailing rates of the Fund covenant advisers (approximately £10,000, depending on circumstances).	-

## Additional fees that may be charged by the Surrey Pension Administration Team

Activity	Description	Indicative charge	Comments
<b>Pension sharing on divorce pension in payment CEV (pensioners)</b>	Charges may be levied for CEVs because they are not part of business as usual.	Charge of £117	-
<b>Pension sharing on divorce implementing a pension sharing order</b>	Charges may be levied for CEVs because they are not part of business as usual.	Charge of £643	-
<b>Additional cash equivalent transfer values (CETVs)</b>	Additional quotations may be provided	None	There is no statutory basis for charges.

## Additional costs arising from an employer's level of performance (regulation 70)

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Indicative charge</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Failure to provide end of year returns in good time</b>	This prevents the Pension Section from producing annual benefit statements, delays the processing of pension benefits and hinders the smooth administration of the pension scheme and runs the risk of incurring substantial fines from the Pensions Regulator.	A charge of up to £5,000 will be payable if the end of year return is received later than 30th June as it may be too late to produce an annual benefit statement (they must be sent out by 31st August).	-
<b>Failure to provide monthly contribution returns in good time</b>	This is dealt with in requirements for scheme employers (above).	-	-
<b>Failure to initiate an admission agreement or arrange alternative pension arrangements before a contract is let.</b>	This leads to great uncertainty for the members being transferred and a considerable amount of additional work for the Surrey Pension Team.	A charge of up to £2,000 depending upon the severity of the delay.	-
<b>Failure to pay pension strain costs in good time.</b>	This is dealt with in requirements for scheme employers (above).	-	-
<b>Pension recharges that are late for any reason.</b>	As the payments are made from the Fund, the Fund suffers if it is not reimbursed promptly.	Interest at 1% above base rate from the date the payment fell due. This provides modest protection for the pension fund without being too onerous for employers	-

## Additional costs arising from an employer's level of performance (regulation 70)

Activity	Description	Indicative charge	Comments
<b>Failure to self-calculate a contribution rate within 10 working days.</b>	This can lead to uncertainty for the employees being transferred and additional work for the Surrey Pension Team.	A penalty of up to £500.00 depending the severity of the delay	-
<b>Failure to provide membership data for new academies within 15 working days.</b>	This can lead to uncertainty for employers and additional actuarial fees for the Surrey Pension Team.	A penalty of up to £500.00 depending the severity of the delay.	-
<b>Failure to provide membership data for exiting employers 15 working days</b>	Failure to provide this information in good time can lead to a breach of the law, reputational damage for the pension fund and generate considerable additional work for the Surrey Pension Team.	A penalty of up to £1,000.	-
<b>Failure to produce papers for the Local Pension Board, Local Firefighters Board and Pension Fund Committee within the deadlines.</b>	This makes the board roles harder, leads to additional work for the Surrey Pension Team and undermines effective scrutiny.	A penalty of up to £500 per paper.	-

## Consultation and review

In preparing this administration strategy statement the Fund consulted with scheme employers. The original consultation period was in 2019/2020.

Following the consultation, employers' comments were reviewed and were added to the final administration strategy.

The administration strategy was approved on 13 March 2020 and reviewed in 2022 and 2023 with no material changes.

All Scheme Employers will be consulted before any material changes are made to the Strategy.

Effective date of policy	1 April 2022
Approved date	13 March 2020
Next review	1 April 2024

<b>Version</b>	<b>Nature of Change</b>	<b>Implemented</b>
V1	Initial Creation	1 December 2023