

# Communications Policy



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## Introduction

This is the Communications Policy for the East Riding Pension Fund (the Fund) in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (the Scheme), which is administered by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council (the administering authority) on behalf of Scheme employers.

The Fund communicates with over 300 Scheme employers and over 120,000 Scheme members in relation to the Scheme.

The Communications Policy is made under Regulation 61 of the LGPS Regulations 2013 in conjunction with the Fund's Pension Administration Strategy. These detail the requirements of the Fund and Scheme employers to fulfil their administration responsibilities and the Memorandum of Understanding which sets out an agreement between the Fund and the Scheme employer to ensure that the 2018 Data Protection (with GDPR) Regulations are adhered to.

The Fund will review this policy on an annual basis and following any material change in legislation or policy.

## Key objectives

The Fund aims to deliver a consistently high level of customer service and performance to our stakeholders and recognises that effective communication plays a vital role in driving efficiencies within the Fund. The Fund also recognises and acknowledges that different stakeholders may require information delivered via different methods. Wherever possible, the Fund will look towards digital communication for both Scheme members and Scheme employers.

The Fund communications aim to:

- Put the needs of our customers at the centre of our policy and provide clear, accurate and relevant information in a timely manner.
- Be compliant with all legislative requirements
- Use a multi-channel approach to communication, that focuses on having digital communication at the centre of our policy
- Ensure members can make informed decisions regarding their pension with the information made available.
- Cut out jargon.

## Our stakeholders

The Fund's stakeholders for the purpose of this policy are:

- Scheme members
- Representatives of Scheme members
- Prospective Scheme members
- Scheme employers
- Prospective Scheme employers

## How the Fund Communicates with Scheme Members

When communicating with Scheme members, the Fund's objectives are to:

- Encourage and retain membership of the scheme.
- Highlight the benefits of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- Provide more opportunities for two-way communication.
- Provide clear information to promote informed decision making.
- Update on key events, regulatory changes and guidance to keep scheme members informed.

### **ERPF Member Self Service and the ERPF website**

The Fund has a digital first approach to communication and has developed a secure member self-service portal (ERPFMSS), providing secure online areas to transfer data between the Fund and its Scheme members. Scheme members can view the information that the Fund holds for them, perform their own pension updates, model the benefits that they may be entitled to, access letters/documents and complete administration forms online. ERPFMSS allows the secure transmission of information from the Fund to Scheme members and from Scheme members to the Fund, ensuring data security.

Members are automatically issued documentation online through the portal when they join or leave the Scheme or on retirement and are able to opt out of online communication. The Fund also has a rolling programme of inviting all its existing members to sign up to the portal or there is a facility for Scheme members to sign up anytime using the link on the home page of the ERPF website.

The Fund promotes the ERPFMSS in its correspondence to Scheme members where appropriate and is developing a Member Engagement Strategy.

Our website [www.erpf.org](http://www.erpf.org) and [www.lgpsmember.org](http://www.lgpsmember.org) are principal sources of information for Scheme members and prospective Scheme members.

### **Paper communications and special requests**

The Fund understands that not all Scheme members want to communicate digitally, and Scheme members are therefore able to opt out of digital communication through ERPFMSS and instead continue to receive all communication by letter.

Scheme members who require alternative formats (such as Braille or audio) can always request this to ensure access to relevant information.

### **Annual Updates**

Annual Benefit Statements (ABSs) will be moving online through ERPFMSS for those members who have not already opted out of digital communication, however, paper communications will still be sent to members to let them know that the information is available and where it can be viewed.

Once a member is in receipt of a pension from the Fund, they are sent a payslip in April & May each year or where the monthly pension changes by more than £1. P60's are also sent annually.

### **ERPF Helpline**

The Fund's digital telephony call centre makes contacting the right team easy and allows the Fund to maintain a high level of customer service. Telephone numbers are quoted on all our letters which means our Scheme members can communicate verbally with the pension fund staff.

### **Visits to our Offices**

Scheme members are encouraged to book an appointment before visiting our offices. Online video calls are also available.

## **Workshops**

Pre-retirement presentations are held regularly, online and in person for Scheme members in partnership with Affinity Connect.

## **How the Fund Communicates with Representatives of Scheme Members**

When communicating with representatives of Scheme members, the Fund's objectives are to:

- Ensure that the representative is entitled to represent the Scheme member.
- Encourage and retain membership of the scheme.
- Highlight the benefits of Local Government Pension Scheme.
- Provide clear information to promote informed decision making for customers.

### **ERPF website**

Our website [www.erpf.org](http://www.erpf.org) and [www.lgpsmember.org](http://www.lgpsmember.org) are principal sources of information for representatives of Scheme members.

### **Helpline and Contact**

The 'contact us' page of the website details how representatives of Scheme members can contact the Fund by letter, e-mail or telephone. The Fund's digital telephony call centre makes contacting the right team easy and allows the Fund to maintain a high level of customer service

## **How the Fund communicates with Prospective Scheme members**

When communicating with prospective Scheme members, the Fund's objectives are to:

- Highlight who can join the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- Highlight the benefits of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- Highlight the cost to the Scheme member and their Scheme employer contribution.
- Provide clear information to encourage membership of the scheme.

### **ERPF website**

Our website [www.erpf.org](http://www.erpf.org) and [www.lgpsmember.org](http://www.lgpsmember.org) are principal sources of information for prospective Scheme members.

### **Helpline and Contact**

The 'contact us' page of the website details how prospective Scheme members can contact the Fund by letter, e-mail or telephone. The Fund's digital telephony call centre makes contacting the right team easily and allows the Fund to maintain a high level of customer service.

Scheme employers are required to provide prospective Scheme members with information about the Scheme as part of the employee's letter of appointment.

## How the Fund Communicates with Scheme employers

When communicating with Scheme employers, the Fund objectives are to:

- Improve relationships.
- Help Scheme employers understand costs/funding issues.
- Work together to maintain accurate data.
- Ensure the smooth transfer of staff.
- Ensure Scheme employers understand the benefits of being a Scheme employer.
- Assist Scheme employers to maximise discretionary benefits of the Scheme.

The Fund has a digital first approach to communication and has developed a secure self-service portal (ERPF Online Services), providing secure online areas to transfer data between the Fund and its Scheme employers. This ensures data security and gives Scheme employers access to relevant information for the Scheme employer and their Scheme members. Scheme employers can view queries raised from the Fund, reply online and can also submit member or regulatory queries through the ERPF Online Services.

The secure self-service portal includes the facility for Scheme employers to calculate the estimated costs associated with a member's potential early retirement.

Our website [www.erp.org](http://www.erp.org) has a dedicated section for Scheme employers. The website is maintained and regularly reviewed to ensure that the information provided is relevant, up to date, useful and helps to identify areas for improvement whilst ensuring the website complies with the EU accessibility directive. Where relevant, guidance documents are provided for Scheme employers on the website to assist with specific areas of work.

Scheme employers can communicate verbally with pension fund staff and are provided with contact details for all key pension fund staff on a regular basis. The Fund's Data and Employer Governance Team, including the Fund's Training Officer are always available to support Scheme employers.

Scheme employers can request a meeting with the Fund at any time either in person or online to raise any questions or discuss any issues they may have.

Workshops for Scheme employers take place on a quarterly basis. These workshops are delivered remotely and face to face where possible. The Fund is developing e-learning packages to enhance the website and further support Scheme employers.

Employer Bulletins and alerts are issued via email regularly to the contacts provided by Scheme employers with important regulatory and procedural information.

## How the Fund communicate with Prospective Scheme employers

When communicating with prospective Scheme employers, the Fund's objectives are to:

- Establish a good working relationship
- Help prospective Scheme employers to understand costs/funding issues
- Work together to maintain accurate data
- Ensure the smooth transfer of eligible staff within the Scheme
- Ensure an understanding of the benefits of being a Scheme employer
- Assist and promote maximisation of discretionary areas within the Local Government Pension Scheme

Our website ([www.erpf.org](http://www.erpf.org)) has a dedicated section for Scheme employers, which includes a section about becoming a Scheme employer.

Prospective Scheme employers can communicate verbally with pension fund staff using the contact page of the website and the Fund's Data and Employer Governance Team, including the Fund's Training Officer are always available to support prospective Scheme employers.

Prospective Scheme employers can request a meeting with the Fund at any time either in person or online to raise any questions or discuss any issues they may have.

### **Feedback**

ERPF welcomes feedback on this policy and any communications. Please e-mail us at [employerweb@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:employerweb@eastriding.gov.uk) or contact us at:

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