

Pension Services

If you prefer to discuss your Pension in person you are welcome to come and see us. It is advisable to make an appointment.

Contact us ▶



by writing to:

Pensions Services,
Wedgwood Building,
Tipping Street,
Stafford,
ST16 2DH

or by phoning:

01785 278222

or by fax:

01785 276489

or by e-mailing:

pensions.enquiries@staffordshire.gov.uk

We also have a website at: www.staffordshire.gov.uk/pensions



Tax Office Details

If you wish to discuss any issues about your tax code the Tax Office can be contacted on

Tel: 0845 302 1436

Please quote your

**National Insurance
Number and Employer
Reference Number**

Shared Service Centre

You should tell our Shared Service in writing when your banking details change. If you have any queries about your pension payments you can contact Shared Service on the telephone numbers opposite:

01785 85 4473

01785 85 4474

01785 27 6443

01785 85 4472

01785 85 4476

inContact

Issue 4 • Spring 2009

A Newsletter for retired members of the Local Government Pension Scheme participating in the Staffordshire County Pension Fund



If a copy of the information in this Newsletter is needed in large print, Braille, another language or on cassette, please get in touch with us

Welcome to the inContact Newsletter!

Welcome to the fourth newsletter for retired members.

The last twelve months have been very busy in Pension Services as we have been getting to grips with the 'new look' Local Government Pension Scheme that was introduced from 1 April 2008. Any changes introduced by that Scheme, however, will only affect those of you who have retired since 1 April 2008. Those people should have received a Scheme members' Newsletter or attended a presentation about the new scheme before retirement.

Last year we included a crossword competition based on Staffordshire and although there were a couple of errors in it, for which I apologise, you seemed to enjoy it as we received a large number of entries, almost all of which were correct. A winner was drawn out and the prize went to Mrs L M Banks of Stafford

Although inContact is sent to all the people to whom we make a payment through our Pensions Payroll please remember that if you are a retired teacher the payment you receive from us is a 'top up' to your main scheme benefits which come from Teachers' Pensions; so any article we do about Local Government Pension Scheme benefits will not apply to you.

We really enjoy hearing from you so please keep sending ideas for articles and suggestions for any ways in which we can further improve our service.

Janet Caiazzo

Pensions Manager



Payment of your pension

Remember that a pay advice slip will only be issued to you if the amount of your net pension has changed by more than £1 since the previous month.

The table opposite shows the dates when you can expect your pension to be put into your bank account or building society over the coming financial year, please note that there **will not** be an early payment in December.

Pension payment dates for 2009/10

Thursday	30th April	2009
Friday	29th May	2009
Tuesday	30th June	2009
Friday	31st July	2009
Friday	28th August	2009
Wednesday	30th September	2009
Friday	30th October	2009
Friday	27th November	2009
Thursday	31st December	2009
Friday	29th January	2010
Friday	26th February	2010
Wednesday	31st March	2010

Pension Fund Update

This article gives information about the finances of the Staffordshire County Pension Fund for 2007/2008.

The Annual Report on the Fund is available on our website at :

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/pensions

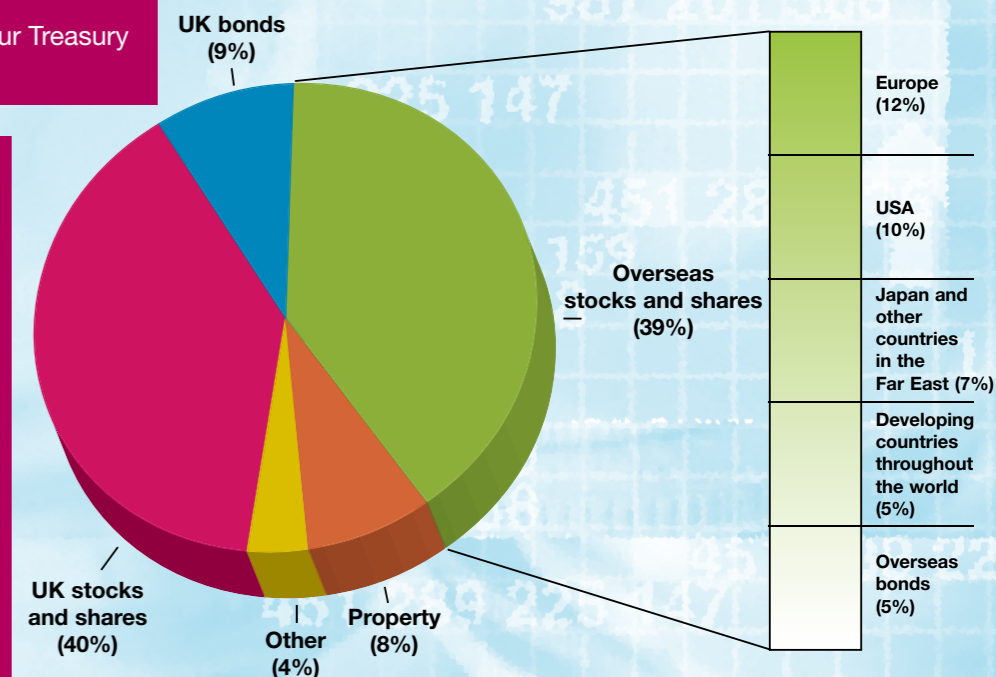
Any other queries please contact our Treasury Services Team on **01785 276330**.

Investment performance

2007/08 has been a challenging year for the Fund, against a background of great economic uncertainty and the much publicised credit crunch arising out of the US housing market in 2007. Unsurprisingly, the Fund's value decreased by £123m to £2,189m as a result. However, over the long-term, the Fund's market value has increased by over 40% between 1998 and 2008 and is in line with the average return for all local-authority funds.

Finance

Where the Pension Fund is Invested



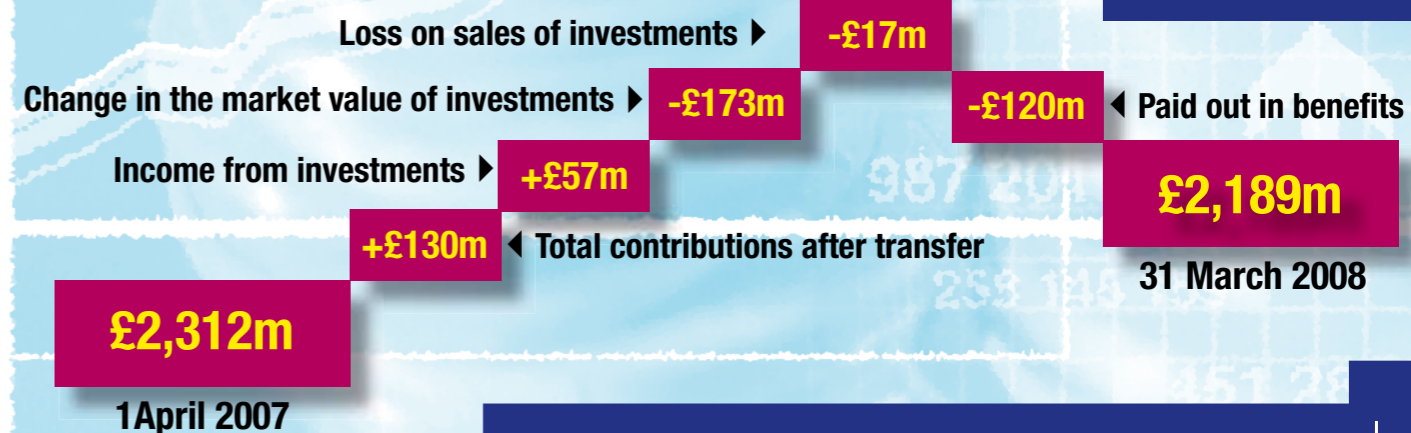
Funding Level

Every three years the Actuary calculates whether the amount of assets matches the level of liabilities. The last valuation at 31 March 2007 showed that the Fund was 89% funded with a deficit of £299m. Employer contributions have been increased as a result to reduce this deficit.

The next actuarial valuation will be carried out up to 31 March 2010 and the results will be applied from the 1 April 2011.

Fund Transactions

The chart below shows in £ million the size of the Fund at the beginning of the 2007/08 financial year, transactions during the year and the resultant balance at 31 March 2008.



Please note the value of the Fund does not affect your Pension

Pension Increase

Pensions increase April 2009 - 5.0%

Every year, the government issues a legal document called a 'Pensions Increase (Review) Order'. The order tells public-sector pension schemes like Staffordshire County Pension Fund what the annual increase to pensions is. This year, the increase is 5.0%. As usual, the increase is based on the percentage rise in the Retail Prices Index in the twelve months up to last September. It's due from April 6th this year.

Who gets the increase?

Pensions increase is normally paid to pensioners who are aged 55 or over: or have retired on ill health grounds (at any age): or receive a spouse's/child's pension.

Are you over State Retirement Age or receiving a State spouses pension?

You may have received a notice from the Inland Revenue that shows your Contracted Out Deduction (COD); this is because your pension may have been based wholly, or partly, on service after 5 April 1978 and because, from that date, the Local Government Pension Scheme is contracted out of the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (the Additional Pension provided by the State). If you were a member of the LGPS at any time after 5 April 1978 you will have been paying a reduced rate of National insurance contributions because you were not paying for the earnings related addition to the State retirement Pension. Your COD represents the value of the earnings related addition you would otherwise have received.

Your COD is already included in the total pension you receive from the Staffordshire County Pension Fund and will be shown on your payslip as GMP (Guaranteed Minimum Pension.)

For those of you who have a GMP amount shown on your payslip as part of a pension, the increase on that pension is paid from two sources.

- ◆ The Inland Revenue pay all of the increase due in respect of that part of the GMP attributable to service up to 5 April 1988 and any increase over 3% in respect of that part of the GMP attributable to service after 5 April 1988
- ◆ The LGPS Pension Fund pays all of the increase due on the amount of pension that is over and above the value of your GMP, together with and any increase up to 3% in respect of that part of the GMP attributable to service after 5 April 1988

In summary, to check that you have received the correct amount of pensions increase you will need to add your State Retirement Pension to any pensions you receive from Staffordshire County (and include your Teachers pension, if you are a retired teacher.) The total amount of your pension income should have increased by the correct percentage.

(This is probably best done in May when the first full month of increased pension is paid.)

Did you retire after 21 April 2008?

If you did, you don't get the full increase this year. You'll start to get the full increases from next year. This table tells you what the increase is if you retired after 21st April.

Are you under age 55?

If you are, you will probably get the increases earlier than age 55 if you become permanently unfit to do any work. If this doesn't apply to you, on your 55th birthday we'll bring your pension up to the amount it would be if you had received all the increases from the date you retired.



PLEASE NOTE

We have discovered a problem affecting a small proportion of our pensioners where incorrect increases have been made to their pensions in the past. Part of the pension has been increased twice – once with the state pension and once with the occupational (LGPS) pension. This is because we did not have a record of the part of the LGPS pension (the GMP) on which increases are paid either in part or in full with the State pension. Staffordshire Pension Fund has decided not to ask pensioners affected by this particular problem to repay the overpayments. However, if you have been overpaid, we will have to correct your future pension payments. We hope to make the adjustment to your pension at the same time as we apply the pension increase from 6 April 2009 in order to help to offset any reduction. If we do not, however, receive notification of the amount of the GMP from HMRC in time to make that adjustment your pension will be frozen, with no increase applied from 6 April 2009, until the correct rate of pension can be calculated. Any pensioners affected will have received a letter before the pension payment due on 30 April 2009.

Pensions Increase 2009

Pensions Beginning	Increase
22nd April 2008 to 21st May 2008	4.58%
22nd May 2008 to 21st June 2008	4.17%
22nd June 2008 to 21st July 2008	3.75%
22nd July 2008 to 21st August 2008	3.33%
22nd August 2008 to 21st September 2008	2.92%
22nd September 2008 to 21st October 2008	2.50%
22nd October 2008 to 21st November 2008	2.08%
22nd November 2008 to 21st December 2008	1.67%
22nd December 2008 to 21st January 2009	1.25%
22nd January 2009 to 21st February 2009	0.83%
22nd February 2009 to 21st March 2009	0.42%

Pensions Increase 2010

As you will all have seen from the news recently the country is now officially in a time of recession and the Retail Price Index (RPI) has been falling rapidly since October 2008. The amount of the increase that is applied to your pensions each year is determined by the increase in the RPI in the twelve months ending with the previous September. The increase in the RPI between October 2007 and September 2008 was 5%, and therefore the increase to be applied to pensions in April 2009 is 5%. It looks very likely that between October 2008 and September 2009 there will be an overall decrease in the RPI. If this proves to be the case it could mean that there will be no increase to pensions in April 2010.

Odds and Ends

Did you know ...

We all know how important it is to have regular eye tests but for some people getting to a clinic or to an optician is not possible, or very difficult. Eye specialist The Outside Clinic can give you an eye test in your own home.

If you're already eligible for free eye tests, the service won't cost you anything.

For further information or to book an appointment; call 0800 854477 or see www.outsideclinic.com



Do you remember?

- ◆ When people went outside to the toilet and inside to eat.
- ◆ When it took five minutes for the TV to warm up
- ◆ When a shilling a week was decent pocket money.
- ◆ When cereals had free toys hidden inside the box.
- ◆ When being sent to the headmaster's office was nothing compared to the fate that awaited you if your parents heard that you had been sent to the headmaster.
- ◆ When having a weapon in school meant being caught with a catapult.
- ◆ When putting playing cards in the spokes transformed any bike into a motorcycle.
- ◆ When summers were filled with bike rides, cricket games, Hula Hoops, monkey bars, frozen jubbies, visits to the beach and lemonade powder.
- ◆ Laurel and Hardy, The Famous Five, Secret Seven, Biggles, the Lone Ranger, Phantom, Roy Rogers and Trigger, sweet cigarettes, pogo sticks, marbles, home milk delivery in glass bottles with foil tops, Ford Capris, twin tubs, Izal toilet paper, Anglo/Bazooka Joe pink bubble gum, MoJos/black jacks/fruit salads, two bob for a gallon of petrol, Nitty Nora.

If you can remember most or all of these, then you have lived!

Coffee break Sudoku

How to play

Complete the grid so that every row, column, and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

This puzzle is rated as easy/medium

Answers on opposite page

2	9			8				
	1	3			7	5	2	
		5			1			
4		2						1
				5				
3						9		2
			5			8		
	8	4	2			3	7	
				6			1	4

National Fraud Initiative

This authority is required by law to protect the public funds it administers. It may share information provided to it with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, in order to prevent and detect fraud.

The Audit Commission appoints the auditor to audit the accounts of this authority. It is also responsible for carrying out data matching exercises.

Data matching involves comparing computer records held by one body against other computer records held by the same or another body to see how far they match. This is usually personal information. Computerised data matching allows potentially fraudulent claims and payments to be identified. Where a match is found it indicates that there is an inconsistency which requires further investigation. No assumption can be made as to whether there is fraud, error or other explanation until an investigation is carried out.

The Audit Commission currently requires us to participate in a data matching exercise to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. We are required to provide particular sets of data to the Audit Commission for matching for each exercise, and these are set out in the Audit Commission's guidance, which can be found at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nfi.

The use of data by the Audit Commission in a data matching exercise is carried out with statutory authority under its powers in Part 2A of the Audit Commission Act 1998. It does not require the consent of the individuals concerned under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Data matching by the Audit Commission is subject to a Code of Practice. This may be found at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nfi/codeofdmp.asp.

For further information on the Audit Commission's legal powers and the reasons why it matches particular information, see <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nfi/fptext.asp>. For further information on data matching at this authority contact, Steven Parsons, Internal Audit (01785 276405).



Please remember

You should inform Pension Services directly of any amendments we should make to your personal details, for example if you change your name, address or marital status.

The details should be given in writing, quoting your Pay Reference Number and enclosing copies of any supporting documentation if appropriate (e.g. a copy of your marriage certificate if you have married or a copy of decree absolute if you have divorced).

4	1	2	8	6	7	9	3	5
5	7	3	6	1	2	4	8	9
6	9	8	4	3	5	7	2	1
2	8	6	9	7	4	1	5	3
3	6	4	2	5	1	8	7	9
1	5	7	3	6	8	2	9	4
8	3	9	1	2	6	5	7	4
9	2	5	7	4	6	3	1	8
7	4	1	4	7	8	5	1	2

Solution to sudoku puzzle on page 6