

Pension Services Service Standards

Staffordshire County Council Pension Services administer the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) on behalf of approximately 200 employers eligible to participate in the LGPS. Pension Services is part of the Finance and Resources Division of Staffordshire County Council.

The aims of Pension Services are to:

- provide a high quality, cost effective service that we will continuously try to improve
- treat everyone equally and courteously
- communicate effectively, using easy to understand language where possible
- be accessible, fair and helpful
- learn from your comments

This leaflet tells you about the level of service we aim to provide under normal circumstances, for key areas of our service. The target times shown will be reviewed on a regular basis. We will monitor the quality of our service and publish the results on our website. The targets stated are working days and we aim to achieve these targets in at least 90% of cases. In all cases where a payment is due, please allow a further 3 working days for the BACS transaction to arrive.

Our Commitment to New Members

Membership Certificates

We will issue a scheme guide and membership certificate showing the information we hold within 20 working days of receipt of your employment details.

Transfers In From Previous Pension Schemes

We will write to your previous pension scheme requesting details within 20 working days of receiving your request or, if later, receipt of your employment details.

We will issue details of the estimated benefits 'bought' by the transfer value within 10 working days of receiving sufficient information from your former scheme and HM Revenue and Customs.

We will confirm the actual credited period of membership within 30 working days of receiving the payment from your previous scheme.

Our Commitment to Existing Members

Early Leavers and Optants-Out

We will send an option form to all leavers within 40 days of being notified by their employer that their pensionable service has terminated.

Refunds

If you are eligible we will process payment of the refund due within 5 working days of receiving your completed option form.

The option form must be signed and received by Pension Services no earlier than 1 month and 1 day after you have left your employment or opted out of the LGPS.

Transfer Out to another Pension Scheme

We will issue a quotation of transfer value within 10 working days of receipt of your authorised request provided that all of the necessary information is available. We will issue up to 1 free quotation within any 12 month period.

We will pay the transfer value within 10 days of receiving confirmation from you that the transfer is to proceed.

Please note that this target can only be met if we have all of the information we require to make the payment, and Pension Services are satisfied that the new provider meets the requirements under the regulations which govern the payment of transfer values to alternative pension arrangements.

This standard does not apply to transfers to overseas arrangements or cases involving a pension sharing order following a divorce settlement.

Estimates of Benefits

We will issue a quotation within 10 working days of receiving the relevant details from your employer. This should normally be within 1 month of receiving your request.

Retirements

We will send details of the benefits payable and process the payment of any lump sum Retirement Grant within 10 working days of receiving all the information required from your employer and /or you the member.

Deaths

We will send a Form of Application within 5 working days of being notified of the death of the member.

We will send details of the benefits payable to the member's next of kin within 5 working days of receiving all of the relevant documents.

We will pay the lump sum Death Grant within 5 working days of receiving the Grant of Probate (or other appropriate documentation).

Please note that if there is any doubt as to who the beneficiary should be this performance standard will not apply.

Newsletters

We will send a Newsletter to members at least once a year.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

We welcome and value your comments on the standard of service we provide. If you have any comments you wish to make, please contact us. See details below.

You can help us to give you a good service by:

- fully and accurately completing any forms we send to you
- giving us your National Insurance Number and full name when you write to us
- where possible providing us with a day time contact telephone number or E-mail address

While we always try to do, things accurately and on time we recognise that things can, and do sometimes go wrong. In that event there are several things you can do. In the first instance please contact Pension Services and every effort will be made to clarify any misunderstanding and put right any error. Failing that, you can make a formal complaint to the Pensions Manager at the address below.

If you make a formal complaint we will:

- acknowledge or reply to your complaint in writing within 5 working days of its receipt
- within a further 10 days endeavour to give you a full explanation of our findings, and, if necessary, what action we propose to take to resolve any outstanding issues

Finally, the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) allows you the right to have your complaint independently reviewed. A set of notes about the IDRP process together with a form to set out the nature of your complaint can be sent to you upon request.

**The Pensions Manager, Pension Services
Staffordshire County Council
2 Staffordshire Place
Tipping Street
Stafford ST16 2DH**

Phone: 01785 27 8222

Email: pensions.enquiries@staffordshire.gov.uk

**If you would like this information in large print, Braille,
audio tape/disc, British Sign Language or any other language,
please ring 01785 27 8222**