



# Staffordshire Pension Fund

Local Government Pension Scheme

## Employer Focus

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**This bulletin from the Staffordshire Pension Fund, focuses on the current issues that you should be aware of relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme.**

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**Issue April 2025**

### **Employer's submission of year end pension data returns reminder**

As highlighted in February's Employer Focus newsletter, we would like to remind all Scheme employers that the submission of data for the financial year ending 31 March 2025 must be received by Pensions Services no later than **19 April 2025**.

It is especially important that this deadline is adhered to this year as in addition to normal year end processes, the full triennial Fund Valuation will also be based on membership data as of 31 March 2025. Timely receipt of the data will allow for data validation processes to be completed and any necessary data cleansing to be performed prior to submission to the Fund's Actuary. In addition, this will also ensure that we can comply with the requirement to issue annual benefits statements within statutory time limits.

### **Scheme employer guidance**

To assist Scheme employers with completing their annual return we have a dedicated area of the Pension Fund's website, which contains all the necessary documentation for completion including guidelines and supporting information. <https://www.staffspf.org.uk/Employers/Year-end/Year-End.aspx>

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### **Local Government Association (LGA) Bulletin 261 Annual Update**

The LGA have issued a bulletin aimed at employers who participate in the LGPS. The [bulletin](#) sets out the rates and bands that apply from April 2025 for various purposes including employee contribution rates, automatic enrolment earnings bands, [PAYE tax and national insurance limits and thresholds](#), and the maximum week's pay for calculating a statutory redundancy payment.

## **Pensions Administration Strategy**

We have recently reviewed and updated the Pensions Administration Strategy, which was approved by the Pensions Committee at the recent meeting of 28 March 2025.

The Strategy sets out the key roles and responsibilities for the Fund and its Scheme employers by setting out expectations and confirming the targets that both parties need to work to. This will help ensure regulatory compliance is achieved and best value service standards are delivered to Scheme members.

The strategy also seeks to promote good working relationships, improve efficiency and ensure agreed standards of quality in delivery of the pensions administration service amongst Scheme employers and the Fund.

A copy of the Pensions Administration Strategy can be found on our website: <https://www.staffspf.org.uk/Governance/Pensions-administration-strategy/Pensions-administration-strategy.aspx>

If you have any comments regarding the Strategy, please do not hesitate to contact the Fund. Email: [pensions.comms@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pensions.comms@staffordshire.gov.uk)

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## **Climate Change Strategy**

At the meeting of 28 March 2025, the Pensions Committee also approved the Staffordshire Pension Fund's updated Climate Change Strategy.

The Climate Change Strategy sets out the Fund's approach to managing the risks and opportunities presented by climate change; it was first approved by the Pensions Committee at its meeting on 11 February 2022.

The overarching aim of the Fund's Climate Change Strategy is to achieve a portfolio of assets with net zero carbon emissions by 2050. However, with 2050 being many years away, to guide and monitor the Fund's decarbonisation journey, a series of interim 2030 Climate Objectives have been set. The Fund's progress against these objectives are detailed in the Climate Change Strategy.

A copy of the Fund's Climate Change Strategy can be found on our website: <https://www.staffspf.org.uk/Finance-and-Investments/Corporate-Governance-and-Responsible-Investment/Responsible-Investment-and-Engagement.aspx>

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## **Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs)**

We would like to remind Scheme employers of their responsibilities with regards to the deduction of AVC's and the payment of contributions over to AVC provider(s).

We have had a couple of recent instances where the monthly AVC deductions have not been correctly credited to the Scheme member's personal AVC plan. This can result in a loss of investment returns for the Scheme member.

Where you have an employee paying AVCs, you are required to submit a monthly contribution schedule to the AVC provider along with the corresponding payment. It should be noted that the contributions schedule and payment need to exactly match.

For new AVC applications, your monthly contribution schedule should be amended to include the new members. Likewise, where an employee notifies you of a change in contribution level, the contribution amount must also be altered on the next contribution schedule.

**Please note** that where the AVC application is the first request from one of your employees i.e. it will be the first time a deduction to be made on your payroll, before making the first payment you will need to contact Standard Life\* to set up a new Site name/code so they can correctly allocate the new payment. To do so, you will need to register on the Standard Life portal. Please contact Pension Services for more information:

[pensions.employers@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pensions.employers@staffordshire.gov.uk)

\* Staffordshire Pension Fund previously had arrangements with two other AVC providers: Scottish Widows and Utmost. However, we currently only offer the Standard Life AVC arrangement for new members.

For new AVC applications, deductions should commence in the month following the date of the employee's election. The payment of contributions to the AVC provider should be made by the nineteenth of the month following the month of deduction.

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## Confirmation of annual revaluation, earnings and pensions increase

On 11 February 2025, [HM Treasury \(HMT\) published a written ministerial statement](#) confirming the rates of annual revaluation, earnings and pensions increase due to apply from April 2025. The statement confirms:

- public service pensions will increase on 7 April 2025 by 1.7%, in line with the Consumer Prices Index for the year up to September 2024.
  - revaluation of 1.7% plus any local addition will be used in April 2025 to revalue CARE accounts in public service pension schemes that use prices as the measure of revaluation.
  - revaluation of 4.5% will be used in April 2025 to revalue the CARE accounts in public service pension schemes that use earnings as the measure of revaluation.
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## Employer designated pensions contacts

To ensure that the Fund and Scheme employers are able to work together closely and in partnership, it is important to keep us updated with any changes to staff responsible for sending and signing off pensions data and who we can contact with any queries (authorised contacts). Key employer contacts include:

- Director of Finance
- Head of Human Resources
- Head of Payroll

If you believe your organisation's contact details are incomplete or out of date, please complete the employer contact details template form. The form can be downloaded from the [employers' area of our website](#)

Please note, you will need a username and password in order to access the forms and documents. If you have not previously registered, you should contact [pensions.employers@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pensions.employers@staffordshire.gov.uk) to request access.

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## The Neonatal Care Leave and Pay (Consequential Amendments to Subordinate Legislation) Regulations 2025

On 24 February 2025, the Department for Business and Trade laid the Neonatal Care Leave and Pay (Consequential Amendments to Subordinate Legislation) Regulations 2025.

The regulations come into force on 6 April 2025 and make changes related to neonatal care leave (NCL) and pay. This is a new statutory entitlement for employed parents whose child receives neonatal care starting within 28 days of birth and goes on to spend seven or more continuous days in care. Eligible parents will be entitled to up to 12 weeks of NCL in addition to existing entitlement such as maternity, adoption and paternity leave. The leave must be taken within 68 weeks of the baby's birth. The entitlement applies to children born after 5 April 2025.

For LGPS purposes, neonatal care leave will be treated similarly to most other types of child-related leave. Members on paid neonatal care leave are treated as receiving assumed pensionable pay. Members on unpaid neonatal care leave can choose to buy back the lost pension through a shared-cost additional pension contract.

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### **Circulating the newsletter within your organisation.**

We would be grateful if you could continue to circulate this newsletter to appropriate colleagues in your organisation for example, Human Resources, Payroll and Finance Department or alternatively provide us with their email address, so we can add them to our distribution list.

If you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to email the Fund at [\*\*pensions.comms@staffordshire.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:pensions.comms@staffordshire.gov.uk)