
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.

Issue March 2022

Limited Pension Fund service from 17.00 on 11 March to 16 March 2022.

Staffordshire Pension Fund has a major pensions system infrastructure update scheduled to commence at the end of normal business hours on Friday 11 March 2022. Our aim is to resume normal pensions service provision during business hours on 16 March 2022.

We have planned the systems update to include the weekend of 12-13 March 2022, as this will lessen the impact on service delivery for both Employers and Scheme Members, and we apologise for any inconvenience this may cause. However, the update to the system is essential and will result in longer term benefits for us all.

In the short period of disruption to services, this will mean that:

- The Pensions Team will not have full access to the pensions administration software; they will be able to view members records but will not be able to process calculations and benefits due.
- Employers who use i-Connect will not be able to submit payroll information through the i-Connect portal, as this will not be available.
- Scheme Members will not be able to access My Pensions Portal (MPP) to run their own pensions estimates, view their pension records including Annual Benefit Statements, or update personal information online.



The Staffordshire Pension Fund website (www.staffspf.org.uk) including the My Pension Portal (MPP) webpage, will be updated with details of the limited service during the affected period, however, we would be grateful if you could cascade this information to employees within your organisation, in advance of 11 March 2022, to make them aware. The Pension Fund's website will remain accessible throughout the systems update, to provide general information about Pensions and the Staffordshire Pension Fund.

Thank you all for your understanding and continued support.

Employer's submission of year end data returns

As highlighted in the February Employer Newsletter [Staffordshire Pension Fund - Focus February 2022 \(staffspf.org.uk\)](#) we would like to remind all Employers that the submission of data for the financial year ending 31 March 2022 must be received by Pensions Services no later than **22 April 2022**.

This deadline 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. This will also allow sufficient time to issue our Members' Annual Benefit Statements by 31 August 2022.

Employer guidance

To assist 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.

Failure to respond by 22 April 2022 may result in the late issue of Members' Annual Benefit Statements, which constitutes a breach of law. This means the Fund has a legal requirement for the breach to be reported to the Pensions Regulator. This exposes both you, as the Employer and the Fund to reputational risk and also the risk of financial penalty.



Revised Employer Pension Contributions effective from 1 April 2022

To assist Payroll Managers, details of the Employer Contribution rates due from 1 April 2022, for all participating Employers in the Staffordshire Pension Fund, can be found on our website (see link below)

[Staffordshire Pension Fund - Year end data \(staffspf.org.uk\)](https://staffspf.org.uk)

N.B. If the contribution rate your organisation pays is fixed for the duration of your current contract, the Fund Actuarial Valuation will not alter the contribution rate payable.

LGPS Scheme Members contribution banding from 1 April 2022

The table below sets out the Members contribution bands which will be effective from 1 April 2022. These are based on the pay bands for 2021/22 as increased by the September 2021 Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure.

Please ensure your HR and Payroll Teams take the necessary action to implement the changes from 1 April 2022

Band	Pensionable Pay Range	Main Section Contribution	50/50 Section Contribution
1	Up to £15,000	5.5%	2.75%
2	£15,001 to £23,600	5.8%	2.9%
3	£23,601 to £38,300	6.5%	3.25%
4	£38,301 to £48,500	6.8%	3.4%
5	£48,501 to £67,900	8.5%	4.25%
6	£67,901 to £96,200	9.9%	4.95%
7	£96,201 to £113,400	10.5%	5.25%
8	£113,401 to £170,100	11.4%	5.7%
9	£170,101 or more	12.5%	6.25%



Pensions Pledge – Preventing Pensions Scams

The Pensions Regulator is asking Pension Funds, trustees, providers, and administrators to pledge to do more to protect scheme members and follow the principles of Pensions Scams Industry Group (PSIG) Code of Good Practice.

The Staffordshire Pension Fund already has well established due diligence processes in place to warn and prevent Members from being victims of pensions scams.

However, in accordance with industry best practice we have made the pledge to combat pension scams. By doing so we commit to:

- regularly **warn Members about pension scams**
- get to know the warning signs of a scam and best practice for transfers by **completing the scams module in the Trustee Toolkit** and encourage all relevant staff to do so
- study and use the resources on the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) **ScamSmart website**, **our scams information** and the **PSIG code**
- **report concerns about a scam** to the authorities and communicate this to the Scheme Member

NJC “Green Book” Local Government Pay Agreement effective from 1 April 2021 – Active Members

New pay rates for Local Government Employees have been issued effective from 1 April 2021. The NJC have encouraged Employers to implement the pay award as swiftly as possible. For those covered by the “Green Book” agreement, the pay award has increased most Spinal Column Points and allowances by 1.75%. The increase to the Pension Contributions banding from **1 April 2021** was only based on CPI to September 2020, which was 0.5%

As a result when applying the new pay rates some Members of the scheme will see an increase to their contribution rates. The Fund has checked the new rates against the 1 April 2021 Contribution bands and have found the following obvious trigger points (for Whole Time Employees):



Spinal Column Point	WTE Rate at 01/04/2020	2021 Contribution Band before	WTE Rate at 01/04/2021	2021 Contribution Band after
13	£22627	Band 2 (5.85% Main; 2.9% 50/50)	£23023	Band 3 (6.5% Main; 3.25% 50/50)
33	£36922	Band 3 (6.5% Main; 3.25% 50/50)	£37568	Band 4 (6.8% Main; 3.4% 50/50)
43	£46845	Band 4 (6.8% Main; 3.4% 50/50)	£47665	Band 5 (8.5% Main; 4.25% 50/50)

Please remember that the Contribution Bands are based on a Member's Actual Pay (if they are part time), so this does mean that not all Members on these spinal column points will be affected and could also mean that Scheme Members working part time on different grades could also be impacted.

Within the LGPS regulations it is at an Employer's Discretion how often Employees' contributions are re-banded (and how the Employer will act where a late pay award is announced): what your organisation has decided will be published in your discretionary policy. You may need to confirm with your Payroll Provider that their system will act in accordance with your policy.

If you are changing a Member's contribution band, you must, as soon as is reasonably practicable, inform the Member of the **new contribution rate** and **the date from which it is to be applied**.

Further information on this can be found in the full HR Guide on the National LGPS website here: [Guides and sample documents \(lgpsregs.org\)](https://www.lgpsregs.org).



For all 3 of the trigger points above, a Member would be affected backdated to 1 April 2021 and may have to pay an increased pension contribution for the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, but when applying the new contribution rates on 1 April 2022, in many cases, the Employee will return to their previous contribution banding. In this case, you must inform the Member of both changes.

NJC Local Government Pay Agreement effective from 1 April 2021 – Members who left before 31 March 2022

An Employer may pay arrears to Employees who have already left the scheme. If you are paying arrears to these Members and are an i-Connect Employer, you will already have received details of how to report these additional payments where applicable – Staffordshire Pension Fund will make any amendments to pension benefits for these Members.

If you are not an i-Connect employer, you must inform Staffordshire Pension Fund of any changes that will require a recalculation of a benefit. This can be done in 2 ways: either a combined spreadsheet with all relevant data; or by sending through revised individual termination notices for all Members affected.

If you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the Pensions Communications Team on pensions.comms@staffordshire.gov.uk

