

Webinar for Academies

Our fund actuaries, Hymans Robertson, hosted a free webinar for academies on 19 September 2017. The webinar was aimed at helping academies better understand the costs and risks associated with the local government pension scheme and navigate the challenges specifically facing academies. In brief the webinar covered:

- **Understanding participation in the LGPS**
The role within the scheme and how academies can manage long term costs more effectively.
- **Understanding 2017 accounting reports**
Why the pension figures disclosed in academy accounts are so important and how academies can take more control.
- **Managing the risk of unexpected pension costs**
Stable and predictable pension costs are important to all businesses – the webinar looked at the unexpected costs associated with ill health early retirements and the solutions available to mitigate these.

The webinar was recorded and can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/234690548> or by contacting Hymans Robertson directly.

Independent Registered Medical Practitioners

The list of Independent Registered Medical Practitioners which provides the names of qualified Physicians who meet the requirements imposed within the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2008 (as amended) to undertake work connected with the administration of the East Riding Pension Fund has been recently updated to include the latest approved doctor, Dr Yew.

The revised list can be found on the ERPF website <http://www.erpf.org.uk/library-and-information/online-forms>

If you have any questions regarding Ill Health Retirement then please contact Suzanne Firth, Principal Pensions Officer by email Suzanne.firth@eastriding.gov.uk or on 01482 394178 for an informal chat.

Authorised Absence form and guidance

The 'Returning from Authorised Absence' form has been updated to make the information required and the rules surrounding buying back lost pay easier to understand and to bring the form in line with the information required for the ERPF online services. The guidance on how to complete the forms has also been updated to reflect the changes made.

Both these revised documents can be found on the ERPF website <http://www.erpf.org.uk/employers>

Contact details for scheme employers and payroll providers

Communication between the administering authority and its scheme employers plays a vital role in ensuring that the scheme is administered effectively and efficiently. It is also very important to ensure the ERPF is compliant with data protection requirements that the ERPF has correct contact details for all its scheme employers and signed consent to liaise with any third party HR or payroll providers.

It is an employer's responsibility to keep the ERPF informed of the correct contact details for the:-

- Organisation for the main point of contact for the scheme employer;
- Payroll provider for completion of pension administration forms;
- Human Resources for retirement, ill health and employer discretionary matters;
- Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure for the stage 1 contact officer.

One of the main concerns is when a scheme employer changes its payroll provider but fails to notify the ERPF of the change. When this occurs the ERPF will continue to contact the old payroll provider to request information and this leads to delays in obtaining pension data and consequently delays in processing the members pension benefits. This also has a negative impact on resources at the ERPF.

Notification must be received from the scheme employer at the earliest opportunity where there is a change in the payroll provider and we will need signed consent to share and accept member data from the new payroll provider. The ERPF cannot accept notification of the change from the new payroll provider.

All amendments to contact details for scheme employers must be emailed in the first instance to comms@eastriding.gcsx.gov.uk and a form will be issued for the scheme employer to complete.

Where there has been a change in payroll provider the previous payroll provider will be asked to provide a closure report. This will ensure the pensionable earnings received and contributions paid up to that point are recorded correctly on the ERPF administration system. Any outstanding queries and missing member data will also be requested in bulk from the previous payroll provider to ensure that membership data is held is correct.

Revised employee leaver form for TUPE transfers and academy conversion

The ERPF has recently received guidance from the LGA on whether a deferred benefit should be awarded to a scheme member when their employment is transferred either as a result of a TUPE transfer or an academy conversion.

The current LGPS regulations state that where an LGPS member is TUPE transferred into another LGPS employment, it is to be treated as a new LGPS employment with the member being given the same rights as an employee who has left one employment and started a new employment. This includes immediate entitlement to the payment to benefits where the member is aged 55 or above and the right to elect to aggregate previous LGPS benefits or transfer in any other pension benefits within 12 months of the date the new employment commences.

The 'Employee leaver' form and the guidance notes for how to complete the form has been updated to bring the form in line with the LGPS regulations and the information required by the ERPF. Both these revised documents can be found on the ERPF website <http://www.erpf.org.uk/employers>

Member Data Reviews

The Pensions Regulator (TPR) has published their 2017 report on the governance and administration of public service pension schemes. The commentary in the report highlights a number of points which the ERPF have noted.

In particular TPR have highlighted ongoing concerns in respect of the quality of member data held by Funds and that they expect all Funds to undertake an annual data review and put an improvement plan in place where required. The ERPF will be reviewing the member data held and will carry out an assessment of the accuracy and completeness of this data.

It is therefore timely to remind all scheme employers of their responsibilities for ensuring the membership data held by the Fund for their own LGPS membership is correct and up to date. Employers are responsible for providing timely and accurate data in order for the ERPF to be able to fulfil its legal obligation. Where a scheme employer fails to provide information about members to the ERPF it may be necessary for the ERPF to report this as a breach of the law to TPR.

If you have any questions regarding this matter then please contact Liz Vollans by email liz.vollans@eastriding.gov.uk or on 01482 394175.

Auto Enrolment

A new version of the automatic brief guide (version 7.0) has been uploaded to www.lgpsregs.org. This new guide aims to supplement the information provided by the Pensions Regulator (TPR); it covers automatic enrolment from the perspective of the LGPS and TPS and contains signposts to the detailed guidance available on TPR's website. The sample letters have also been updated and are also available on www.lgpsregs.org

The LGA have also issued further guidance for employer who have used the transitional delay as below:

Transitional Delay

Employers who used transitional delay will be aware that the end of the transitional period is approaching i.e. 30 September 2017. Employers are encouraged to review the [transitional delay guidance](#) on TPR's website and, in particular, to note that the exception where a worker opted out more than 12 months before the automatic enrolment date applies at the end of the transitional delay period.

*In essence, this means that an employer **cannot** automatically enrol an eligible jobholder who opted out more than 12 months before the transitional delay assessment date of 1 October 2017. As this exception was introduced by the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Automatic Enrolment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 [[SI2015/501](#)] from 1 April 2015 it is likely to have changed the position for many employers whose staging date was prior to 1 April 2015. These employers will have sent letters to eligible jobholders to whom transitional delay was applied informing them that they will be enrolled into the LGPS on 1 October 2017 if they meet the eligible jobholder criteria on that date. However, where the worker opted out more than 12 months before 1 October 2017, this cannot now happen. It would be advisable for employers to write to such individuals to inform them they will not be automatically enrolled from 1 October 2017 and to remind them of their option to opt in to the LGPS.*

In addition, employers should also be aware that [TPR's guidance](#) (see paragraphs 73 to 78) states that where an individual to whom transitional delay was applied is not an eligible jobholder on 1 October 2017 the employer must keep assessing the worker each pay reference as usual. If at any point after 1 October 2017 the eligible jobholder criteria are met, unless one of the exceptions apply, the individual must be automatically enrolled with effect from 1 October 2017 i.e. active membership must be backdated to start from 1 October 2017 irrespective of the date the employee first meets the eligible jobholder criteria after 1 October 2017. Obviously, this could have serious consequences if employers are required to backdate contributions for several years. We have been seeking clarification from DWP on this and will provide further information as soon as it becomes available.

The ERPF will keep employers updated on any further announcements with regards to auto enrolment as they are received.

Distribution details

To make sure the information provided in the monthly employer bulletins is reaching the right people, could you please circulate this bulletin to colleagues within your organisation who have responsibilities for pensions including Business Managers, Finance Officers, HR and Payroll staff.

If you would like to add anyone to the mailing list please then their details (name, email address and organisation): liz.vollans@eastriding.gov.uk.

Earlier bulletins issued can all be found on the ERPF website <http://www.erpf.org.uk/employers>