



Communications Policy

2021



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Introduction

The Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF) is a regional pension fund administering the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). It is the largest LGPS fund in England and Wales.

GMPF has a Communication and Engagement Strategy that has been developed based on the feedback we receive. The Strategy is used to drive changes to the communication work that we do. It outlines GMPF's aims and objectives when communicating and engaging with all its stakeholders.

This Communications Policy is a statement of how we are currently delivering those aims and objectives.

The LGPS Regulations require us to prepare, maintain and publish a statement setting out our policies on communications. We have prepared this document in line with these requirements. It covers our communications with:

- Pension fund members
- Representatives of members
- Prospective pension fund members
- Our employers and prospective employers.

This document will be revised and republished whenever there is a material change to the way we communicate or engage with any of these groups.

This Communications Policy and the Communications and Engagement Strategy are available on the GMPF website.

Pension fund members

We communicate with our members in a variety of ways.

GMPF Website and My Pension

The GMPF website at www.gmpf.org.uk has general information about GMPF and about being a member of the LGPS.



Members can access their pension account using the My Pension area of the website. This is a secure area that allows members to see the personal details we hold about them. They can also update information such as their death grant nomination and use a calculator to estimate their retirement benefits. Contributing and deferred members can view their annual pension statements and pensioner members can view their pension payment information.

We will send emails to all members who have registered for My Pension to alert them to any key updates made to the GMPF website or My Pension area. We will also add any relevant news updates here.

Members can send questions and queries to us using the online form, and we will respond to them by email or another method as requested. The GMPF website has a 'feedback zone' where members can leave feedback or register complaints or compliments about the service we provide. A survey is presented to members when they log out of My Pension, allowing them to provide feedback specifically about this online service.

We store all literature (such as GMPF's annual report and Guide for Members) and all statements and policies on the website.

Twitter

GMPF has a Twitter account. We regularly tweet information and updates that we believe our members might be interested in. You can follow us at @GMPF_LGPS

Google

GMPF makes use of a feature in Google where members can ask us questions and receive answers back, see our opening times, access directions to our offices, see photos and write reviews on our performance.

Helpline

We provide a helpline service for all our members to use if they need to contact us by telephone or email. There are two helpline numbers for members; one for pensioner members to call 0161 301 7100, and one for all other members to call 0161 301 7000.

Roadshows, seminars, webinars and surgeries

GMPF arranges a programme of online and face to face events each year to meet with individuals or small groups of members. We will arrange some of these events in conjunction with employers, and the employer will advertise these to its employees. We will arrange and host others ourselves. We will advertise these on the GMPF website.



Individual letters, telephone calls and e-mails

Whenever we are dealing with a specific request or processing a pension benefit, we will likely communicate either by letter, telephone call or email, depending on which is most appropriate.

What we do not do

We never cold call our members about any aspect of their pension. If a member receives an unexpected call from someone claiming to be from GMPF, then we suggest they always ring our Helpline to check whether the call was genuine.

Visits to our offices (currently not available due to COVID-19 restrictions)

Members are welcome to visit our offices if they prefer to speak to us face to face. Ideally, members should make an appointment in advance so we can make sure that someone is available to see them. We have private interview rooms so that we can discuss matters confidentially. Members can return documents or make general enquiries at our reception at any time during office hours. Our opening hours and details of how to find us are on our website at <https://www.gmpf.org.uk/about/contact-us>.

Special requests and paper communications

Members should contact us if they need information or for us to communicate with them in a specific way (for example, requiring letters to be in large print or on a different coloured background). We will then arrange to do this. If a member wishes to opt out of receiving electronic communications and wishes to receive paper copies instead, then we ask that they put this request in writing to us. Members should quote their unique GMPF pension reference so that we can identify the correct pension record and make the necessary arrangements. If we are unable to communicate electronically with a member for whatever reason and we are required by law to provide information to them, then we will send that information in writing either to their home address or to their employer to forward on.

Consultations, surveys and focus groups

GMPF conducts various consultation events and surveys and holds focus groups from time to time to obtain feedback that might help to improve the service. We publish all relevant results or feedback on the GMPF website.



Representatives of members

General information about GMPF and the LGPS

General information and literature is available to the representatives of members on the GMPF website, as detailed in the section above.

Employee representatives who are members of the GMPF Management Panel, Local Board or Working Groups

GMPF will provide representatives with information about GMPF and the LGPS through online and face to face presentations delivered at meetings or through written reports. GMPF will provide or facilitate training where identified or requested. We will also circulate news updates as and when required.

Prospective pension fund members

General information about GMPF and the LGPS

We hold general information and literature for prospective pension fund members on the GMPF website. Prospective members can contact us by using the 'Contact Us' option on the website.

Promoting the benefits of joining

GMPF requires all its employers to provide prospective members with a link to or copy of its 'Guide for Members'. This guide highlights the benefits and costs of joining the LGPS. Employers should ideally provide it as part of an employee's letter of appointment. GMPF also requires its employers to engage with any events that promote the benefits of the LGPS to prospective members.

Consultations and surveys

GMPF conducts various consultation events and surveys from time to time for prospective members, to obtain feedback that might help it to promote the LGPS to non-members.

GMPF employers

We communicate with our employers in a variety of different ways.

GMPF Website and Employers Website

We hold general information about GMPF and about becoming an employer in GMPF on the GMPF website.

Employers can access a secure area of the website that is just available for employers. This area holds procedure notes, training information, forms and guidance to help employers to carry out successfully their employing authority responsibilities.

Email bulletins and newsletters

We issue regular bulletins to our employers to provide news, updates and reminders. We also publish newsletters and ad hoc alerts whenever there is specific or topical information employers need to be aware of.

Helpline and other support

We have an Employer Liaison team dedicated solely to employer support. We provide a helpline service for all our employers to use if they need to contact us by telephone. The number is 0161 301 7200. We also have a dedicated employer support email address too.

Meetings, webinars, training events and surgeries

GMPF can arrange online and face to face events depending on the requirements of each employer.

GMPF holds regular online and face to face meetings with all its large employers, the frequency of which depends on the agenda.

We arrange training events for employers to attend. These may be large scale events providing general training on the LGPS or smaller events or webinars to provide training on a specific area or task (such as how to provide pay and contribution returns).

GMPF will also work with employers who have individual training needs, hosting in-house training sessions or visiting employers.

GMPF hosts an annual update meeting for all its employers. Officers provide a verbal update about GMPF's work over the previous 12 months and employers can ask questions or ask for further information about specific topics or projects.

Consultations, surveys and focus groups

GMPF conducts various consultation events and surveys and holds focus groups with its employers from time to time. The feedback helps to improve the service provided to employers and their members. All relevant results or feedback is made available to all employers.

