



Inscribe

The newsletter for Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund employers

Summer 2022

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Please note our helpdesk number has changed to **01628 796 668**. Our previous '0845' number is no longer in use.

Welcome

Welcome to *Inscribe* the quarterly newsletter for employers within the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund.

Each edition of *Inscribe* contains information and updates for the administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

LGPS Annual Report 2021

On 13 June 2022 the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) published the Scheme's annual report 2021.

The report provides a single source of information about the status of the LGPS for its members, employers and other stakeholders. The report collates information supplied by 86 administering authorities, as at 31 March 2021. Highlights of the report include:

- total membership grew by 1.08 per cent from 6.160 million to 6.226 million
- total assets increased to £342 billion - a rise of 23.4 per cent
- a positive cash-flow was maintained overall, including investment income
- over 1.8 million pensioners were paid

<https://lgpsboard.org/index.php/schemedata/scheme-annual-report>



Local Government
Pension Scheme



THE ROYAL COUNTY OF
BERKSHIRE
PENSION FUND

Tel: 01628 796 668

E-mail: info@berkshirerpensions.org.uk

DLUHC statutory guidance on special severance payments

On 12 May 2022, DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) published statutory guidance on special severance payments.

Best Value authorities in England must have regard to the guidance in circumstances in which it may be appropriate to make special severance payments.

The guidance also covers approval, disclosure and reporting requirements. The guidance confirms that a:

- strain cost related to the early payment of LGPS benefits under regulation 30(6) or (7) (flexible retirement, redundancy or efficiency retirement over age 55) does not constitute a special severance payment
- strain cost of awarding additional pension under regulation 31 of the LGPS Regulations 2013 may constitute a special severance payment, depending on the terms of the individual's contract
- strain cost related to waiving an actuarial reduction when a member retires under regulation 30(5) may constitute a special severance payment, depending on the terms of the individual's contract.

DLUHC consulted on a draft version of this guidance in 2021. You can find links to the original consultation, the LGA response and the Government response on the Scheme consultations page of www.lgpsregs.org.

The statutory guidance can be found via the link below:

https://lgpslibrary.org/assets/cons/lgpsew/20210702_SG.pdf

i-Connect contacts - *update*

Rachael Granger, Technical Analyst, commenced her maternity leave on 1 August.

In Rachael's absence your i-Connect contacts will be:

Amy Webb Morris - Assistant Technical Analyst

amy.webb-morris@rbwm.gov.uk

01628 796741

Paul Burke - Pension Administrator

paul.burke@rbwm.gov.uk

01628 796778



i-Connect

Please contact Amy or Paul going forward until further notice.

Responsible Investment - *update*

Dear Scheme Employers,

The Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund (the Fund) is committed to responsible investment (RI) and positive engagement, working with its specialist investment manager Local Pensions Partnership Investments Ltd (LPPI) to implement its investment portfolio.

Since 2018 the Fund has been in the process of transitioning its assets into pooled investment arrangements where it is able to benefit from increased scale and resources which are enabling improved evaluation of risks and greater capacity to engage and mitigate these risks.

In the Winter 2022 edition, I set out some of the key positive activities and highlights on the Fund's RI activities over the past few years and in the last edition I provided an update on how the Fund has reacted to some of the recent geopolitical issues. In this edition, I wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with another update now that time has moved on, focusing on what the Fund is doing to ensure it keeps up with best practice on its RI journey.

- The Responsible Investment working group are in the final stages of drafting a revised RI policy to help guide the Fund's responsible investment activities ensuring that the Fund's policy remains fit for purpose and is versatile in the quickly changing external environment. The revised RI policy is expected to be taken to the Pension Fund Committee for approval on 19 September 2022.
- The Fund continues to report publicly on its RI and engagement activities and outcomes each quarter, with the latest report taken to the Pension Fund Committee (July 2022) continuing to break down the split of Green and Brown Investment exposures in the portfolio. Brown sectors (extraction, transportation, storage, supply, and generation of energy from fossil fuels) make up just 1.47% of the portfolio. Whereas Investments in green sectors (renewable energy generation, clean technology, and decarbonising activities) make up 3.67% of the portfolio. The green exposures significantly outweigh the brown demonstrating the Fund's "net" green investment exposure. The July 2022 RI report saw the introduction of an engagement summary, outlining many of the Fund's positive stakeholder engagement activities across the investment portfolio. Each quarter, we aim to further improve upon the report content, informing the reader of the positive progress the Fund is making in its continuous RI journey.

As I reported to you in the last edition; RI, ESG and the Fund's response to climate change remain high up on the agenda and effectively underpin all investment decisions. This is far from a tick box exercise and is continuously being monitored, adapted, and improved in conjunction with industry best practice.

All policies, statements and reports referred to above can be found on the Fund's website <https://www.berkshirerpensions.org.uk/bpf/publications>, along with supporting policies available on LPPI's website <https://www.localpensionspartnership.org.uk/Investment-management/Responsible-investment>

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any questions.

Damien Pantling

Damien Pantling – Head of Pension Fund

Employer Self Service (ESS) - decommissioned

As previously reported we have received formal notice from our software provider- **Heywood Pension Technologies (HPT)** - that our Employer Self Service (ESS) will be decommissioned from 28 February 2023.

This means that from this date you will no longer have access to the functionality available on this platform.

Please be advised that this is a decision made by our software provider and not the Pension Fund.

HPT plan to make their existing data portal - **i-Connect** - a one-stop shop for all the Employer/ Fund interactions, and throughout 2022 more enhancements and features will be added to i-Connect. These include:

- Contribution reconciliation reporting improvements
- Capturing final pay for leavers & members reaching age 65 subject to McCloud

Although the formal ESS end date is 28 February 2023, we may be advised to decommission ESS at an earlier date. Please be assured we will keep you updated with this process.



New version of Payroll Guide

The LGA have published a new version of the payroll guide.

You can view the payroll guide on both the Employer guides and documents page of www.lgpsregs.org

The guide is also available on the Employer Forms section of the Berkshire Pension Fund website: <https://berkshirerpensions.org.uk/bpf/employers/employer-forms>

An HR guide is also available for employers <https://www.lgpslibrary.org/assets/gas/ew/HRv4.2c.pdf>

Cost of living crisis FAQs

The LGA have added a series of frequently asked questions on the cost of living crisis to the LGPS member website. The FAQs cover:

- Where can I find help with money troubles?
- Can I reduce or stop my pension contributions?
- Could pension scams increase?
- Is there any help for pensioners on lower incomes?
-

You can access these on the Frequently asked questions page of www.lgpsmember.org.

LGPS Opt-out reminder

As you will be aware once an employee has joined the LGPS they can opt-out at anytime.

As a reminder certain safeguards were introduced by the Pensions Act 2008 prohibiting employers from discouraging members from joining or remaining in a workplace pension scheme (such as the LGPS).

If you have a member of staff who wishes to opt-out of the LGPS please refer them to the Berkshire Pension Fund directly. Employers must not provide their staff with opt-out forms (or a link to an opt-out form). Any decision to opt-out must be taken freely by the employee.



The pension team can post or e-mail a form if required to scheme members.

Pension Awareness Day 2022

It's National Pension Awareness Day on **15 September**. To support this day the Berkshire Pension Fund will be holding a pension surgery for active scheme members between the 12 and 16 September. One to one appointments will be available over Microsoft Teams or over the telephone. An advert for the pension surgery will be issued to employers shortly to send to your staff.

Pension Awareness Day highlights the importance of pension saving for the future.

Look out for promotional material to distribute to your staff - including updated posters, factsheets, and videos. **More details coming soon.**

Is your policy statement up to date?

Under the LGPS Regulations, Scheme employers are required to prepare, maintain and keep under review a statement of policy concerning a number of discretions made available to them throughout the Regulations. It is important that each Scheme employer takes full responsibility for ensuring that their obligations are fulfilled appropriately and in accordance with the statutory instruments laid by Parliament.

If you haven't got a policy statement we have provided a template document and accompanying guide to assist you:

[Employer's guide to completing a statement of policy](#)

[LGPS Regulations 2013 Employer Policy Statement - template](#)

Year-end 2022

We are in the process of finalising our year-end 2022 requirements.

A personalised annual benefit statement for 2022 is available for scheme member's to view through their 'my pension ONLINE' accounts as soon as their employers Year End reconciliation has been completed.

All will be available to view by no later than 31 August 2022.

An e-mail will be sent to all employers in August to advertise the availability of the statements to view on 'my pension ONLINE'. You are welcome to then communicate this message to your staff.

Some members prefer a hard copy of their statement to be posted to them. Hard copies of statements will be sent out by early September.

'my pension ONLINE' portal:

Access to 'my pension ONLINE' can be found via the link below.

<https://mypensiononline.berkshirerpensions.org.uk/>

'my pension ONLINE' allows a member to...

- **securely access their pension information**
- **calculate future pension benefits**
- **update address details**
- **update their Expression of Wish**
- **View current and historic annual benefit statements**
- **View the latest newsletters and Pension Fund factsheets**



If you have any questions regarding year-end please contact **Philip Boyton** on **07792 324 459** or e-mail philip.boyton@rbwm.gov.uk

- If you are a user of i-Connect you will not be required to submit a year-end return. However you may still be contacted with queries identified as part of the month 12 reconciliation process but it is anticipated the number of queries will be low in number.



Employer contacts

Please ensure that the relevant HR and Payroll staff within your organisation are receiving this newsletter.

Please notify us of any updated contact details - e-mail joanne.benstead@rbwm.gov.uk

LGS15C Withdrawal from Scheme *update*

This latest version of the LGS15C is to be used with immediate effect. The form can be found in the 'Employer forms' section of our website:

<https://www.berkshirerensions.org.uk/bpf/employers/employer-forms>

You will notice we have made a couple of changes to the form to hopefully assist employers in understanding the potential cost implications involved with certain retirements.

If you have selected any of the following 'Reason for Leaving' are you fully aware of the cost implications involved? – Redundancy, Business Efficiency, Flexible Retirement with Employer Consent	YES/NO (if 'NO' please contact the pension team for further guidance)
Are benefits to be paid with or without an actuarial reduction? (see note 6)	WITH (default option is 'with'. Please see note 6 on page 5)

Please ensure you (or your Payroll administrators) are using the most recent version of the LGS15C Withdrawal form.

Are you using the correct forms?

Our employer forms are regularly updated to assist employers when notifying the pension team of member data - i.e starter and leaver forms and estimate requests. Please ensure you are completing the most up to date versions of our employer forms.

2022/2023 employer forms can be found on our website by following the link below:

<https://www.berkshirerensions.org.uk/bpf/employers/employer-forms>

Updated employer forms 2022/2023

The Employer Forms section on our website contains the pension forms we require for completion at different stages of an employee's LGPS scheme membership.

All forms can be downloaded via our website at:

<https://berkshirerpensions.org.uk/bpf/employers/employer-forms>

Form	Title	Reason for Use
LGS1B	Brief Guide to the Berkshire Pension Fund	Include with new contracts of employment issued from 1 April 2022
LGS10	Application to opt-in to the LGPS	Employees wishing to opt-in to the LGPS
LGS10B	Application for re-entry to the MAIN Section from the 50/50 Section	Employees wishing to opt back in to the MAIN Section from the 50/50 Section.
LGS5050	Application to opt-in to the 50/50 Section	Factsheet and application form for members wishing to opt-in to the 50/50 Section of the LGPS
LGS15A(5050)	Notification of Entry to the 50/50 Section of the LGPS	Formal notification to Berkshire Pension Fund advising of a member opting in to the 50/50 Section.
LGS15A	Admission to the Scheme	Formal notification to Berkshire Pension Fund advising of a member joining the LGPS
LGS15C	Withdrawal from the Scheme	Formal notification to Berkshire Pension Fund advising of a member opting-out, leaving or retiring from the LGPS
LGS15C (i-Connect)	Withdrawal from the Scheme	Withdrawal notification for users of i-Connect
LGS15D	Opt-out notification	Formal notification to the Berkshire Pension Fund of a member who has opted-out of the LGPS with no further entitlement to a pension. Please complete this form if the member has received a refund through payroll
Employer Estimate Requests		
EST3	Request for an Estimate of Pension Benefits for an active Member	Please complete this form to request an estimate of pension benefits for an active member. Employer estimate requests will be generated within 5 working days of your request.
EST4	Request for an Estimate of Pension Benefits for a former Member	Please complete this form to request an estimate of pension benefits for a former member. Employer estimate requests will be generated within 5 working days of your request.
LGS44	Early Retirement Costs	A factsheet for employers providing further information surrounding early retirement capital costs.

New! Accounting web page

As an employer within the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund you may require an accounting report provided by Barnett Waddingham using either an FRS102 or IAS19 accounting standard.



This provides you with a pension liability amount to put into your own accounts and so you will have different year-end dates. We have created an accounting page on the Employers section of the website to provide you with further guidance relating to these accounting reports.

We have added the July briefing note to the accounting page. Click on the links below to access this information.

We will add further information in due course for employers with a year-end date of 31 August.

[Accounting web page](#)

[July 2022 briefing note](#)

[LGPS Accounting Disclosures Webinar](#) - this webinar will help Scheme employers understand the numbers in their IAS19 and FRS102 disclosures.

[July/August Accounting Disclosures Webinar](#) - helping employers understand what to expect from their accounting disclosures this year.

Pension Surgeries for your staff

The pension team can offer a virtual pension surgery for your staff.

We can arrange a pension surgery to take place on a particular date (or over two days) and your employees can book a 20 minute appointment with us over Microsoft Teams or alternatively over the telephone. All conversations are treated in complete confidence.

If you would be interested in offering a pension surgery for your staff please contact **Joanne Benstead** - joanne.benstead@rbwm.org.uk



A look ahead ...Change of minimum pension age



It was announced in November 2021 that the normal minimum pension age (NMPA) will increase from 55 to 57 in April 2028.

NMPA is the earliest age from which members can take their LGPS pension (unless the member is retiring on ill-health grounds).

We will keep you updated of these changes in future editions of *Inscribe*.

Shared Cost AVCs



As reported in previous editions of *Inscribe* the AVC provider for the Berkshire Pension Fund, Prudential, support the payment of Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) through a salary sacrifice shared cost arrangement.

Prudential don't have a facility in place to do this directly for employers, however AVC Wise has been created by PSTAX to assist with this initiative. PSTAX are the leading tax specialists within the Public Sector.

LGPS members already benefit from tax relief on the AVC payments they make, but by establishing an AVC salary sacrifice arrangement both the employer and the employee will make a saving on the National Insurance contribution paid every month.

Further information and contact details for AVC Wise can be found on the next page.



Make valuable savings for your organisation, and your staff...

Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (Shared Cost AVCs) facilitated by experts in both Tax and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

AVC Wise Ltd, brought to you by PSTAX, manage the employee onboarding and ongoing management of salary sacrifice Shared Cost AVC schemes for members of the LGPS.

When making contributions on a shared cost basis, you and your employees enter into a salary sacrifice arrangement, which means you both make contributions into the AVC fund held by your current provider, Prudential.

Employer savings - your organisation will enjoy National Insurance contribution (13.8%) and Apprenticeship Levy* (0.5%) savings

Employee savings - your staff benefit from National Insurance contribution savings in addition to Income Tax

Working with AVC Wise makes launching a Shared Cost AVC scheme easy:

- Complete end to end project management
- Bespoke webinars for your staff to learn more about their retirement options
- Free highly effective employee communication plan to increase take up

Save your organisation money at this crucial time.

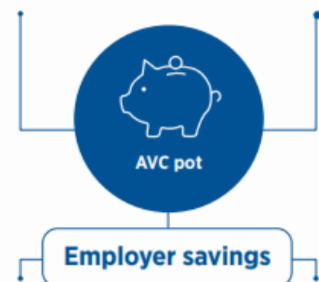
Contact AVC Wise today for a personalised proposal of how much we could help your organisation save.

Here's an example of how much you could be saving:



£1 tax relief contribution

£199 contribution via salary sacrifice



£34,148 saved
in total per year



£341.48 saved
per employee per year

E-mail Jonathan.Kempson@AVCWise.co.uk
Call **01252 784 546**

/AVCWiseOfficial
 @AVCWise

AVC WISE

*Only applicable to employers with a payroll over £3m where the full Apprenticeship Levy fund is not used

Re-enrolment duties



Every three years you must put certain staff who have left the LGPS back into it. This is called re-enrolment.

You must fulfil certain duties set out by The Pensions Regulator. Please refer to the The Pensions Regulator website and the links below for more information and guidance:

[Re-enrolment and re-declaration](#)

[Re-enrolment - step by step process](#)

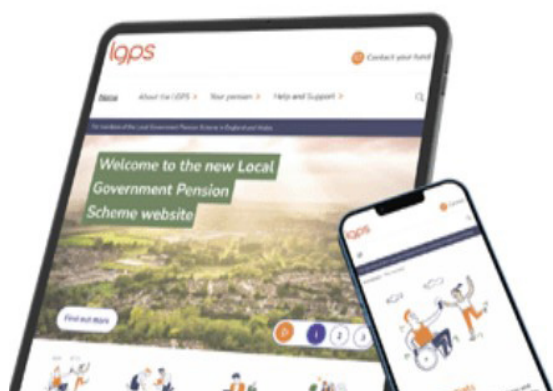
[Ongoing duties after re-enrolment](#)

New LGPS website

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) has refreshed its brand identity and updated its website to improve the user experience and make it easier for members to understand their pension.

The website is designed for all members of the LGPS in England and Wales and includes tools and calculators, helpful videos and detailed content.

Find out more at www.lgpsmember.org



LGPS Videos

The LGA have launched a series of bite-sized videos - 'pensions made simple' designed for active scheme members.

Each video is less than 4 minutes long and provides a short summary around a specific LGPS topic.

- What is a pension?
- How your pension works
- Looking after your pension
- Protection for you and your family
- Life after work
- Your annual allowance
- Your lifetime allowance
- Transferring your pension

Click on the link below to view the videos:
<https://www.lgpsmember.org/help-and-support/videos/>

The logo for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), consisting of the lowercase letters 'lgps' in a bold, orange, rounded font.

Local Government
Pension Scheme

Employer resources

The **LGPS Regs** website makes it easier for Scheme employers to access information and resources that are relevant to the administration of the LGPS.

- **Employer guides and documents** - Containing guides and documents relevant to the LGPS Employers in England and Wales.

<http://www.lgpsregs.org/employer-resources/guidesetc.php>

- **LGPS Employer bite-size training** - As part of the LGPS Regs website update the LGA have launched a bite-sized training section for LGPS employers.

<http://www.lgpsregs.org/employer-resources/employer-bite-size-training.php>



Items of interest *News items from the pensions world*

Teachers' Pension Scheme grant guidance updated.

On 28 April 2022, the Government updated its guidance on pension grants for schools, local authorities and music hubs. The guidance covers the grant for the financial year 2022 to 2023.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-pension-employer-contribution-grant-tpecg>

2022 Training Programme

The LGA have announced their training programme for 2022. A link to the training dates and locations can be found below:

<https://lgpslibrary.org/assets/bulletins/2022/222AppB.pdf>

Some of the courses are already open for booking on the [LGA events page](#).

Useful contacts

Please find detailed below some further links to external websites containing information relating to the LGPS.

Berkshire Pension Fund website	https://www.berkshirepensions.org.uk
Employer's Section	https://www.berkshirepensions.org.uk/bpf/employers
Employer Self Service facility	https://www.berkshirepensions.org.uk/bpf/employers/employer-self-service
National LGPS website	https://www.lgpsmember.org/
LGPS Regs website	https://www.lgpsregs.org/
HR Guide	https://www.lgpslibrary.org/assets/gas/ew/HRv4.3c.pdf
Payroll Guide	https://www.lgpslibrary.org/assets/gas/ew/Pv4.3c.pdf
The Pensions Regulator	https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/
State Pension Age calculator	https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age
State Pension information	https://www.gov.uk/check-state-pension
'my pension ONLINE'	https://www.berkshirepensions.org.uk/bpf/my-pension-online



Contact us

If you would like to discuss any items contained in this newsletter please do not hesitate to contact us on the numbers below:

Kevin Taylor	Pension Services Manager	07792 324 393	kevin.taylor@rbwm.gov.uk
Philip Boyton	Pension Administration Manager	07792 324 459	philip.boyton@rbwm.gov.uk
Sandra Rice	Deputy Pension Administration Manager	01628 796 743	sandra.rice@rbwm.gov.uk
Joanne Benstead	Assistant Pension Manager	01628 796 754	joanne.benstead@rbwm.gov.uk
Amy Webb-Morris	Assistant Technical Analyst	01628 796 778	amy.webb-morris@rbwm.gov.uk

Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund

Minster Court, 22-30 York Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1SF

Pensions Helpdesk: 01628 796 668

lines are open Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

E-mail: info@berkshirepensions.org.uk

Website: www.berkshirepensions.org.uk



THE ROYAL COUNTY OF
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