

Islington Council Pension Board – Knowledge and Training Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This is a knowledge and training framework established to enable pension board members to perform and develop personally in their individual roles, to ensure that the Fund is managed and governed by individuals who have the appropriate levels of knowledge and skills.

2. Legal requirement

2.1 All employer and member representatives on the Board are required to have capacity (i.e time to commit to the preparing for and attending the Board and training) to represent scheme employers or scheme members (as appropriate).

2.2 All members of the Pension Board must be conversant with –

- The legislation and associated guidance of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).
- Any document recording policy about the administration of the LGPS which is for the time being adopted by the Islington Pension Fund.

2.3 A member of the Pension Board must have knowledge and understanding of :

- The law relating to pensions, and
- Any other matters which are prescribed in regulations.

3. Training

3.1 It is for individual Board members to be satisfied that they have the appropriate degree of knowledge and understanding to enable them to properly exercise their functions as a member of the Board.

3.2. Board members are required to be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and to refresh and keep their knowledge up to date. Pension Board members are therefore required to maintain a written record of relevant training and development.

3.3 Board members will undertake a personal training needs analysis and regularly review their skills, competencies and knowledge to identify gaps or weaknesses. Board members should draw to the attention of the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources any areas in which they consider they need training or information.

3.4 Board members will comply with the Scheme Manager's training policy

and are required to promptly complete any training designated by the Board as mandatory.

3.5 The Board should prepare and keep updated a list of the core documents recording policy about the administration of the Fund and make sure that the list and documents (as well as the rules of the LGPS) are accessible to its members.

4. Areas of Knowledge and understanding

4.1 The Pension Regulator's TPR's Code of Practice 14 *Governance and administration of public service pension schemes* effective from April 2015, expands on the requirement of board members.

4.2 In terms of documented administration policies, the following are examples of administration policies which the regulator considers to be particularly pertinent and would expect to be documented where relevant to a pension scheme, and with which pension board members must therefore be conversant where applicable. This list is not exhaustive and other documented policies may fall into this category: any scheme-approved policies relating to:

- conflicts of interest and the register of interests
- record-keeping
- internal dispute resolution
- reporting breaches
- maintaining contributions to the scheme
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- record-keeping
- internal dispute resolution
- reporting breaches
- maintaining contributions to the scheme
- the appointment of pension board members
- risk assessments / management and risk register policies for the scheme
- scheme booklets, announcements and other key member and employer communications, which describe scheme policies and procedures
- the roles, responsibilities and duties of the scheme manager, pension board and individual pension board members
- terms of reference, structure and operational policies of the pension board and /or any sub-committee
- statements of policy about the exercise of discretionary functions
- statements of policy about communications with members and scheme employers
- the pension administration strategy, or equivalent, and
- any admission body (or equivalent) policies.

- Policies relating to funding and investment matters. For example, they must be conversant with the statement of investment principles and the funding strategy statement.

4.3 Pension board members must also be conversant with any other documented policies relating to the administration of the scheme. For example, where applicable, they must be conversant with policies relating to:

- the contribution rate or amount (or the range/variability where there is no one single rate or amount) payable by employers participating in the scheme
- statements of assurance (for example, assurance reports from administrators)
- third party contracts and service level agreements
- stewardship reports from outsourced service providers (for example, those performing outsourced activities such as scheme administration), including about compliance issues
- scheme annual reports and accounts
- accounting requirements relevant to the scheme
- audit reports, including from outsourced service providers, and
- other scheme-specific governance documents.

5 Sources of training

5.1 The regulator provides an e-learning programme to help meet the needs of pension board members, it is a requirement of Pension Board members to utilise this tool and document progress made on the learning modules. Definite and reasonable timescales must be set for members to complete the learning modules on the regulator's website. You will be required to register as part of accessing the modules. The link is provided below:

<https://education.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/login/index.php>

5.2 The Islington pension fund has a dedicated area on the council main website where more information on the LGPS and other related sites, as well as policy documents and pension annual report are located. The link is provided below:

<http://www.islington.gov.uk/about/pension-scheme/Pages/default.aspx?extra=22>

5.3 The policy documents currently listed can be found at the link below:

- The Funding Strategy Statement
- The Statement of Investment Principle
- The Communication Policy
- The Governance Compliance policy
- The 2013 Valuation Report

<http://www.islington.gov.uk/about/pension-scheme/Pages/policies.aspx>

5.4 Training will be delivered through a variety of methods including:

- in-house training days provided by officers and/or external providers;
- shared training with other LGPS Funds or framework arrangements
- training at meetings (e.g. Pension Fund Committee or Local Pension Board) provided by officers and/or external advisers;
- external training events, such as those organised by the Employers' Organisation for Local Government, CIPFA, NAPF
- attendance at seminars and conferences offered by industry-wide bodies, such as those organised by the LGC, NAPF and CIPFA;
- circulation of reading material, including Pension Fund Committee reports and minutes from attendance at seminars and conferences;
- attendance at meetings and events with the Pension Fund's investment managers and advisors
- links to on-line training such as that provided by the TPR;

6. Assessment of training needs

6.1 A CIPFA competency self- assessment matrix has been adopted to help assess training needs and level of competency. The following topic are covered

- pensions legislation and governance
- pension administration
- pension accounting and auditing standards;
- pension services procurement and relationship management
- investment performance and risk management;
- financial markets and products knowledge; and
- actuarial methods, standards and practice.

Members will be required to complete this matrix so that individual training needs can be planned for within reasonable timescales.- Appendix A

7. Key Risk

7.1 The key risk to this training policy is changes to pension board members, non-attendance to meetings and training sessions, disengagement of members, poor standards of training and lack of resources.

To mitigate these risks members will be expected to assess their training needs and engage with officers in methods that best suit them . All reasonable training cost will be charged to the pension fund

8. Reporting and Monitoring

8.1 The administering authority will keep a log of all training and members will be expected to evaluate their training to ensure the knowledge and understanding required is being achieved. Training undertaken and evaluations will be reported annually.

