

# Resolution of Grievance Procedures

## A Members Guide

1. Decisions regarding your membership of the Pension Scheme will initially be made by your employer with regard to such matters as the amount of your pensionable earnings, date of scheme entry etc.

2. Other matters regarding your membership will then be determined by the County Council as administrator of the Local Government Pension Scheme, eg how much service is transferred into the scheme from a former employer.

**NOTE:** In the case of County Council employees, both items (1) and (2) will be determined by the same authority, it will however fall to the employing department to determine the level of pensionable earnings and the Pensions Section to calculate the amount of service purchased on transfer of pension rights.



### What should you do if you are unhappy with any aspect of your pension scheme membership?

1. Initially you should contact the Pensions Section. They should be able to explain any matter which relates to membership and service and if necessary, direct you to whom you should contact at your place of employment.
2. If you are still unhappy with the explanation given to you (or if you have not been provided with an explanation), you may instigate a formal appeal.
3. You must instigate any appeal within 6 months of being notified of the decision which is the cause of your complaint.

### To whom should the appeal be addressed to?

Yunus Gajra  
Development Manager (Strategic)  
West Yorkshire Pension Fund  
PO Box 67  
Bradford BD1 1UP

### What format does the appeal need to be?

1. When referring your complaint you must do so in writing providing:-
  - A. Your own details, ie your full name, address, date of birth, National Insurance Number, your employer and the nature of your employment.
  - B. If you are to be represented by someone, for example a trade union representative, you must supply that person's name and address and also whether or not you wish letters to go to yourself or the representative.
  - C. You must explain exactly why you are aggrieved, providing any information which you believe to be relevant eg periods of service, amounts of earnings etc.

### What happens next?

1. Within 2 months of receiving your complaint the specified person must reach a decision and notify you of his/her findings.
2. If it is not possible to reach a decision within 2 months he/she must inform you why this is the case and give you an estimated date when he/she is likely to be in a position to reach a new decision.

### What should I do if I am not satisfied with the findings?

Within 6 months of the decision you may refer the matter to an officer nominated by Northumbria County Council in its capacity as Fund Administering Authority.

You must make any representation in writing, again supplying your personal details, any information you believe to be relevant and the nature of your complaint.

The nominated officer is Mr Liam Henry, Principal Lawyer, Northumbria County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF.

**NOTE:** You may also refer your complaint should the specified person fail to reply to you within the prescribed time.

## What Happens Next?

1. Like the specified person, the person nominated by the administering authority must give his/her decision on your case within 2 months. If he/she is unable to do so he/she must advise you why he/she is unable to make a decision and estimate when a decision is likely to be reached.

## Is there anything else I can do after referring my complaint to the nominated person?

When giving his ruling the nominated person will also advise you of the services of TPAS and the Pensions Ombudsman.

## What is TPAS?

The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS) offer a free service to all pension scheme members who have a problem with their pension. They have local advisors who can help to explain and obtain more information about your pension for you. You can normally contact an TPAS advisor through your local Citizen's Advice Bureau or by contacting them directly at 11 Belgrave Road, London SW1V 1RB, telephone 0845 601 2923.

If you would like the Pensions Ombudsman to consider a complaint, you should normally contact TPAS first. If TPAS cannot sort out your problem themselves and they believe that there has been some maladministration or that a decision made by the officer nominated by the administering authority is wrong, they will recommend that you make a formal complaint to the Ombudsman.

You can ask TPAS for help at any time if you are having difficulties in sorting out your complaint under the dispute rules.



## What function does the Pensions Ombudsman serve?

The Pensions Ombudsman can investigate complaints of maladministration or disputes of fact or Law about decisions that have been made about your pension. Unless the nature of your complaint solely relates to maladministration, you must go through the procedures laid down in the disputes rules first. This means that you must first take your complaint to the person specified by your employer and then to the officer nominated by the administering authority before the Pensions Ombudsman will investigate it.

The Pensions Ombudsman can also investigate complaints or disputes about the handling of a case at any time, you do not need to wait until the internal dispute resolution procedure has been completed if you have a complaint of this nature.

The Pensions Ombudsman's address is 11 Belgrave Road, London SW1V 1RB, telephone 020 7630 2200

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

03/07/14

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Northumberland County Council

for you, for now, for the future  
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