

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

Shared administration service with South Tyneside Council

Q and As for active LGPS members employed by Northumberland County Council

Your LGPS benefits are currently administered by Northumberland County Council by the pensions administration team located in County Hall, Morpeth. This will change in January.

When will changes take place?

With effect from 29th January 2018, your LGPS records and benefits will be administered as part of a shared administration initiative with South Tyneside Council, by a joint administration team located at South Tyneside Council's offices in South Shields.

Why is this happening?

The LGPS rules and other associated legislation and guidance are becoming ever more complex and time consuming to implement to the required standard. By pooling resources with another LGPS administrator Northumberland County Council will continue to maintain high levels of service to members and also deliver further improvements in the future for you.

The joint administration team will have the specialist and technical resources to ensure you continue to receive a "best in class" service whilst also constantly improving the way we work and the facilities available to you as an LGPS member.

Northumberland County Council and South Tyneside Council have been working together for over a year now to implement this change to a fully shared administration service.

How will the change affect me?

The shared administration does not affect your LGPS rights in any way.

All your rights and options remain the same and your employer, Northumberland County Council, will continue to contribute towards your LGPS benefits in exactly the same way as it does now. The LGPS is a single (national) scheme which applies to all scheme members in England and Wales.

The only thing that is changing is the location at which the pensions administration team will work. So instead of telephoning or writing to the current office within County Hall, in future you will use a different telephone number, email mailbox and postal address. But this

change will allow Northumberland County Council to provide you with a better, more robust, service going forward.

How can I get in touch with someone?

Just as you can now, if you want to have a face to face conversation with an administrator, you will be able to arrange a “drop in” meeting, but in most circumstances queries can be dealt with by emailing a query or talking to an administrator over the telephone.

After the 29 January you can contact the Pension Helpline on 0191 4244141.

Will I notice any difference once the shared service is operational?

The branding for the joint administration team, including your annual benefit statement, will be different compared to correspondence you have received in the past. This is how it will look going forward:



South Tyneside Council

Providing pension services for
Tyne and Wear Pension Fund and

Northumberland County Council Pension Fund

Pensions Office

PO Box 212, South Shields, NE33 9ER

• | 0191 424 4141

@ | pensions@twpf.info

• | www.twpf.info

Will Northumberland Council no longer be involved in looking after my pension?

Absolutely not! Northumberland County Council’s Pension Fund Panel (a committee of the Council) retains responsibility for LGPS policy and for investment of pension scheme monies. The Panel, with assistance from the Council’s Local Pension Board, will continue to

monitor and constructively challenge how the LGPS is administered by the shared administrator.

Northumberland County Council (as employer) also sets the policy covering discretionary decisions.

Will it be more difficult for me to find out about my pension?

No, it should actually be easier. Whilst the new joint administration offices will be in South Shields, you should actually find it easier to speak to a LGPS expert. The joint administration team will be providing a specialist helpline, staffed by very knowledgeable LGPS administrators that you can call at any time. If you call outside office hours and leave a message, they will call you back on the next working day.

In addition, more user friendly information will also be available via a much improved website at www.twpf.info.

What if I am unhappy about decisions affecting my pension rights?

In the first instance, you should raise your concerns with whoever has made the decision or carried out the work you are unhappy about; this might either be your employer (Northumberland County Council) or the joint administrator, South Tyneside Council.

If you continue to be unhappy after that then you should contact Northumberland County Council and follow the disputes resolution procedure, as Northumberland County Council will continue to be responsible for reviewing and reconsidering any appeal decisions that are referred to it by unhappy members. You can find more about the resolution procedure at: [resolution procedure for members](#)

What if I need to discuss retirement on the grounds of ill-health?

Responsibility for determining and reviewing ill-health retirements is an employer responsibility, rather than an administering authority responsibility.

This responsibility will remain with Northumberland County Council after implementation of the joint administration service. Therefore there will be no change to the services offered to LGPS members by Northumberland County Council for those members facing ill-health issues.

Which Schemes are covered by the shared administration service with South Tyneside Council?

Only the LGPS (Local Government Pension Scheme) is covered.

So if you are in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme, the Teachers' Pension Scheme, or the NHS Pension Scheme, this will not affect you.

Why share with South Tyneside Council?

South Tyneside Council administers the **Tyne and Wear Pension Fund**, which provides LGPS administration for 240 employers including Newcastle City, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Gateshead and Sunderland City.

In contrast, Northumberland County Council is much smaller and provides LGPS administration for 40 employers, with Northumberland County Council itself being the biggest employer in the Fund by far.

In LGPS administration terms, South Tyneside Council is Northumberland County Council's "next door neighbour". South Tyneside Council already has a strong administration team and a well-developed specialist software system, so sharing services will benefit both while keeping employment local.

Will any staff be made redundant as a result of implementing the joint service?

No.