

T W P F

Tyne and Wear
Pension Fund



Employer Engagement Strategy



South Tyneside Council

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Introduction

South Tyneside Council is the Administering Authority and Scheme Manager for the Local Government Pension Scheme in the Tyne and Wear and the Northumberland County areas. Tyne and Wear Pension Fund (TWPF) is open to the five district councils in Tyne and Wear, Northumberland County Council and a wide range of other bodies that provide a service in these administrative areas.

TWPF has over 300 participating employers and is responsible for administering the pension interests of over **173,000 members** in line with the LGPS regulations. Maintaining and improving employer relationships, allows the Fund to meet its overall responsibilities and statutory duties.

Our Goal

To consistently provide high quality services to our employers to enable them to meet their responsibilities in the Fund, raise standards and contribute to providing an **efficient, affordable** and **attractive** pension arrangement, that is regarded by employers and members as being an important and valued part of the employment package.

Our Aim

We aim to build effective relationships with our employers to ensure they have the information and support to assist them to provide TWPF with accurate and timely information, to enable both the employer and administering authority responsibilities to be met. To make pensions issues understandable to all and to promote membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme through the TWPF.

This strategy sets out how we will involve and consult with our employers in line with TWPF's Service Plan and Communications Policy. It outlines how we will engage with our employers in a cost-efficient way, how we will improve communication, data accuracy and establish relationships.

Aims of the Strategy

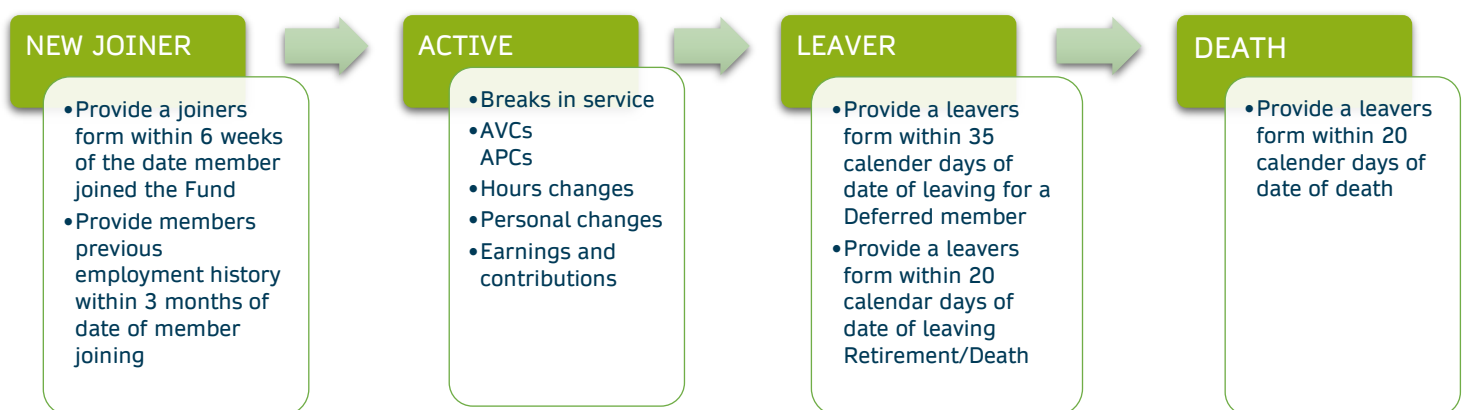
Our aim is to improve and develop our digital platforms, processes and working practices to enhance our employer experience and knowledge, giving employers more confidence in interacting with TWPF. This will involve the review and monitoring of our service effectiveness, communication channels and performance, whilst creating efficiencies within ongoing development of our systems.

We also want employers to be confident in promoting TWPF to their employees as part of the employment benefits package. Taking part in a pension scheme is one of the most important financial decisions employees will make in their lifetime. Being part of one of the largest pension schemes in the United Kingdom is a big benefit to employees joining and remaining with employers. The Local Government Pension Scheme provides a secure and guaranteed income every year to employees when they reach the qualifying age and the main Scheme benefits are not affected by how well investments do or do not perform. We want employers to be confident in letting their employees know what the long-term benefits of this are, how rewarding it will be and how they can take part.

We would like employers to be able to interact seamlessly with us and be part of the ongoing development of TWPF's digital platforms and processes to continually enhance their experience and knowledge.

Employer/Membership Journey

TWPF has over 300 participating employers with over **173,000 members**, all at different stages of their membership within the Fund. Employers in TWPF include local authorities, educational establishments, emergency services and many other local employers. Our employers are largely based across Tyne and Wear, and Northumberland. Further information about our membership and employers can be found on our website at: <https://www.twpf.info/article/10992/Full-annual-reports-and-accounts>.



How Employers Engage with The Fund

Employer Services Team

TWPF has a dedicated Employer Services Team which is made up of pension officers who have extensive knowledge and experience of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The team supports employers by providing information regarding the pension scheme. There is a dedicated section of the TWPF website where employers can find access to information, guides and additional resources.

Employers can engage with the TWPF in several ways:

Employers can access the pension portal via our website

By engaging in our webinars & online workshops

By responding to our employer surveys

By calling the Employer Services Team on:
0191 424 6399

By emailing the Employer Services Team at their dedicated email address:
twpfemployers@southtyneside.gov.uk

Pensions Committee and Local Pension Board

Our employers' voice is of fundamental importance to us, and as well as consulting with employers we have also embedded this into our governance arrangements by having employer representatives on both Pensions Committee and the Local Pension Board.

Three employer representatives are present on the Pensions Committee in an advisory capacity, they are nominated by the employers in the Fund. There are four employer representatives on the Local Pension Board. One is nominated by South Tyneside Council and the other employers in the Fund nominate the remaining three representative. Further information about Pensions Committee and Local Pension Board can be found on our website at: [Pensions committee and pension board - Tyne and Wear Pension Fund \(twpf.info\)](http://twpf.info)

Governance and Funding Team

Our Governance and Funding Team have oversight and co-ordination of the overall governance and employer funding framework for TWPF. This includes managing the admission and withdrawal of employers, including academy and admission bodies, as well as overseeing procedures relating to transfers of staff between employers.

The Governance and Funding Team are responsible for managing the funding strategy and actuarial valuations and work closely with TWPF's actuary in many other situations that will have an impact on employer funding, such as calculating individual employer contribution rates, appropriate bond cover or exit valuations. To carry out regular monitoring of employer covenant strength, the team maintain a database of employers and carry out annual surveys with our employers to understand any issues that may have an impact on their ongoing participation in TWPF.

For enquires about admissions and exits contact AdmissionsTWPF@southtyneside.gov.uk

Pension Fund Finance Team

The Pension Fund Finance Team deals with the receipt and reconciliation of pension contributions from all employers on a monthly basis. This involves reviewing the Care16 form submitted by each employer and ensuring the correct payment is received within the deadline of 14 days from the end of the month. Any late or missing payments will be followed up with the employer and may be reported to the Pensions Regulator.

What TWPF Expects from Employers

TWPF does have some expectations of its employers and we want to ensure employers remain compliant in terms of the legal requirements they must follow. Our Pensions Administration Strategy helps employers and TWPF to work together more effectively in fulfilling their joint responsibilities in administering the Scheme. The Pensions Administration Strategy will let you know what things an employer must do by law and what they should do, where there is some discretion. The Pensions Administration Strategy can be viewed on TWPF website www.twpf.info/article/10178/Plans-and-policies

We would expect all employers to communicate with us as described in the Pensions Administration Strategy and Communications Policy, but also engage with us at the earliest stage where any issues are identified that may impact performance or data quality.

We would also ask that employers contact us as soon as they feel there may be an impact on them which would stop them performing their statutory functions, such as an organisational change or financial difficulties.

Overall, we would ask employers to embrace the TWPF's provision of support and participate in our engagement activities. Employers within the TWPF can help shape the future of our service and how we develop it. Successful partnership will lead to a strong working practice and procedures that will benefit everyone.

Employer Feedback

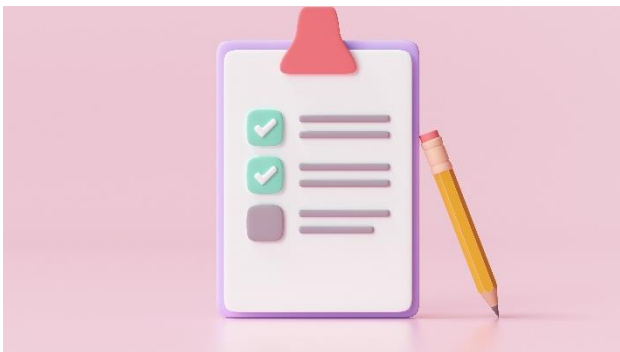
Employers told us the areas that they would like us to focus on are:

- ✓ Improve the employer portal.
- ✓ Make more training available for them.
- ✓ Improve response times to their queries.

We hope that by pursuing the goals in this strategy we will be working towards improving those areas for our employers.

Engagement Goals

We will engage with our employers by:



Annual survey

We conduct a survey annually to ensure that we are aware of employers' views on the service we offer.



Monthly data collection

Introduce monthly data collection for all employers to replace our year end data collection. Receiving data monthly will bring efficiencies to both TWPF and the employer, and will ensure member records are kept up to date in a more timely manner



Training videos & process guides

We provide training videos and process guides on our website so that employers have a guide on hand to help them through any process they must complete and to keep them up to date with legislative changes.



Webinars, workshops & meetings

We will increase our online webinars, workshops and meetings to improve/enhance/strengthen engagement between TWPF and employers.

Engagement Schedule

ACTIVITIES
Year End Training/ Monthly Data
Webinar: Communication with the Fund and Information Services
Webinar: Employer Roles and Responsibilities
Annual General Meeting

Measurement and Review

We measure and review our goals by asking our employers for feedback via surveys, at webinars, at meetings and by giving employers the opportunity to feedback each time they interact with us.

We will know when we are achieving our engagement goals when: -

- **We receive positive feedback from our employers**
- **We are meeting our key performance indicators**
- **Data received from employers is of good quality**
- **Data is received from employers within statutory time limits**

Employer Strategy and Our Service Plan

TWPF's service plan explains that we will work with our partners to provide a high-quality service to employers. We will do this by devising and delivering training, consultation and developing communication with the employers.

We have committed to gathering feedback from the employers by conducting an initial survey and to repeat this annually. We will also increase our interaction with employers by using online options such as Teams meetings, webinars and workshops, whilst also providing employers the opportunity of face-to-face interaction with our employer's team.

We are reviewing our training programme for our employers and will communicate this shortly.

We believe that this engagement strategy will demonstrate our commitment to improving and developing services, help establish better relationships and have a positive impact on our employers.



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Employer Services helpline:

0191 424 6399

Employer Services email:

twpfemployers@southtyneside.gov.uk

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Westoe Road
South Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE33 2RL