

Pensions



Welcome to Westminster LGPS Page

Welcome to the one stop shop (page) on everything LGPS, well almost everything!

The LGPS is a defined benefit scheme, which is guaranteed by the government and does not rely upon investment returns on the stock market, it is safe and guaranteed to be paid when you retire, rather than you having to look for an annuity or other arrangement to pay your pension.

Are you saving enough for your future?

The LGPS is a great way to save towards your retirement, please click [here](#) for further information.

Why LGPS?

The LGPS is a generous pension scheme. The LGPS is a salary-related, defined benefit scheme and will not be affected by stock market changes or performance of investments. LGPS offers benefits such as

A secure pension

Tax-free cash when you retire

Freedom to choose when to take your pension from 55

Flexibility to pay more or less contributions

Excited yet? To have more detailed information, the national website for members of the LGPS is www.lgpsmember.org

Did you know?

Westminster City Council have their own Westminster City Pension Fund Page dedicated to WCC employees.

So, if you want to know:

- Where to find guidance and forms to transfer your previous pension to the LGPS?
- Who runs the Pension Fund?
- About auto enrolment?
- Where to find the Expression of Wish Form

Please view the [Westminster City Council Pension Fund](#) page where you can find answers to the above questions, relevant forms and most general queries.

Hampshire Pension Services Member Portal

The City of Westminster Pension Fund administration service is [Hampshire Pension Services](#) (HPS).

Please click here [here](#) to register for the HPS Member Portal.

When registering it is vital that members use their personal email address rather than their work email. This is because if the member decides to end employment, they will no longer be able to access their HPS Member account as their work email address will be deleted once they leave employment. It is important that members can still access their self-service HPS Member Portal account if they do leave employment to ensure they can still access their benefits information.

The HPS Member portal is an online service which will enable you to:

- View and update your personal details - these changes are updated in real time
- Securely view Annual Benefit Statements
- Run retirement estimates online
- Add or amend an 'Expression of Wish' form
- Update Membership Option Form
- Request estimates online
- Complete Retirement Declaration Form
- A new feature is that you will also be able to send messages and ask questions directly to HPS from your Member Portal Account. HPS will respond in the same way so there will be a log of all correspondence for you to view in the portal.

We are pleased to share that the overall customer experience with HPS and their online services will enhance the experience going forward for members of the scheme.

If you are having trouble registering, you can access the HPS active member guide [here](#). This document provides instructions on how to register and activate your account, there is also details on how to use the HPS Member Portal.

Have any questions relating to HPS Member Portal?

Please email payroll&pension@westminster.gov.uk if you have any queries.

Understanding your LGPS Annual Benefit Statement

If you are contributing to the Local Government Pension Scheme you will be issued with an annual benefit statement. The scheme year in the LGPS runs from 1 April to 31 March and the statement is normally available to members by 31 August each year.

Your statement is an important document which updates you about your pension, gives you the opportunity to plan for your future income and helps you make decisions about retirement.

Pensions Made Simple

The LGA have produced a "Pensions Made Simple" series which is a number of short but informative and helpful videos on pensions such as:-

- Looking after your pension
- Annual allowance
- Life after work

The LGA have recently added a new video called "Transferring your pension" which focuses on what members should consider if they are thinking about transferring their pension into a defined contribution scheme.

Please click [here](#) for "Pensions Made Simple" series.

Retirement - Planning on retiring?

There are many things to consider as you approach retirement. It's good to start by reviewing your finances to ensure your future income will allow you to enjoy the lifestyle you want.

There is also useful information available on retirement, flexible retirement, ill health retirement via the [retirement page](#) retirement page on the wire.

Pension Scams - Beware

A pension scam – when someone tries to con you out of your pension money. Someone will often get in touch with you out of the blue. This is because they'll be trying their luck with whatever information they have managed to gather on you, to try and convince you to part with all or some of your pension savings.

If someone gets in touch about your pension and you didn't ask to be contacted, it's the biggest red flag to stop communicating and don't take them up on their offers.

The [The Pensions Regulator](#) website gives more detailed information on how to spot and avoid pension scams

Useful FAQ's

When will I be enrolled into the pension scheme at Westminster City Council?

Most employees who are allowed to join will automatically become a member of LGPS (Local Government Pension Scheme) at the start date of employment. You do have the right to opt out of the LGPS at any time however please consider the valuable benefit that you are giving up that your employer also contributes to.

How do I know if I have already joined?

Your payslip will show if you are contributing to the LGPS and shortly after joining you should receive an email from Hampshire Pension Services with instructions on how to register for the "HPS Member Portal".

What do I pay?

Your contribution rate depends on how much you are paid, but it will be between 5.5% and 12.5% of your pensionable pay. The rate you pay depends on which pay band you fall into.

If you work part-time, your rate is based on the actual rate of pay for your job, so you only pay contributions on the pay you actually earn.

You can view the current LGPS contribution rates [here](#) that currently apply; however, the contribution rates and / or pay bands will be reviewed every April and may change in the future.

Can I buy extra Pension Benefits?

You have two options to pay extra pension contributions, one is APC (Additional Pension Contributions) and the other is AVC (Additional Voluntary Contributions).

With Additional Pension Contributions, the maximum amount of additional pension you can buy is £7352 per year (2022/23 rates). Please note the figure of £7352 per year will increase each year in line with the cost of living.

Additional Voluntary Contributions is used to provide additional benefits to your LGPS benefits. You also have your own personal account and you decide how the money is to be invested. Please note if you have had a previous AVC and has it has been cashed, the maximum amount of additional benefits you can buy for the year is £3,600.

Please see link below for further detailed information on these two options.

<https://www.lgpsmember.org/arm/already-member-extra.php>

APC's and AVC's are employee only contributions, your employer does not normally pay into your APC or AVC.

What is 50/50 section?

The LGPS offers you the option to pay half your normal contribution rate and build up half your normal pension. This is called the 50/50 section of the LGPS and it is designed to help members stay in the scheme, building up valuable pensions benefits.

If I opt for the 50/50 section, can I move back to the main section at any time?

Yes, you will need to complete the Main section option form and upload via ESS Lite and "My Enquiry" and it will be processed in the next available payroll.

Can I transfer previous pension rights to the LGPS?

Yes you can, to transfer pension benefits into the Scheme, the application must be made before your Normal Pension Age and within 12 months of joining the scheme.

Further information on transferring your pension can be found [here](#)

Please contact Hampshire Pension Services pensions@hants.gov.uk if you have any queries.

Can I transfer my previous LGPS membership?

This is optional, but we do advise to seek financial advice. If you wish to proceed please email Hampshire Pension Services pensions@hants.gov.uk for any questions.

If I decide to opt out, will I get a refund?

If this is actioned **within 3 months** of your scheme membership you will be refunded through the next available pay run minus the normal deductions (i.e. tax and national insurance).

If I opt out of the LGPS, can I re-join at any time?

Yes, you will need to complete the LGPS New joiner option form and upload via ESS Lite and "My Enquiry" and it will be processed in the next available payroll.

If you have any queries regarding the information on this page please contact: -

Tracey Fuller – Payroll and Pension Specialist - tfuller@westminster.gov.uk

Zuzana Fernandes – Payroll and Pension Specialist- zfernandes@westminster.gov.uk

In This Topic

Welcome to Westminster LGPS Page

Are you saving enough for your future?

Have you registered with Orbis Pension Member Self Service Portal?

Understanding your LGPS Annual Benefit Statement

Pensions Made Simple

Retirement - Planning on retiring?

Pension Scams - Beware

Useful FAQ's

When will I be enrolled into the pension scheme at Westminster City Council?

How do I know if I have already joined?

What do I pay?

Can I buy extra Pension Benefits?

What is 50/50 section?

If I opt for the 50/50 section, can I move back to the main section at any time?

Can I transfer previous pension rights to the LGPS?

Can I transfer my previous LGPS membership?

If I decide to opt out, will I get a refund?

If I opt out of the LGPS, can I re-join at any time?

Expenses, Pay and Benefits