

EMPLOYER UPDATE – JUNE 2020

Welcome to an update from the Pensions Team at Barnet Council. We hope you are all safe and coping well in these unprecedented times.

This update is to keep you informed of developments and issues relating the Barnet Fund LGPS. For further information on any topic covered before or for any pensions related questions, please contact Mark Fox (details at the end of this update).

COVID-19

Both staff at the fund administrators, Capita, and Officers in the Barnet Pensions Team are working at home, and it remains business as usual. At present, there has been no reduction from the normal Capita service levels.

Pension payments to pensioners continue to be paid as normal. If you have any issues with the service provided by Capita, please contact Mark Fox.

If you have any questions regarding the operation of the LGPS during the pandemic, please visit the Q&As for employers LGPS website, which can be found on the following link:

<http://lgpsregs.org/news/covid-EFAQs.php>

If your query is not answered by these Q&As, please contact a member of the Barnet Pensions Team.

Transfer of pensions administration services

As you may be aware, on 3 March, the Council approved the recommendation that the pensions administration for the Fund be moved from Capita to the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF). This is currently scheduled to take place on 1 November 2020.

As well as administering their own fund, WYPF also administer the Lincolnshire and Hounslow LGPS funds, along with over 30 Firefighter Schemes.

The transfer to WYPF will result in some changes in the way that scheme employers in the Barnet Pension Fund interact with our administrator (see below regarding Monthly Returns).

Further updates will be issued as the transition date gets closer and the Barnet Pensions Team will arrange a conference call/meeting for all employers in September. Representatives from WYPF will also attend to provide more details on the changes to processes once the transition is completed.

We would also ask you to look ahead a few months to see if you have any members due to reach their scheduled retirements age between 15 October and 31 October. If so, it would be helpful if you could get all the paperwork to Capita earlier than usual so that the cases can be processed ahead of the 15 October (when Capita will start to wind down their administration services).

In the meantime, please continue to contact Capita as normal.

Monthly Contribution Returns

The transfer of the administration to WYPF will mean a new monthly contribution return and process for the payment of contributions.

We do not anticipate that these changes will be too onerous for employers. Further details will be provided to employers in August/September. If the transfer to WYPF takes place on 1 November, the new changes will start with the submission of the October contribution returns due in November.

To test the new processes, we would like to ask a small sample of employers to complete the WYPF contribution returns, alongside the current returns sent to Capita, and send these to WYPF. We have contacted the selected employers to ask if they are willing to assist in this testing.

You should note that all employers will be required to complete backdated WYPF monthly contribution returns from April 2020, once the transfer of administration has been completed.

For your information, attached is the WYPF monthly contribution return and accompanying notes. You may wish to start completing this form now in parallel with the Capita return for the months from April onwards, to avoid having to complete and send backdated returns to WYPF, once the transition is complete.



WYPF - Monthly
Return Specification

Triennial Valuation

You should have now received confirmation of your new employer contribution rate effect from April 2020, together an individual valuation results schedule.

The funding level for the Fund overall has improved from 73% as at 31 March 2016 to 86% as at 31 March 2019, with an overall deficit of £190 million.

Whilst the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the funding level, it should be remembered that pension scheme funding is a long-term investment. Financial markets have partially recovered their March losses and the next review of contribution rates is two years away.

Fund Website

Just a reminder that the website for the fund can be found at:

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/your-council/finance-funding-and-pensions/local-government-pension-scheme>

Updates and new documents are periodically uploaded onto the website.

Once the transfer of the administration to WYPF takes place, a new website will be set up for the Fund.

Annual Benefit Statements (ABS)

The year end returns were due to be completed and returned to Capita by 1 May. If you or your payroll provider has not yet done this, please could you arrange for this to be completed as soon as possible. If Capita raise any queries regarding your end of year return, could these be dealt with urgently please.

This will help to ensure that all members receive their ABS by the deadline date of 31 August.

Please could you also ensure that you have sent Capita the relevant forms for all members who have joined or left the Fund during 2019/20.

The email address for the Barnet Fund at Capita is barnetpensions@capita.co.uk

New Contractors

If you decide to change contractor and their employees are eligible for membership of the LGPS, please could you let the Barnet Pensions Team know as soon as possible please.

This will help us to keep track of participating employers in the Fund and arrange for new Admission Agreements to be issued and provide cessation valuations for the previous contractors.

Forms and processes

Just a reminder that the forms to be completed and brief explanation of the Capita processes can be found on the attachment below:



20200305 Barnet
procedure manual.x

If you have any questions regarding the forms or processes, please contact Mark Fox.

Technical updates

Please see the Actions Points from the latest Local Government Association bulletin in relation to the LGPS. These Action Points are also uploaded onto the Barnet Fund website.

If you wish to discuss any item included on this document, please contact Mark Fox.



Action points from
Bulletin 197 (Barnet)

Expression of Wish forms

You may wish to remind members that they may wish to complete an Expression of Wish form (or if they have already completed a form and their circumstances have changed). This form assists when deciding who should receive any lump sum death grant which may become payable. A copy of this form is attached below:



Pen16 - EOW
form.docx

Barnet Pensions Team

The Officers in the Barnet Pensions Team are as follows:

Mark Fox – Pensions Manager

0208 359 3341 mark.fox@barnet.gov.uk

Gavin Roberts - Pensions Operations Manager

0208 359 2863 gavin.roberts@barnet.gov.uk

George Bruce – Head of Pensions

0208 359 7126 george.bruce@barnet.gov.uk

Nigel Keogh – Strategic Pensions Consultant

0208 359 2208 nigel.keogh@barnet.gov.uk