

Worcestershire Pension Fund

Pensions Administration Strategy 2025

Executive Summary

What's New in this version of the Administration Strategy.

The Layout

The new layout of the Pensions Administration Strategy (“the Strategy”) is intended to make it easier for stakeholders to locate relevant information. The main body includes a more streamlined overview of the key roles, responsibilities and information. Performance standards are now held within separate appendices for both the Administration authority (**Appendix A**) and scheme employers (**Appendix B**). This will make it easier to seek out relevant standards when required. Finally, the more detailed information that stakeholders may want when coming across specific tasks are held within the final appendix (**Appendix C**).

The Vision of the Administering Authority

Our ultimate goal is to be clear and transparent in everything that we do. The strategy now includes a clear outlined purpose and the objectives of the strategy. These can be found in **sections 3 and 4** of the document.

Communications Strategy

The administering authority publishes a separate communications strategy which accompanies the pension administration strategy during the consultation period. The revised communications policy has a strong focus on utilising digital communication as our primary communication channel going forward and focusing on continuous improvement in engagement. Please take the time to review the new document and provide any suggestions or recommendations via email to wpfengagement@worcestershire.gov.uk.

A strong focus on ensuring data accuracy and use of I-Connect monthly data upload

Complete and accurate data is essential to how we ensure that members benefits are paid out accurately and efficiently. **Section 9** details what, in order to achieve this, we require from our scheme employers. This includes a revised data improvement plan and new timescales for employers to submit I-Connect uploads to the fund, to support our goal that all data is accurately maintained. For all data submissions (I-Connect or interface) not received by the 19th of the month we will also be following up missing data requests and using an improved escalation procedure, where required.

Most employers have 'onboarded' or are in the process of 'onboarding' to I-Connect. The aim is to have all employers using I-Connect from **1 April 2025**, so that employers will not have to complete Year End submissions for 2025/2026. If you have not discussed this with the Fund please contact the team at pensions@worcestershire.gov.uk

Increased performance standards expected of the Administering Authority

A new inclusion to "the strategy" is found within **Appendix A** and the performance standards/KPIs for the administering authority. An 'expected achievement as %' is included to demonstrate more clearly how well the Fund is processing key tasks in relation to administration. Performance against these targets are reported and taken to the Local Pension Board and Pension Committee meetings on a regular basis.

Investment into technology to support improvements in administration

As our ongoing goal is to improve pensions administration for all stakeholders and in an effort to do so we have invested resource in improving the technology available to us.

Alongside investing in i-Connect to support our employers, scheme members have access to the self-service portal, which can be accessed via the Funds website as mentioned in **section 7**. The portal enables them to access and update their information securely at anytime, anywhere. Members using the portal also enables the fund to stay connected with our members even after they leave active service, improving the data quality for our deferred members.

Additionally, members are able to run estimates of their benefits keeping them more informed and reducing the impact of multiple requests being made through the scheme employer and to the administration team.

Although it is the primary responsibility of the administering to continually promote this, we rely on our scheme employers to help support the message as per **section 9**.

Review of the pensions administration strategy

As per the LGPS Regulations 2013 an administering authority must keep its pension administration strategy under review. In doing so when preparing, reviewing and making revisions to its pension administration strategy, 'an administering authority must consult its scheme employers and such other persons it considers appropriate'.

As per **section 14** before the document is finalised by members of the pensions committee it must be shared with our stakeholders for consultation. The consultation period will run from 17 January 2025 - 16 February 2025. A written response will then be provided by the administering authority to scheme employers following the consultation period.

Any recommendations or questions in regards to the pension administration strategy can be directed to pensions@worcestershire.gov.uk which will be reviewed and considered.

Actions required from our scheme employers

Pensions Discretions Policy

Under the LGPS regulations 2013 regulation 60(1) 'a scheme employer must prepare a written statement of its policy' when exercising discretionary functions. The regulations also state that scheme employers must publish its statement and send a copy of its statement to the relevant administering authority.

The WPF engagement team will be contacting all employers where we deem to not hold an up to date statement and requesting this be shared with the Fund. If you would like to check if your policy is up to date or would like support in preparing a statement, if not already done so, please contact wpfengagement@worcestershire.gov.uk

Employer Contact list

With the implementation of I-connect we are asking all employers to review their contacts they have previously provided the Fund. If you have had any notable changes in staff who may have previously been supplied to the Fund as a contact, please could you update and send a new employers contact sheet using the form found on the [Funds website](#).
