

Version: 2025.1
Effective from: 11 April 2025

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY





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1. Introduction to Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF)

Who are we?

GMPF is a regional pension fund that administers the statutory Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). It is managed by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and is the largest of 88 LGPS funds across England and Wales.

Employees of all local and joint authorities in the Greater Manchester area and of many other public bodies normally have access to the LGPS*. Employees of a wide range of other bodies that provide a public service can also join the LGPS where certain circumstances apply.

GMPF currently has over 700 employers whose employees pay into the pension fund.

** Members of these bodies normally have access to the LGPS unless they are eligible to be a member of another public service pension scheme, such as the teachers, police officers, firefighters, civil service, or NHS pension schemes.*

What do we do?

Our job is to look after the LGPS pensions of all those employees who are, or have in the past, paid into GMPF. We do this in line with the LGPS regulations and other relevant legislation. This includes calculating and paying benefits as well as investing the money we receive in contributions.

We currently look after over 436,000 pension accounts.

What are our core values?

These eight organisational values are the most important to us:

CORE VALUES	
Excellence	Being focused on our stakeholders' needs and providing excellent customer service
Legality	Fulfilling our statutory obligations
Collaboration	Working well with others and capturing the benefits of teamwork

CORE VALUES	
Social responsibility	Encouraging good pension provision amongst our members and wider, and contributing to debate and decision-making in the wider pensions landscape
Efficiency	Demonstrating value for money, continually learning and looking to improve
Prudence	Being prudent in our decision-making and taking a long-term view
Accountability	Having good governance and clear lines of accountability
Transparency	Being able to demonstrate that we are an open, transparent and trustworthy organisation

We also have a set of service delivery values, which are:

PRIDE - OUR SERVICE DELIVERY VALUES	
Being Professional	We expect all individuals, teams, sections, and our partners to be professional and accountable for the service we provide.
Delivering Results	We go the extra mile to deliver an excellent service and we recognise the successes, efforts, and achievements of all individuals, teams, and sections.
Making Improvements	We constantly look to drive our service forward and encourage new, innovative ideas and solutions that will improve what we do.
Encouraging Diversity	We recognise that collectively using our different skills, strengths and opinions enables us to achieve greater outcomes than we would individually.
Striving for Excellence	We expect everyone to strive for excellence as well as encouraging those around them to achieve it.

2. The purpose of our strategy

Why have we developed a communications and engagement strategy?

- To demonstrate our desire to communicate and engage effectively and cost efficiently with all our stakeholders.
- To help us to develop a clear and transparent plan of how and when we intend to communicate and engage with people.
- So we know exactly how we are going to measure progress and evaluate the success or otherwise of the activities we do.
- For all stakeholders to be clear about our core values and key messages, so that these can be portrayed when we deliver our service or when services are delivered on our behalf.
- For stakeholders to be clear about the timescales GMPF is working to when delivering its communication and engagement objectives.
- To ensure we fulfil any statutory obligations we have that relate to communications and engagement work.
- To have a clear understanding of the resources and budget needed to deliver our communication and engagement objectives.
- To enable our plans to be scrutinised and challenged effectively, to drive improvements and increase performance.

What is our strategy intended to deliver?

- Clarity about the communication and engagement activities we will do and what we intend to achieve.
- Objectives that give a clear and consistent message about what we do and our values.
- A means of encouraging the use of, or development of, industry leading methods and strategies for effective communication and engagement.
- Value for money.

What are our specific areas of focus and why?

Electronic communication and the use of modern technology

To:

- Meet member expectations.
- Deliver efficiency savings.
- Deliver cost savings.

Reflecting the view of those with an interest in GMPF's investment activities

To:

- Help us to develop in our role as a responsible investor.
- Ensure we can identify important ethical or environmental issues that may arise.
- Identify other opportunities or benefits that are important to our stakeholders.

3. GMPF stakeholders

Who are our stakeholders, and what are their key needs or interests?

GMPF stakeholders can generally be grouped into one of the six categories in the table below:

STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR NEEDS OR INTERESTS		
Stakeholder category	Some examples	Key needs or interests
GMPF members & prospective members	Contributing and benefits on hold members, pensioners and dependants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about their pension benefits or potential pension benefits Information to help them make decisions about their pension provision
GMPF employers & prospective employers	GM local authorities, the National Probation Service, academies, colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information that helps them to carry out their employer pension duties effectively Details about the financial implications of fund / scheme membership
GMPF Trustees and Local Board members	Nominated council representatives, nominated employee representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information to enable effective decision-making Clarity on key risks and responsibilities
GMPF officers	The Director of Pensions, pensions officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding and knowledge to carry out their role effectively
Partners and contractors	IT software suppliers, investment and legal advisors, investment managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of our priorities and values, to reflect them in the work they do for us
Other external bodies	Government departments, independent financial advisors, the Local Government Association	

4. Our strategy

What are we setting out to do and achieve?

- To have clear branding, a strong image and be a recognised organisation within the field of pensions.
- To develop a cohesive and consistent approach when creating our communications tools and materials.
- For our communication materials to always be clear, concise, and easy to understand.
- For all partners and associated parties to understand our priorities and values.
- To ensure all GMPF officers understand our key messages and approach, to communicate with our stakeholders effectively.
- To fulfil and build on our statutory obligations.
- To keep stakeholders up to date with any changes that might affect them.
- To publicise our successes.
- To establish routes for us to feedback to recognised industry partners.
- To ensure our members have a good /increased understanding of the value of their pension pots and to promote pensions as a valuable benefit.
- To encourage and support members to make well-informed decisions and be effective in their pension planning.
- To respond to members' everyday questions and queries in a convenient way and at a convenient time for them.
- To reach all the people or groups that we want to communicate and engage with.
- To establish where there are gaps in member knowledge and understanding so we can look to fill them.
- To put in place mechanisms that enable us to address 'topical' issues in a timely way.
- To look to dispel some of the myths that surround pensions.
- To facilitate easy links to other organisations that members might find useful or want to get in touch with.
- To establish the tools and information employers would find useful to help them to support their employees on pension matters.
- To support employers in fulfilling their employing authority role to achieve value for money, excellent customer service and / or efficiency savings.
- To support employers to respond to pension issues / consultations that affect them or their employees.
- To facilitate communication between stakeholders (for example, where LGPS employers wish to communicate with other LGPS employers).
- To be able to demonstrate any stakeholder events we hold are effective and value for money.
- For all our processes, procedures, or other routes of communication to enable people to effectively scrutinise what we do and provide feedback to us.
- To build clear mechanisms and tools for evaluating success into our procedures and embed that approach into everything we do.

- Have an ‘invest to save’ approach, whereby we give due focus to tasks or opportunities that will provide clear benefits going forward.

What is the timeframe to which we are working?

This strategy is intended to be in place from April 2025 until March 2027. It will be reviewed every quarter and will be updated or replaced if needed.

What are the key messages that we want to get across?

About GMPF

There are five key messages that we want to get across about GMPF when we are communicating and engaging with our stakeholders based on our core values. These are:

- We put our members at the heart of everything that we do.
- We always do our best, being polite, open, and honest.
- We work to high standards.
- We listen to views, opinions and feedback and use them to improve.
- We demand value for money when using resources and spending budgets.

About the LGPS

There are five key messages that we want to get across to members and prospective members about the LGPS and their pension. These are:

- Planning for retirement is important
- Your LGPS pension is a valuable benefit
- It is important to let us know if you ever change address
- It is important to complete a death grant nomination form and keep it up-to-date
- Your feedback is valued by us.

How are we going to measure progress and success?

We intend to measure success through regular assessment and by obtaining feedback from stakeholders. All the objectives we set will form part of our implementation plan and the methods of measuring success will be included in the plan.

How will we encourage continual improvement?

We believe that we already have a well-established culture of continual improvement. However, we will look to put training and mechanisms in place that ensure continual improvement remains embedded in our ways of working.

5. Implementation plan

Key objectives

Six key objectives have been set. These are to be achieved between April 2025 and March 2027. Achieving these objectives will improve and strengthen the communications and engagement activities that GMPF already do and will help to ensure the aims listed in section 4 are met. Details of these objectives are as follows:

Objective 1	Replace the online Member Self Service module (the platform used for My Pension) with the latest version from Heywood Pension Technologies, 'Engage'
Stakeholders	GMPF staff and trustees, GMPF employers, all contributing, benefits on hold and pensioner members
Achieves	Members can do more online, quickly, easily, and securely
Main benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Self Service will reach end of life and be removed from use by the end of 2025 • Improving the access members have to their pension benefits and related information • Improving the member experience by providing easy online access to their pension record and secure online processes • Improving the security and safety of member data online by introducing multi-factor authentication and investigating the use case for Electronic ID Verification
Resource	Internal team and software provider
Timeframe	From April 2025 to December 2025
Measure success by	Take-up levels; feedback to the Customer Services team; online survey; number of cases processed through My Pension
Budget required	Estimated costs have been built into the budget
Status	In progress

Objective 2	Get Pensions Dashboard ready
Stakeholders	All contributing, benefits on hold and pensioner members; MAPS
Achieves	Members being able to see all their pensions in one place and trace any pension providers they've lost touch with
Main benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves the access to information for members • Helps to keep members engaged
Resource	Internal team and external partner
Timeframe	Connection to the dashboard eco-system by October 2025. Dashboard-ready by the dashboard availability point to be set by government
Measure success by	Successful dashboard onboarding
Budget required	Estimated costs have been built into the budget for the ISP, however other elements yet to be established
Status	In progress

Objective 3	Review current service provision to ensure member expectations are being met
Stakeholders	All stakeholders
Achieves	All stakeholders will be able to obtain the information they need quickly and easily; member expectations are met
Main benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved service levels • Increased stakeholder satisfaction
Resource	Internal team
Timeframe	From April 2025 to March 2027
Measure success by	Survey feedback; comparison of service levels with industry standards and peers;
Budget required	Estimated costs have been built into the budget
Status	In progress

Objective 4	Implement targeted campaigns based on our key messages to encourage customer engagement
Stakeholders	All prospective, contributing, benefits on hold and pensioner members
Achieves	More members engaged with their pension and understanding the benefits of the LGPS and of saving for their retirement
Main benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves service levels • Improves management information
Resource	Internal team
Timeframe	From April 2025 to March 2027
Measure success by	Responses received to any calls to action
Budget required	Estimated costs have been built into the budget
Status	In progress

Objective 5	Review and improve all member literature
Stakeholders	All prospective, contributing, benefits on hold and pensioner members
Achieves	All members being provided with information in an accessible and engaging way; to be able to clearly understand the information being provided and, if applicable, know what steps they need to take
Main benefits	Improves the member understanding and subsequently reduces the number of second stage or third stage queries received
Resource	Internal team and external partner
Timeframe	From April 2025 to March 2027
Measure success by	Surveys, focus group
Budget required	TBC
Status	Pilot project in progress

Objective 6	To improve customer experience by using new tools, such as customer journeys and personas
Stakeholders	All prospective, contributing, benefits on hold and pensioner members
Achieves	Improved understanding of the level of service we provide. Increase member satisfaction
Main benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases understanding of what is important to members Will provide vital information to inform what member related key performance indicators should be in place Will provide important feedback on new initiatives and developments
Resource	Internal team and external partner
Timeframe	From April 2025 to March 2027
Measure success by	Benchmarking, surveys, focus group
Budget required	TBC
Status	Not yet started

Review date	Reviewed by	Amendments	Version
3 March 2025	Matthew Simensky	Dates, figures and objectives updated to reflect the new Strategy timeframe	2025.1
20 March 2024	Matthew Simensky	Minor amendments made to some wording	2024.1
20 March 2023	Matthew Simensky	PRIDE values added and objectives updated	2023.1



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