



Communications and Engagement Strategy

2021



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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 600 employers whose employees pay into the pension fund.

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 have over 390,000 pension fund members whose pensions we are looking after.

What are our core values?

These eight values are the most important to us:

CORE VALUES	
Excellence	Being focussed 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
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

* 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.

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, in order 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

In order to:

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

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

In order to:

- Help us to develop in our role as a responsible investor.
- Ensure we are able to 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 deferred 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 in order 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, in order 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, in order 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 in to 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 2021 until March 2023. It will be reviewed every six months 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.

6. Implementation plan

Key objectives

Seven key objectives have been set. These are to be achieved between April 2021 and March 2023. 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	To further enhance, develop and promote the online Member Self Service module, 'My Pension'
Stakeholders	All contributing, deferred and pensioner members
Achieves	Members can do more online, quickly, easily and securely
Main benefits	Improves the access members have to their pension benefits and related information; promotes the importance of saving for retirement
Resource	Internal team and Aquila Heywood
Timeframe	From April 2021 to March 2023
Measure success by	Take-up levels; feedback to the Helpline; online survey
Budget required	Estimated costs have been built into the budget
Status	In progress

Objective 2		Get Pensions Dashboard ready
Stakeholders	All contributing, deferred 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	Improve the access to information for members; helps to keep members engaged	
Resource	Internal team and external partner	
Timeframe	From April 2021 to March 2023	
Measure success by	Successful dashboard onboarding	
Budget required	Costs currently unknown - tbc	
Status	In progress	

Objective 3		Implement a full online events programme for both members and employers
Stakeholders	All contributing, deferred and pensioner members; all employers	
Achieves	Members being able to learn in an easy and engaging way about LGPS pension benefits, what choices they have and how improve their benefits package. Employers being able to learn how to fulfil their responsibilities and how to best support their employees on pension matters	
Main benefits	Improves the access stakeholders have to information and increases member understanding	
Resource	Internal team	
Timeframe	From April 2021 to March 2022	
Measure success by	On-line surveys, focus groups	
Budget required	Estimated costs have been built into the budget	
Status	In progress	

Objective 4		Expand and develop the use of the new contact centre software, including implementing email and webchat
Stakeholders	All stakeholders	
Achieves	Maximising available functionality to enable all stakeholders to obtain the information they need quickly and easily	
Main benefits	Improves service levels; improves management information	
Resource	Internal team and external partner	
Timeframe	From April 2021 to March 2022	
Measure success by	Telephone / contact centre surveys, focus group	
Budget required	Potential costs linked to chatbots - tbc	
Status	In progress	

Objective 5		Implement regular campaigns to encourage customer engagement
Stakeholders	All prospective, contributing, deferred 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	Improves service levels; improves management information	
Resource	Internal team	
Timeframe	From April 2021 to March 2023	
Measure success by	Responses received to any calls to action	
Budget required	TBC	
Status	In progress	

Objective 6	Review and improve all member literature
Stakeholders	All prospective, contributing, deferred 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 September 2021 to March 2023
Measure success by	Surveys, focus group
Budget required	TBC
Status	Not yet started

Objective 7	To improve customer experience by using new tools, such as customer journeys and personas
Stakeholders	All prospective, contributing, deferred and pensioner members
Achieves	Improved understanding of the level of service we provide; increase member satisfaction
Main benefits	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 September 2021 to March 2023
Measure success by	Benchmarking, surveys, focus group
Budget required	TBC
Status	Not yet started



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