



LOCAL PENSION BOARD - 26 OCTOBER 2020

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

PENSION SECTION - COMPLAINTS POLICY

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform the Board of the Complaints Policy for the Pension Section.

Background

2. Although formal complaints brought by scheme members or their representatives, against the calculation or administration of their pension benefits, are dealt with through the Local Government Pension Scheme Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP), most issues are caused by general misunderstandings or human error, and are usually resolved without the need to invoke IDRP.
3. As part of the Pension Section's commitment to good governance, a complaints policy has been created to ensure that the Pension Section handle these specific complaints in a consistent, appropriate and timely fashion.

The Process

4. When a complaint is received, these are to be passed to the relevant Pensions Team Manager to consider;

Complaints must be submitted in writing, either by letter or email;

If it is not possible to reply within three working days, then an acknowledgement letter must be sent by the Pensions Team Manager, and a full written reply will follow.

5. The standard timeline for a reply is ten working days, from receipt of the complaint, but can be longer if circumstances dictate, e.g. further information is required from a third party (for example - the scheme members employer).
6. A written reply must be sent to the complainant which must include where appropriate:

- A summary of the complaint and where appropriate, a timeline of events leading up to the complaint;
- Advise the complainant of the Pension Section's proposed resolution to the issue, and where appropriate the reasons for the decision;
- Advice on next steps if the complainant is still unhappy with the decision. The wording below* should be included. However, there maybe exceptional cases where a complaint cannot be taken to IDRP (for example – a complaint lodged years after the event).

7. If the complainant is still dissatisfied and they feel the issue cannot be resolved informally, they can within six months of receiving this letter, appeal in writing formally under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure. This is shown in the Appendix A.

If you are dissatisfied with any decision given in this notification you may, within 6 months of receiving this letter, appeal in writing under the approved Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure. **It is suggested however, that any points of difference should be addressed with the Pensions Office on an informal basis initially.*

Should you still then be unhappy, you would be provided with the name and address of the "Specified Person" nominated by your employer or former employer, who would formally investigate your complaint. In the unlikely event of a disagreement progressing beyond this stage, details to enable an appeal to the final stage two "Appointed Person" nominated by the pension scheme's administering authority, would be provided with the decision reached by the "Specified Person."

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that the Board notes the Pension Sections Complaints policy.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

None specific

Appendix

Appendix A - Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure

Officer to Contact

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