

Knowledge and Training Policy: Lewisham Pension Board June 2022

Legal requirements

A member of the Pension Board of a public service pension scheme must be conversant with:

- the rules of the scheme, and
- any document recording policy about the administration of the scheme which is for the time being adopted in relation to the scheme.

It is appropriate to consider the skills and knowledge of the Committee as a collective for the purposes of enabling the Committee as a whole to properly exercise its delegated responsibilities; as such, although desirable, it is not necessary for every member of the Committee to be able to demonstrate individually that they meet all the expected knowledge and skills competencies.

However, the Fund must still be able to evidence that the combined knowledge and understanding of the Committee allows it to properly exercise its responsibilities. The degree of knowledge and understanding required is that appropriate for the purposes of enabling the individual to properly exercise the functions of a member of the Pension Board.

Training policy

It is the responsibility of individual pension board members to ensure that they have the individual and collective skills, knowledge and understanding to enable them to properly exercise their functions as a pension board.

Areas of knowledge and understanding required

Being 'conversant' means having a working knowledge of the scheme regulations and policies, so that pension board members can use them effectively when carrying out their duties.

They must also have knowledge and understanding of the law relating to pensions (and any other matters prescribed in legislation) to the degree appropriate for them to be able to carry out their role, responsibilities and duties.

In terms of documented administration policies, the following are examples of administration policies which the Regulator considers to be particularly pertinent and would expect to be documented where relevant to a pension scheme, and with which pension board members must therefore be conversant where applicable. This list is not exhaustive and other documented policies may fall into this category:

Any scheme-approved policies relating to:

- conflicts of interest and the register of interests
- record-keeping

- internal dispute resolution
- reporting breaches
- maintaining contributions to the scheme
- the appointment of pension board members
- risk assessments / management and risk register policies for the scheme
- scheme booklets, announcements and other key member and employer communications, which describe scheme policies and procedures
- the roles, responsibilities and duties of the scheme manager, pension board and individual pension board members
- terms of reference, structure and operational policies of the pension board and / or any sub-committee
- statements of policy about the exercise of discretionary functions
- statements of policy about communications with members and scheme employers
- the pension administration strategy, or equivalent, and
- any admission body (or equivalent) policies.
- Policies relating to funding and investment matters. For example, they must be conversant with the statement of investment principles and the funding strategy statement.

Pension Board members must also be conversant with any other documented policies relating to the administration of the scheme. For example, where applicable, they must be conversant with policies relating to:

- the contribution rate or amount (or the range/variability where there is no one single rate or amount) payable by employers participating in the scheme
- statements of assurance (for example, assurance reports from administrators)
- third party contracts and service level agreements
- stewardship reports from outsourced service providers (for example, those performing outsourced activities such as scheme administration), including about compliance issues
- scheme annual reports and accounts
- accounting requirements relevant to the scheme
- audit reports, including from outsourced service providers, and
- other scheme-specific governance documents.

Degree of knowledge and understanding required

Pension Board members must have knowledge and understanding of the law relating to pensions (and any other prescribed matters) sufficient for them to exercise the functions of their role. Pension Board members should be aware of the range and extent of the law relating to pensions which applies to their scheme, and have sufficient understanding of the content and effect of that law to recognise when and how it impacts on their responsibilities and duties.

Pension Board members should be able to identify and where relevant challenge any failure to comply with:

- the scheme regulations
- other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the scheme

- any requirements imposed by the Regulator, or
- any failure to meet the standards and expectations set out in any relevant codes of practice issued by the Regulator.

Pension Board members' breadth of knowledge and understanding should be sufficient to allow them to understand fully and challenge any information or advice they are given. They should understand how that information or advice impacts on any issue or decision relevant to their responsibilities and duties.

Acquiring, reviewing and updating knowledge and understanding

Pension Board members should invest sufficient time in their learning and development alongside their other responsibilities and duties. Newly appointed Pension Board members should be aware that their responsibilities and duties as a Pension Board member begin from the date they take up their post. Therefore, they should immediately start to familiarise themselves with the scheme regulations, documents recording policy about the administration of the scheme and relevant pensions law.

Pension Board members should undertake a personal training needs analysis and regularly review their skills, competencies and knowledge to identify gaps or weaknesses. They should use a personalised training plan to document and address these promptly.

Learning programmes are flexible, and Lewisham Council will assist in acquiring the provision of relevant training.

The Regulator provides an e-learning programme to help meet the needs of Pension Board members, it is a requirement of Pension Board members to utilise this tool and document progress made on the learning modules. Definite and reasonable timescales must be set for members to complete the learning modules on the Regulator's website.

The link is provided below:

<http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/public-service-schemes/learn-about-managing-public-service-schemes.aspx#s16691>

In addition, the Board will consider areas in which training needs of Board members are effectively met through training for the whole Board. Lewisham Council will assist in organising such training.