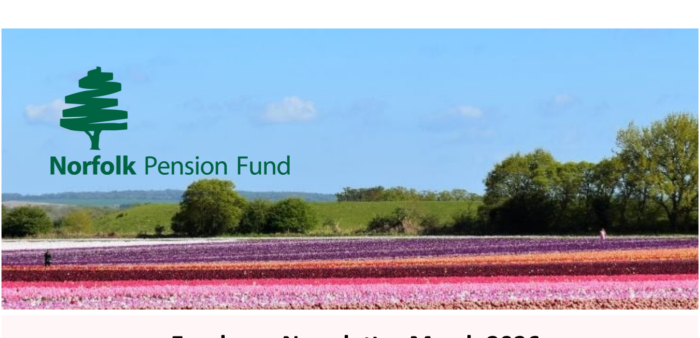

Employer Newsletter March 2026

Welcome to our Employer Newsletter

The completion of the Triennial Valuation, which sets employer contribution rates from 1 April 2026, generated some enquiries from members regarding any affect it had on their pension benefits. To help you deal with any similar questions from your employees, in this issue we have a summary of how employer contribution rates have been calculated and how they have no impact on member pension benefits, which are guaranteed under statute.

The volume and frequency in the exchange of sensitive member data between the Fund and employers requires us all to maintain the highest cyber security measures. An essential part of this commitment will be the rollout of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) within i-Connect, so please read our update to find out what the launch of this important project means for you.

I hope you enjoy reading the Newsletter and find it helpful.

Best wishes,

Glenn Cossey
Director of the Norfolk
Pension Fund

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Triennial Valuation
Employer contribution rates from 1 April 2026

The Fund has now completed the 2025 Triennial Valuation.

As part of the valuation process, the Fund Actuary certifies the employer contribution rates for the three-year period starting 1 April 2026.

Please ensure that you or your payroll provider are using the correct employer contribution rate from 1 April 2026.

If you are unsure of the correct rate, please contact **valuation.2025@norfolk.gov.uk**

You should now have received your individual employer results and consultation on the Funding Strategy Statement (FSS). This consultation has now closed. No material changes were made to the FSS following the consultation.

Overall there has been a substantial improvement in the funding level and most employers will see their employer contribution rate fall as a result of this. The improvement is a result of:

- **Investment returns** - our assets have grown due to high investment income received and capital gains since the last valuation at March 2022.
- **Higher bond/gilt yields** - rising gilt yields have led to a significant change in financial market conditions, allowing the Fund Actuary to assume higher future investment returns (discount rates). We note that ultimately these higher returns must be achieved to maintain the funding position.
- **Reduced liabilities** - higher discount rates result in a lower "present value" (the current value of future payments from the scheme) being placed on future pension liabilities.
- **Funding surpluses** - the aggregate funding level for the Fund is now 129%, creating a surplus that can support lower employer contribution rates as part of the long term contribution strategy.

When the revised employer rates are published, members may question whether any reduction in employer contributions will impact their benefits.

You can assure your employees that lower employer contribution rates have no impact on the benefits they will receive, or the security of their accrued pensions.

- **Benefits are unaffected** - the LGPS is a Defined Benefit (DB) scheme. Pensions are calculated based on salary and length of service, not on investment performance or employer contribution levels.
- **Guaranteed by law** - benefits are guaranteed under government legislation. Changes in how much an employer needs to pay, do not impact the accrual or payment of your pension.
- **Member contributions** - the percentage you pay from your salary is set nationally by the government and is not affected by the value of Norfolk Pension Fund's assets or employer rate reductions.
- **Inflation protection** - pensions in payment and active accounts continue to be adjusted annually for inflation. For April 2026, an increase of 3.8% (based on September 2025 CPI) has been confirmed for pensions in payment.

Employee contribution bands for 2026/27 are shown below.

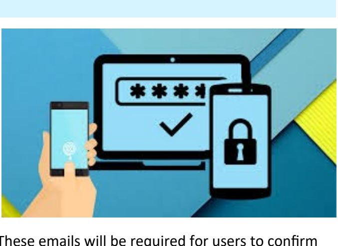
Employee contribution bands 2026-27

These are the Employee Contribution Bands for 2026-27. For more information, please see the Contributions Guide G020, which is available on the *Employers* section of our website **www.norfolkpensionfund.org** under *Forms and documents/Guides*.

Band	Pensionable pay	Contribution rate Main Section	Contribution rate 50/50 Section
1	Up to £18,400	5.50%	2.75%
2	£18,401 to £29,000	5.80%	2.90%
3	£29,001 to £47,300	6.50%	3.25%
4	£47,301 to £59,800	6.80%	3.40%
5	£59,801 to £84,000	8.50%	4.25%
6	£84,001 to £119,100	9.90%	4.95%
7	£119,101 to £140,400	10.50%	5.25%
8	£140,401 to £210,700	11.40%	5.70%
9	£210,701 or more	12.50%	6.25%

Introducing Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for i-Connect

Strengthening security across our i-Connect service



As part of our ongoing commitment to improving security and protecting sensitive member data, we are pleased to announce the rollout of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) within i-Connect.

This enhancement forms part of the latest release and marks a significant step forward in safeguarding access to the system.

What is MFA and why are we introducing it?

MFA adds an additional layer of protection when logging into i-Connect.

After entering a username and password, users will now also provide a one-time passcode (OTP) generated by an authenticator app.

This ensures that even if login credentials are compromised, unauthorised access is prevented.

This upgrade reflects both customer feedback and industry expectations, with some fund retenders now mandating MFA as standard.

By introducing MFA, we are aligning with best practice and strengthening security for all employers and administering authority (AA) users.

What this means for i-Connect users

Once enabled, users will follow the usual login steps and then enter a six-digit OTP from an authenticator app such as Microsoft Authenticator.

This passcode refreshes every 30 seconds to ensure secure access.

In a future update, Heywood will introduce email-based MFA for users who may not be able to use an app-based option.

Preparing for the rollout

Before we enable MFA, we strongly recommend you ensure that your IT teams have whitelisted i-Connect verification emails.

These emails will be required for users to confirm their email addresses during first-time setup.

If these emails are blocked, users will be unable to proceed with MFA activation.

MFA rollout

Norfolk Pension Fund will enable MFA for employer users via a phased process. We will contact you directly to confirm activation.

Once activated, users will be prompted to:

1. Confirm their email address
2. Create a secure password - you can enter your existing i-Connect password
3. Enter a verification code sent by email
4. Scan a QR code using an authenticator app
5. Enter the first app-generated OTP to complete setup

After this, MFA is active and a generated code will be required for every login.

We will provide more detailed instructions when your MFA is activated.

Looking ahead - email-based MFA

The latest release focuses on app-based MFA. A future update from Heywood will introduce the ability to use verification codes via email instead.

Need assistance?

If you have any questions about MFA rollout, please contact Matthew Crane on **01603 495789**.

Updating your contact details - what to expect

Keeping our employer contact details up to date is essential to making sure we communicate with the right people, at the right time, about the things that matter to you.

Over the coming months, we'll be carrying out a review and refresh of our employer contact database. This work will help us ensure that key messages — such as regulatory updates, scheme changes, training opportunities and employer-specific requests — reach the most appropriate contacts within each organisation.

Why are we doing this?

Employer structures, roles and responsibilities change over time. By updating our records, we can:

- Target communications more effectively to the right teams and individuals
- Reduce unnecessary or duplicate emails
- Improve response times and engagement
- Strengthen our overall employer support and governance arrangements.

In short, better data means better communication.

What does this mean for you?

We will soon be contacting employers in phases and asking you to review and update your contact details using a new, streamlined online form. The form will allow you to confirm:

- Key LGPS contacts within your organisation
- Payroll and finance contacts
- Any shared or outsourced arrangements (for example, payroll providers).

Completing the form should only take a few minutes, and it will help ensure we hold accurate and up-to-date information for your organisation.

Data protection and security

All information collected will be used solely for LGPS administration and communication purposes. It will be handled securely and in line with data protection legislation and our published privacy notices.

What happens next?

You don't need to do anything just yet. When it's your organisation's turn, we'll contact you with clear instructions and a link to the form.

We appreciate your support with this exercise and thank you in advance for helping us improve how we communicate with you.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact the Pensions Team using your usual contact details.

Take part in MoneyHelper Pensions Dashboards consumer testing

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) is inviting people to take part in **phase two of consumer testing** for the new **MoneyHelper Pensions Dashboards**.

Testing began on **2 March 2026** and will help refine the service before it becomes publicly available.

We are encouraging Norfolk Pension Fund scheme employers to share this opportunity with their staff, particularly those who may benefit from early support and guidance when engaging with pensions online.

Who can take part?

Anyone who:

- is **aged 18 or over**; and
- has at least one pension not yet in payment.

MaPS is especially keen to include individuals who may have:

- accessibility needs, or
- confidence barriers around **literacy, numeracy, digital skills,** or **technology**.

Why take part?

Consumer testers get an early chance to try the dashboard — a tool designed to let people view all their pensions securely **in one place**. Feedback from testers will directly shape improvements to the design, usability, and clarity of the dashboard.

How to register

Organisations supporting the programme can **register to receive a toolkit** from MaPS to help promote the opportunity. Your staff can sign up using the registration route provided in that toolkit.

Find out more

Further details about consumer testing and the Pensions Dashboards Programme are available at **www.pensionsdashboardsprogramme.org.uk**

Advance warning of member retiring

If you have an employee who has informed you of their retirement, please could you send us an **Advance Warning of Member Retiring (R25) form** which can easily be done via i–Connect.

This will enable us to send the member all the paper work they will need to complete so that we can pay them their pension benefits promptly, as and when they are due.

Employer Forum
Wednesday 8 July

Please save Wednesday 8 July in your diary for our next hybrid Employer Forum which you can attend either:

- In person at **The Horizon Centre**, Peachman Way, Broadland Business Park, Norwich, NR7 0WF or;
- Virtually online via MS Teams.

The Forum offers an excellent opportunity to keep up to date with scheme developments, which is an important part of your responsibility as an LGPS employer.

AGENDA

The Agenda will include the following items:

- **Update from the Fund Actuary, Hymans Robertson**
- **Update on the national Pensions Dashboards programme**
- **Administration update** - including news on i-Connect and Multi-Factor Authorisation
- ***Fit for the Future* reforms and investment pooling**
- **Ask the Panel Q&A session** – your chance to put questions to the Fund Actuary and the Norfolk Pension Fund team.

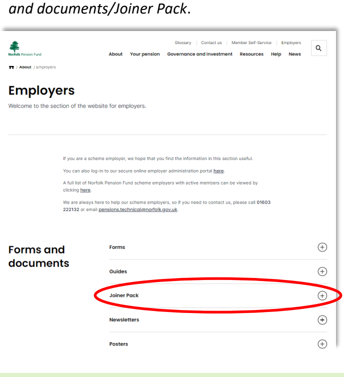
The meeting will commence at 10.00am. If you plan to attend at The Space, you're welcome to register and join us for a coffee from 9.30am.

We aim to finish by 12.30pm, followed by a buffet lunch, giving you the opportunity to speak 1:1 with Hymans Robertson and our team members, and chat to other employer colleagues.

To reserve your place, please contact
jordan.mann@norfolk.gov.uk
or call 01603 303334

New Member Joiner Pack

When you have a new employee, please provide them with New Joiner Pack items which can be downloaded from the *Employers* section of **www.norfolkpensionfund.org** under *Forms and documents/Joiner Pack*.



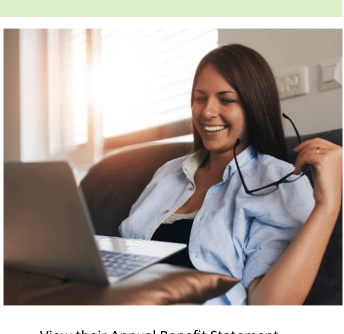
You can also download the documents by clicking on the item names below.

- **A Brief Guide to the LGPS**
- **Membership Form (SR95)**
- **Non LGPS Benefits Transfer-In Request (SR96)**
- **Death Grant Form (SR81)**

The forms can be completed electronically, so you can email a copy to the employee and submit the completed form via i-Connect.

Member Self-Service

We have recently made enhancements to our Member Self-Service portal which gives your employees access to their LGPS pension details online.



The improvements bring improved security, including two-factor authentication, and greater functionality for members - such as expanded document upload options and more self-service calculation and member data update options.

Existing users need to go through a revised registration process, using an email address (ideally personal, not work) as login details, rather than their current username.

Please let your employees know that Member Self-Service is a great way for them to:

- View pension account benefits
- Amend personal details
- Update Death Grant nomination details
- Calculate pension benefits with the Benefit Projectors
- View their Annual Benefit Statement
- Upload documents and queries
- Contact us securely

The service can be accessed from the homepage of our website at **www.norfolkpensionfund.org** by clicking *Member Self-Service* on the menu bar or on the *Member Self-Service* icon.

For support, we have a dedicated Member Self-Service helpline on **01603 222132** and email address **pensions.mss@norfolk.gov.uk**

Norfolk Pension Fund governance

Norfolk County Council, as Administering Authority of the Norfolk Pension Fund, delegates its pensions functions to **Pensions Committee** to administer the scheme on behalf of all participating employers and scheme members.

All public sector pension schemes are also required to have a Local Pension Board (known in Norfolk as the **Pensions Oversight Board**), to assist the Administering Authority in ensuring the effective and efficient governance and administration of the scheme.

The **Governance Strategy Statement** details our governance arrangements. It can be viewed on our website **www.norfolkpensionfund.org** under the 'Resources' section.

Pensions Committee news

Pensions Committee last met on Tuesday 10 March at County Hall.

As usual, the Committee was given an operational update from Fund officers, plus updates from the Pensions Oversight Board and the Investment Consultant, Hymans Robertson.

The Committee also reviewed items including the LGPS *Fit for the Future* reform, the Pension Fund Budget 2026-27 and a Responsible Investment update report.

You can watch a recording of the public section of Pensions Committee on the **Norfolk County Council Democratic Services YouTube channel.**

Pensions Committee papers and details of meeting dates can be found on the **Norfolk County Council website.**

Committee Members
Norfolk County Councillors
Greg Peck (Chair)
Steve Morphew
William Richmond
Martin Storey
Brian Watkins
District County Councillors
The Lord Fuller OBE
Mike Stonard
Staff representative
Steve Aspin

Pensions Oversight Board news

The Norfolk Pension Fund Pensions Oversight Board (POB) last met on 10 February 2026.

At the session, the Board was provided with an update on the national Pensions Dashboards programme, the *Fit for the Future* reforms and the *LGPS: Access and Fairness* consultation.

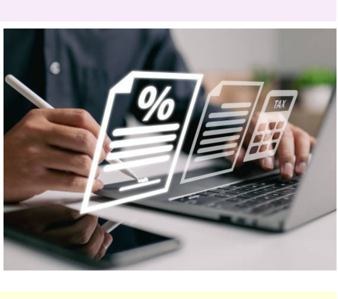
The Fund Actuary reported on the Triennial Valuation, plus there were other updates including the Fund's approach to the TPR (The Pension Regulator) general code of practice, the Norfolk Pension Service Plan, the Fund budget and Risk Management.

We are currently recruiting for a non levying/ precepting employers representative. If you are interested in applying for this role, please contact **eunice.walcott@norfolk.gov.uk**

Board members
Chair
Brian Wigg
Employer Representatives
Julie Brown: Levying/precepting employers
Vacancy: Non levying/precepting employers
Sally Albrow: Norfolk County Council
Scheme Member Representatives
Frances Crum: Active/deferred member
Peter Baker: Pensioner member
Robin Konieczny: Trade Union

Processing a pay award for retirees or leavers

If you have, or are due, to process a pay award for a member who has retired or left the pension scheme and you are intending to deduct pension contributions on the payment, please use the **Pensionable pay paid to a member after leaving (L1) form** to let us know.



Please contact us if you are unsure whether to deduct pension contributions from any employee payment.

Pre Retirement Planning Course

If you have any employees within two years of retirement, they may benefit from the Pre Retirement Planning Course delivered by Norfolk County Council on our behalf.

The course, which is held virtually over two half day sessions via MS Teams, covers general LGPS scheme information, the process of retiring and information members should know before they leave work.

The course is free to all members of the Norfolk Pension Fund and the content includes:

- Creating a new future and managing change
- Investment and finance planning
- Ideas for leisure, sporting and cultural activities
- Volunteering opportunities
- Information about the LGPS

Next Course Dates

- 13 and 20 May 2026 (two half days)
- 9 and 16 July 2026 (two half days)

To book a place please contact the
Workforce Development Team
hrld@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 224114
Norfolk County Council employees can book via myOracle Learn.

Be scam aware!

Report Fraud (the UK national reporting service to tell the police about cyber crime and fraud) is urging consumers to remain highly vigilant against a surge in sophisticated pension and investment scams.

Fraudsters are leveraging AI-driven social engineering, setting up clone companies and using high-pressure tactics to steal retirement savings and investments.

Please take note of and share the following advice with your employees on how to identify, protect yourself from, and report scams.

Common fraud tactics look out for

- **AI-powered impersonation** - criminals are using deepfake technology and AI to create realistic voice calls, videos, or phishing emails, often posing as trusted financial advisors, pension providers, or even FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) officials.
- **"Free" pension reviews** - unexpected offers for a free review of your pension are almost always scams, designed to gain trust and access investment funds.
- **High-pressure and time-limited offers** - are key tactics used by scammers to force victims into making impulsive decisions before they have time to think critically and conduct any due diligence or background research.
- **Unrealistic returns or early access** - promises of high, "guaranteed" returns (for example, 8%+ annual guaranteed return or "doubling your money") or offering to release pensions before age 55 (which is illegal in most cases).
- **Clone firms** - fraudsters impersonate legitimate FCA-authorised firms to deceive investors, using fake websites and phone numbers.

How to protect pension and investments

- **Check the FCA Register** - before changing pension arrangements, verify that the firm is authorised on the **FCA Register.**
- **Ignore cold calls** - unsolicited calls about your pension are illegal in the UK. Hang up.
- **Use separate passwords** - ensure your online accounts use unique, strong passwords and enable 2-step verification (2SV).
- **Don't be rushed** - take your time to seek independent, professional financial advice before making any decisions.
- **Avoid unregulated investments** - be wary of offers involving unusual assets like cryptocurrency, foreign property or storage units.

If you suspect a scam or have been a victim

- **Contact Report Fraud** - immediately report any suspected pension or investment scam via the official Report Fraud service at **www.reportfraud.police.uk** or by calling **0300 123 2040**.
- **Contact the FCA** - report unauthorised firms directly to the FCA by calling **0800 111 6768**.
- **Contact your provider/bank** - if you have made a payment or transferred your pension, contact your bank and pension/ investment provider immediately.
- **Report to ICO** - report unsolicited pension and investment cold calls to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at **www.ico.org.uk** or by calling **0303 123 1113**

For more information and to find out how to stay safe from scams, you can also visit **Stop! Think Fraud**, the UK Government's campaign to help people protect themselves.

If you suspect a scam, contact
Report Fraud immediately
0300 123 2040
www.reportfraud.police.uk

The TPR Pledge

The Norfolk Pension Fund is signed up to The Pension Regulator's (TPR) pledge in an effort to combat pension scams.

We self-certify that we follow the principles of the pledge to combat pension scams

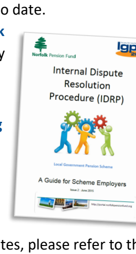
The Pledge means that we will combat pension scams by raising awareness, educating and protecting scheme members in a number of ways including:

- Regularly warning members about pension scams
- Encouraging members asking for cash drawdown to get impartial guidance from Pension Wise, a service from MoneyHelper backed by the Government
- Getting to know the warning signs of a scam and best practice for transfers
- Using resources on the **Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) ScamSmart website**
- Reporting concerns about a scam to the authorities and communicating this to the scheme member

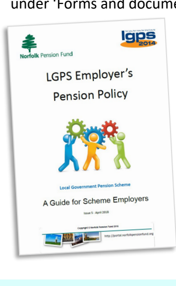
Please visit the TPR website here for more information.

Employer's Pension Policy and Internal Disputes

Just a reminder of the importance of keeping your Employer Pension Policy up to date. Your Employer Pension Policy should be sent to **graham.trussell@norfolk.gov.uk** within one month of joining the scheme and as soon as possible after making any update.



For more information, please see the **Employer Pensions Policy Guide (G060)** available on the Employers section of our website **www.norfolkpensionfund.org** under 'Forms and documents/Guides'.



The Policy usually specifies the person that your employees should contact in the first instance of any dispute.

For more information about managing Internal Disputes, please refer to the **Employer IDRP Guide (G070)** which can be found on the Employers section of our website **www.norfolkpensionfund.org** under 'Forms and documents/ Guides'.

There is also the **Scheme Member Guide to Disputes (G071)** available at **www.norfolkpensionfund.org/help/compliments-complaints-and-disputes/**

Staff transfers

Just a reminder that if you are considering options for reshaping and/or reorganising your service delivery, such as outsourcing, please let us know at the earliest stage of your planning.

What you are considering could have significant pension implications.

We can help you understand these and take account of them upfront, for example, considering what pension information you may need to include in tender documentation.

CONTACT ME

If you are considering making any changes to your service delivery, please contact **Alex Younger** at **alexander.younger@norfolk.gov.uk**

Contact details

Norfolk Pension Fund
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DH

Pensions Administration
pensions@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 495923

Investment, Accountancy and Actuarial Services
pensions.finance@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 222139

Online, Technical and i-Connect Queries
pensions.technical@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 222132

www.norfolkpensionfund.org

Norfolk Pension Fund

lgps | Local Government Pension Scheme

IN TRAN communication for all

If you would like this newsletter in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please call 01603 495923 or email pensions@norfolk.gov.uk