

Pensioner survey 2022...the results

This paper details the results of the 2022 survey issued to pensioners of the East Sussex Pension Fund. The annual survey offers pensioners the opportunity to provide direct feedback on whether the Fund is providing you with the right level of support. We use the results to analyse where we are getting things right and where we can improve.

Thank you to everyone who completed the survey. The response rate of just over 25% was excellent.



Note: We had some comments left by members asking for individual support but without any contact details. If you still need our support, please call 0300 200 1022 or email pensions@eastsussex.gov.uk.

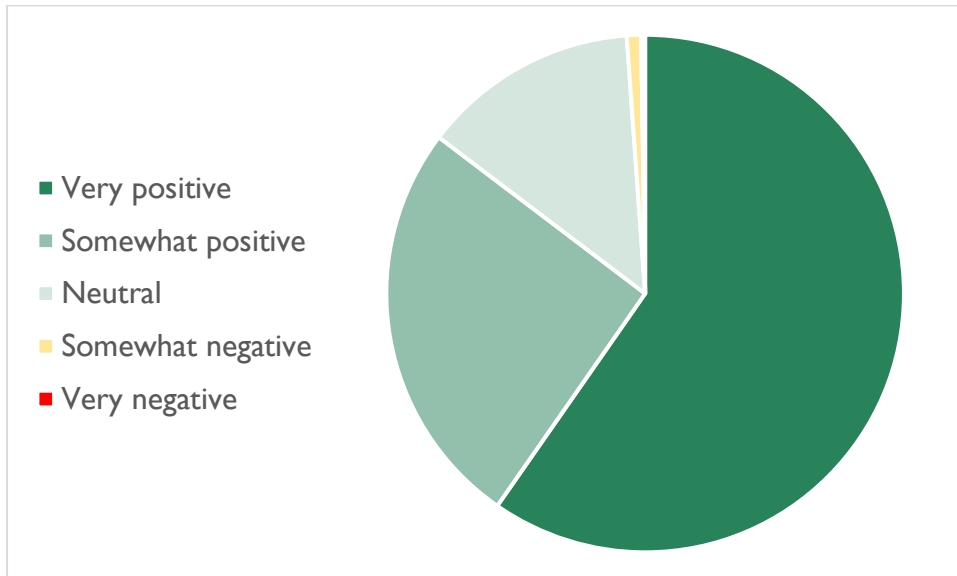
We also had queries from pensioners who are currently receiving a small pension who were asking if this could be paid as a lump sum instead. This could be possible (less a tax charge) but the circumstances where this may happen are restrictive, particularly if you have any other pension benefits. We suggest you contact us if you wish to investigate this further.

Servicing

Providing excellent administration support is crucial.

We asked how you rated the quality of the customer service provided by the Fund.

Around 60% of pensioners who responded were very positive about the support we provide. A further 25% were somewhat positive. Thank you.



Helpdesk

The Fund operates a UK based helpdesk where members can call or email for support.

Helpdesk phone number: **0300 200 1022**

Helpdesk email: **pensions@eastsussex.gov.uk**

The Helpdesk has been set challenging targets to ensure that queries from members are dealt with efficiently. If you email us, you should expect a reply within three working days. We aim to answer the phone within 20 seconds and try to answer queries at the first time of asking. We have performed very well against these targets. We conduct regular helpdesk surveys and the feedback we receive is incredibly positive. Our administration team also set service targets so that we provide the information you need within pre-defined timeframes. During 2021 the average performance across all the administration targets set was 97%.

If you need our support, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Do not forget that our website has an array of information to support those in receipt of a pension from the Fund. These pages may be of particular interest:

- 1 [Retirement](#)
- 2 [Forms and publications](#)

We are also looking to implement a chatbot to provide answers to your frequently asked questions. A chatbot is a computer program that talks to an internet user in real-time. A great advantage of this tool is that you can receive immediate answers to commonly asked questions 24-hours a day. We will let you know when this feature is live.

Contacting us

The survey highlighted that most pensioners knew how to contact us. A reminder of our contact details is shown below.

Our website has a contact us menu where you can always find [up to date contact information](#).

Call 0300 200 1022

Email pensions@eastsussex.gov.uk

Write Pension Services, East Block, Floor F, East Sussex County Council, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE



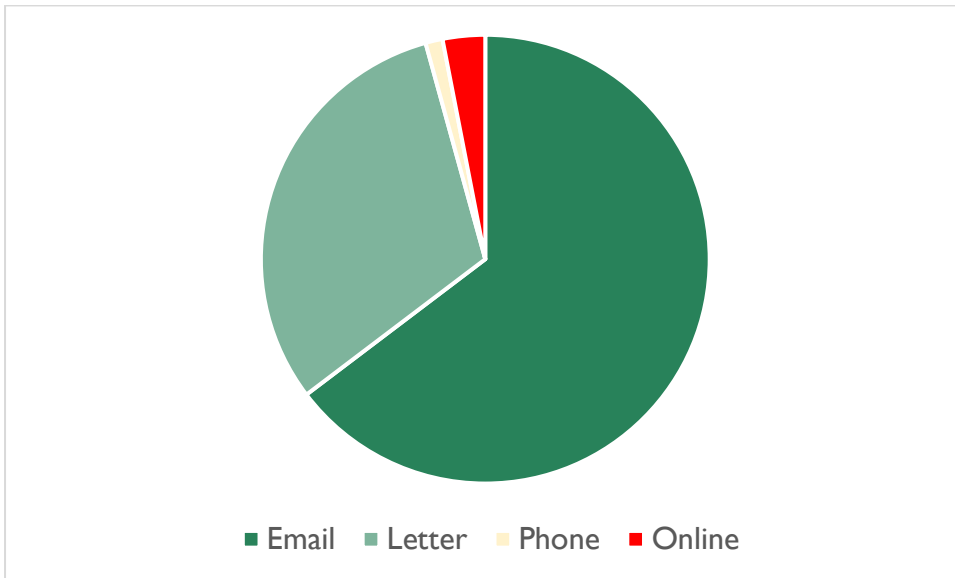
We asked for your preferred method of providing or receiving information

Almost 65% of members selected email as their preferred method of communication. Unsurprising as this method ensures immediate communication when compared to traditional post – in a more environmentally friendly way. It is also the cheapest method of delivery helping the Fund reduce costs which benefits members.

Just over 30% of members want us to send their pension information in the post. This is not an unusual request, certainly where financial products are concerned. We post most requests for information currently but are investigating:

- how to increase usage and functionality of the member self-service facility, and
- how we can use email more frequently.

We will be in touch when this work has progressed.



Whatever method you prefer it is vital that you keep us updated with your contact details.

You can do this in one of two ways:

1. By completing a [‘Change of personal details form’](#) and sending this to us either via email or post.
2. Via [‘My Pension’](#) our member self-service Portal by editing the ‘your details’ section. If you have not registered for the portal and want to do so [please follow these instructions](#).

My pension - member self-service portal

'My Pension' was introduced to Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) members to provide them with online access to their pension information.



We asked whether you have ever used 'My Pension'

Unfortunately, around 6 in 10 members had never used 'My Pension'.

In summary with 'My Pension' you can:

- **View or amend personal details** – home address, email address, phone number
- **Pension benefits** – view a summary of your pension payments
- **Nominations** – check or amend who you have nominated to receive benefits on your death
- **Benefit projectors** – Calculate what would happen to your pension when you pass away

A lot of valuable information is available at your fingertips – 24 hours a day.

All the features available are used by registered members to varying degrees. Most users are accessing the portal at least annually.

Fund action – Members are interested in enhancement of the portal to allow access to key individual documentation etc. We are committed to making the user journey and functionality as useful and seamless as possible.

This will be a major project for the Fund in 2023 where we will have to work closely with the software providers to build, test and implement changes. This will take time, but we will keep you updated with our progress.

We did receive some negative feedback about difficulties with registration, retrieving usernames or passwords. We apologise if you have encountered issues.

Fund action –

Since collating the feedback we have set up a webpage which provides details of:

1. How to register
2. How to retrieve a forgotten username
3. What to do if you have forgotten your password
4. Frequently asked questions and answer relating to 'My Pension'

Ctrl + Click on the image below to view the new page.

My Pension - member self-service



Register	New user - register for 'My Pension'	+
Forgotten user name	How to retrieve a forgotten username - 'My Pension'	+
How to reset your password	Forgotten password - My Pension Portal	+

Please call our member self-service helpline on 0300 200 1027 if you still need support after reading the instructions provided.

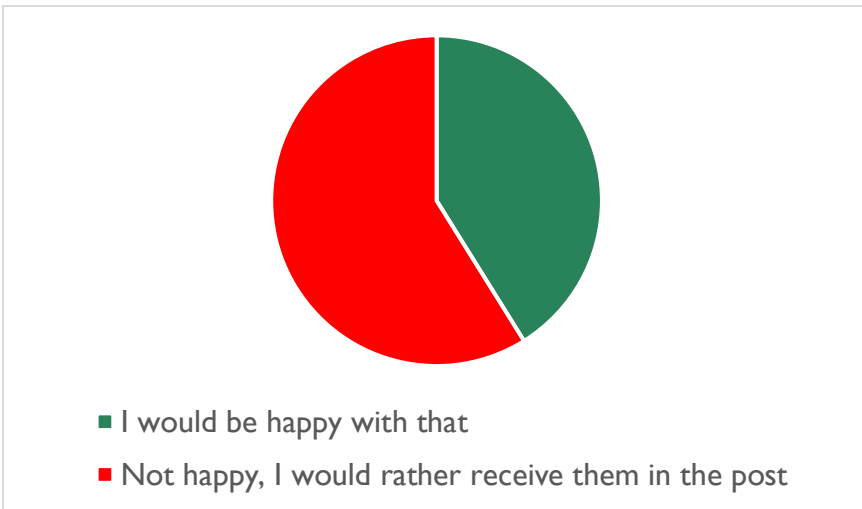
Payslips

Your payslips are important documents detailing your pension payments and tax deductions. These are only issued in March, April and May* because payment amounts do not normally change after the May payment. If you [register for the self-service portal](#), you can view your monthly pension payments.

*Please note that we do send one out if your net payments change by more than £5 per month.



We asked how you would feel if payslips and P60s were only available online



The fund issues all payslips and P60 by post currently which 60% of pensioners wish to retain. This question was posed to test pensioners appetite to moving online.

We had a few queries on taxation of pensions. There are articles on what to do if you have a tax query and tax thresholds within the [latest pensioner newsletter](#).

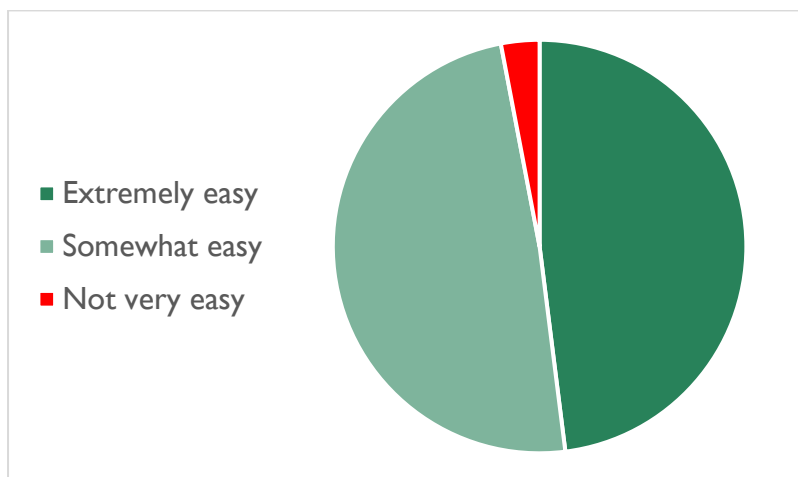
Communication

Excellent communication helps encourage members to engage more with their retirement savings. We try and work hard to ensure that what we produce content that is simple to understand using a range of different communication methods – guides, videos, email, website, letters. In 2022 we began a journey to modernise our communication content.



85% of those surveyed felt that the frequency of communication was ‘just about right’ but around 11% felt we were not communicating often enough. The Fund produces regular newsletters for pensioners of the scheme – twice a year currently. There is an appetite from around 29% of pensioners to receive newsletters more frequently, 29% want them annually and 33% are happy with twice-yearly. We feel that twice-yearly is the right frequency as we want to make sure we have enough engaging content for you.

We asked whether the correspondence you receive from us was easy to understand.



Pensions is a complicated subject, so it is good to know that nearly half of pensioners find our correspondence 'extremely easy'. If you include somewhat easy as well the percentage increase to 97%. But we know we still have work to do. As we look to refine the content we produce we anticipate that these results will improve.

Fund action

- Over the next year we will be reviewing all our administration processes - this includes letter templates, forms, and checklists.
- As documents are reviewed, we will implement a consistent design and brand to make correspondence more engaging for members.
- We will look to make more use of video content.

Many pensioners want 'back to basics' pension information provided by the Fund.

The Fund already produce support material for members of the scheme shown below:

[Brief guide to the Local Government Pension Scheme](#)

[Full guide to the Local Government Pension Scheme](#)

[Pensioner newsletter](#)

[Pension Terminology explained](#)

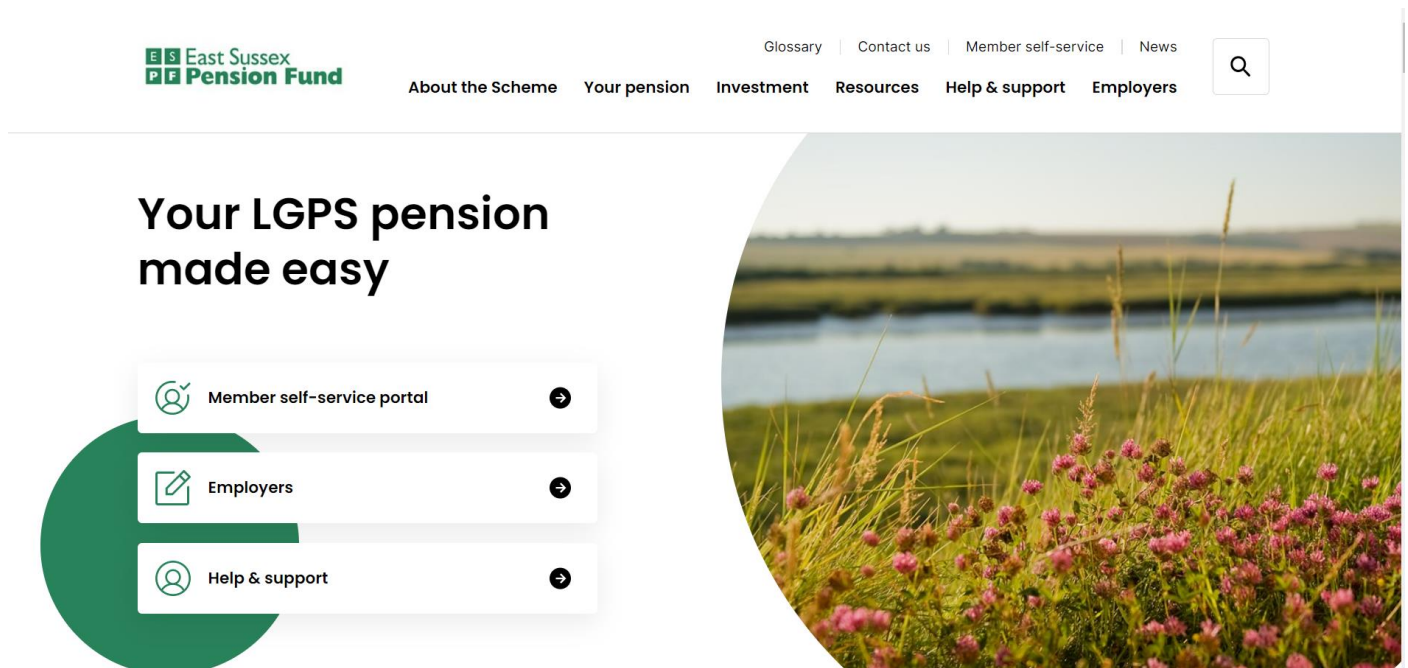
Fund action

- We will look to further refine the guides produced by the Local Government Pension Scheme to simplify content so you can find and understand the information provided.

Website

The East Sussex Pension Fund website should be the first port-of-call for pensioners of the Fund. The website holds a comprehensive range of information to support you in your retirement. It is worth familiarising yourself with the site.

It is concerning that eight in ten members have never used the website. If you press ctrl + click on the picture below it will take you to the homepage of the website.



The Fund has implemented a range of changes to the website over the last few months to try and make the journey as simplistic as possible. 96% of members who use the site cited finding and understanding information as ‘somewhat’ or ‘extremely’ easy. We will look to continuously improve the website to aid navigation.

The following website pages which will be useful for active members of the Fund:

<u>Homepage</u>	From this page you can access/register/get help with ‘My Pension’ - the member self-service portal, link to pension scam information, access the glossary and much more.
<u>Pensioners</u>	A page dedicated to pensioners of the scheme with information on pension payments, death in retirement and frequently asked questions and answers. This page will also include our latest pensioner newsletter. The newsletter is now produced digitally via the website so the most up to date information is always at your fingertips.
<u>Forms and publications</u>	Here you will find forms, guides, policies and more.
<u>Help and support</u>	Questions and answers, useful links, understanding pensions.

Fund action

- We will look at all communication touchpoints to ensure that the East Sussex Pension Fund website is being actively promoted.
- We will continue to refine and simplify content.
- We will look to build case studies with the workings on the scheme brought to life with common examples.
- We will continue to apply more engaging design principles across the site.

Members provided ideas on subjects they felt would be useful to add to the website. We will start to look at these throughout the remainder of 2022 and into next year. Thank you.

Investment

Most private sector pension plans are set up as 'defined contribution schemes' where the value of individual pension policies are directly exposed to the highs and lows of the investment markets (such as a personal pension plan). The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is different. The scheme is set up on a defined benefits basis where you are provided with a secure and guaranteed income every year when you stop working. The investment market risk falls on the employers as opposed to the individual member.



As the LGPS is set up by Statute, payment of benefits to scheme members is set out in Law. In order to provide defined benefits the East Sussex Pension Fund has to ensure that it manages investments appropriately so that member benefits can be paid now and for many years to come. Funding comes from three primary sources:

1. Employer contributions
2. Employee contributions
3. Return on investment

So generating positive investment returns is a vitally important element of the LGPS to keep contributions rates and the scheme affordable.

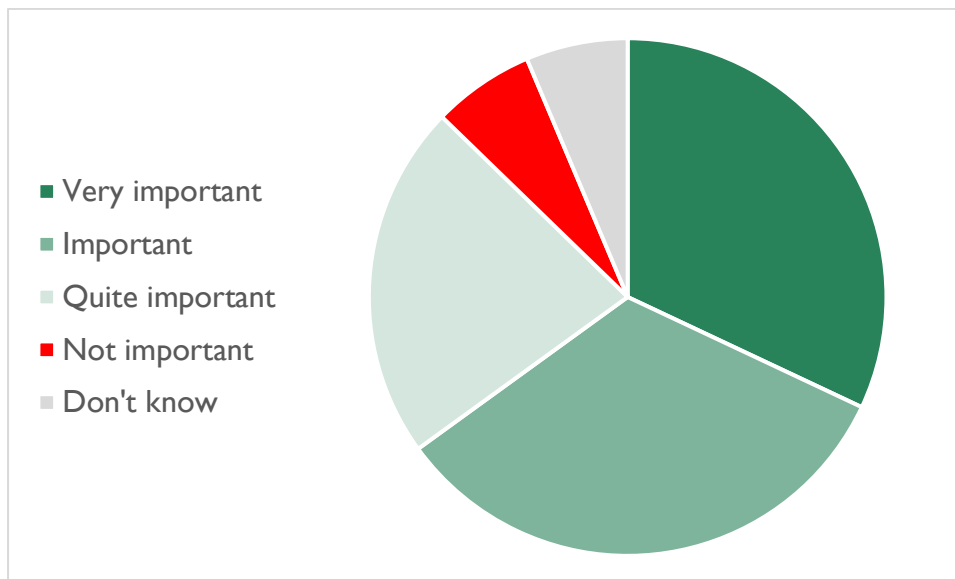
We have not previously sought feedback in surveys about investment, but we wanted to understand the interest pensioners had in our:

- Overarching investment strategy
- Sustainable and responsible investment, and
- Whether the fund should influence the behaviour of companies whose businesses create damage to the environment.

Around a third of pensioners want to understand what the fund invests in and why. 42% were only interested if the investment directly impacted their pension, with 25% not interested.

Around 30% of pensioners felt it was very important that the Fund were taking steps to mitigate investment exposure to climate risk. 31% said it was important with 21% choosing quite important.

We asked if communicating the Fund's approach to responsible investment was important



Approximately 87% of pensioners think it is important (to varying degrees) that the Fund communicates the work it is doing around responsible investment. Only a small proportion disagreed.

This was backed up by the next question which asked if the Fund should try and influence the behaviour of the individual companies it invests in to bring about better environmental and social outcomes. Overall, a resounding yes – with 87% of those who took the survey feeling it is important that we do so.

The East Sussex Pension Fund were highly commended for our Climate Change strategy reflecting the work the Fund has done to address both the challenges and the opportunities presented by climate change, sustainability, and the energy transition. This has helped us to better align the Fund's portfolio with these themes, allowing it to play a role both in providing climate solutions, as well as protecting the interests of our scheme members.

We've done a lot of recent work in helping to bring the investment side of our work to life for members via this webpage - [Investment | East Sussex Pension Fund](#).

This page includes:

- The importance of investment
- How we invest – with a link to our detailed investment strategy.
- Access Pool - the Government introduced statutory guidance which required Local Government Pension Scheme Funds to work together to “pool investments to significantly reduce costs, while maintaining investment performance”.
- Responsible investment – our approach. The Fund produces a regular report detailing our responsible investment position.
- Stewardship code - stewardship is the responsible allocation, management, and oversight of capital to create long-term value for clients and beneficiaries. The Fund produces a quarterly report which explores our engagement activity through fund managers.
- Asset allocation and performance – where we invest money and how these assets perform.

The Fund recognises that Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) issues can have a material impact on the long-term performance of its investments. ESG issues can impact the Fund's returns and reputation. Given this, the Fund is committed to an ongoing development of its Statement of Responsible Investment Principles (SRIP) to ensure it reflects latest industry developments and regulations.

[Find out more here.](#)

Fund action

- We will continue the work we have done on responsible investment and ensure that members are kept up to date with investment developments by reviewing and amending content on the dedicated [investment webpage](#)

Thank you

A final note to say thank you for completing the survey and for the comments you left about the Fund – whether positive or negative. Every bit of feedback we receive is a chance for the Fund to revisit how we support members and investigate alternative ways of doing things. Your feedback really does matter.

Contact us

Individual contact details for East Sussex Pension Fund below:

Phone: 0300 200 1022

Email: Pensions@eastsussex.gov.uk

Write: Pension Services, East Sussex County Council, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE