Employer newsletter – September 2026

East Sussex Pension Fund are excited to bring you our latest newsletter. The newsletter allows us to share important news and insights, so you stay informed and supported.

We hope you find the content helpful and engaging. If you have any feedback on the newsletter or have any ideas for future articles, then please let us know by emailing:

employer.engagement@eastsussex.gov.uk

LGPS 31 form – change to certification

The LGPS 31 form is completed monthly by employers to confirm that contributions have been deducted and payments made to the Scheme in line with requirements. Within the form is a certification section.

Previously it was a requirement that the S151 Officer or designated S151 Officer completed this section.

This is no longer the case, and employers are now being asked to name a ‘Lead Employer Representative’ or ‘Person with delegated authority’.

Certification - To be completed by the employer’s Lead Employer Representative or person with delegated authority.

I certify that the deductions that have been made from employees’ salaries and that the employees’ and employer’s pension contributions paid to the East Sussex Pension Fund, are in all material respects accurate and in accordance with the rates and terms of the East Sussex Pension Fund as notified.

Certified Correct	
Date	
Print Name	
Position	

[LGPS 31 Form]

[Guide to completing the LGPS 31 form]

Authorised signatory form

We have also made some changes to our [authorised signatory form] to reflect current information requirements.

Completion of this form is mandatory for employers as it provides the Fund with details of key individuals within each employer who we can contact.

We will be contacting all employers in September 26 to refresh what we have on file.

ESPA – East Sussex Pensions Assistant

We have recently launched ESPA (East Sussex Pensions Assistant) on our most popular website pages. ESPA is designed to help members find general information on the LGPS. ESPA has resolved over 500 queries (with around 1 in 5 out of office hours).

Explore more about ESPA

Follow us on LinkedIn

East Sussex Pension Fund are delighted to have recently joined the LinkedIn community.

This will be a space where we share updates, insights and stories from the East Sussex Pension Fund. This will include employer and member information, investment and governance updates, and of course highlights and personal stories from the people and partnerships that help make what we do possible.

If you want to stay up to date with the latest news, insights and developments from East Sussex Pension Fund, we'd be delighted to have you as a follower.

👉 **Follow us here... East Sussex Pension Fund LinkedIn**

Our 2026 Employer Forum – save the date

As a Fund, we are committed to supporting our employers to ensure they have the knowledge and training to carry out their responsibilities in administering their members pensions. That's why we run an Employer Forum annually - this year's is via Microsoft Teams. Please save the time and date.

The date: **19 November 2026**
Timing: **10 am until 1 pm (to be confirmed)**

If you have any subject(s), you would like us to cover in the next forum or have any questions, please email: employer.engagement@eastsussex.gov.uk.

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i-Connect…multi-factor authentication (MFA)

In September, we will be strengthening the security of Altair systems by introducing Multi-Factor Authentication for employers who use i-Connect.

MFA is an electronic authentication method in which a user is granted access to a website or application only after successfully presenting two or more pieces of evidence (or factors) to an authentication mechanism.

MFA protects personal data, which may include personal identification or financial assets, from being accessed by an unauthorised third party that may have been able to discover, for example, a single password.

What does this mean for i-Connect Users?

Once a correct username and password are submitted into i-Connect, the user will also be prompted to enter an additional piece of information. Initially, this will take the form of a One-Time Passcode (OTP) (a six-digit code that is valid for a brief period). The user will need to enter the code into i-Connect before they can access the system.

i-Connect contact review

In addition, in October we will embark on a new annual process where we ask employers to confirm their primary iConnect user, as well as any other users who need iConnect access. This is an audit (best practice) requirement. The employer's primary i-Connect user is responsible for maintaining an accurate and up-to-date list of i-Connect users.

Low Earners' Pension Payment: A positive step towards pension fairness

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is contacting around one million people to determine eligibility for the **Low Earners' Pension Payment**. The aim of the payment is to address a long-standing inequality in workplace pensions for employees whose pay is below the income tax threshold of £12,570.

LGPS pension contributions benefit from tax relief because they are deducted from gross pay. However, lower-paid employees have missed out on this benefit in the past, as they do not pay income tax.

The Low Earners' Pension Payment ensures that eligible individuals receive a financial benefit equivalent to pension tax relief, even if they are not taxpayers.

This development aims to improve fairness within the pensions system, support lower earners in building retirement savings, and deliver a positive outcome without adding administrative burden for employers.

In fact, **employers do not need to take any action**. HMRC will provide eligible employees with instructions on how to accept any payment due via post or through their Personal Tax Account. For more information visit: HMRC pension payments for lower earners: LGPS

Local Government pay agreement

We have recently received confirmation that the pay award of 3.3% for this year for single status roles has been agreed (Local Managerial Grades still to be agreed). New salaries and arrears in pay, backdated to 1 April 2026, will be actioned in forthcoming payrolls.

Important…If you provide the Fund with revised salary details for leavers post 1 April 2026 please ensure this is done via a separate spreadsheet and not via i-Connect. This is to avoid us setting up inappropriate duplicate records.

Pensions and absences

As you may be aware some changes around 'absences' related to LGPS Access and Fairness consultation have gone live from April 2026.

To support employers the Fund have provided several new employer toolkit articles:

Subject	Summary	Link to file
Authorised unpaid leave - Under 15 days from 1 April 2026	Understand what to do when an employee takes authorised unpaid leave	Access file here
Authorised unpaid leave - Over 14 days from 1 April 2026	Understand what to do when an employee takes authorised unpaid leave	Access file here
Child related leave from 1 April 2026	Understand what to do when an employee takes child related leave	Access file here
Paternity leave from 1 April 2026	Understand what to do when an employee takes paternity leave	Access file here

In addition, we have produced a table that compares pre and post April 2016 procedures for absences.

Absence - pre and post 2026

‘My Pension’ – member self-service website

In July 2024 we relaunched our self-service website called ‘My Pension’ which provides members with online access to their Local Government Pension Scheme account(s).

New for 2026 – online video annual benefit statements

This year’s Annual Benefit Statements on ‘My Pension’ include a personalised five-minute video designed to help our members cut through complexity to better understand their benefits. We’ve had great feedback.

- *‘I find pension talk confusing, but the video really helped with this.’*
- *‘I love the video with all my details very helpful thank you.’*
- *‘This video is amazing and explained well in in a brief video.’*

This feedback really spoke to us, and it’s exactly why we introduced personalised videos. We know people struggle to fully understand their pension. In fact, research by the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) estimates 22.5 million UK adults do not understand enough about pensions to make decisions about retirement.

We have previously asked for your support in helping promote the new website. And we would like to ask again. For contributing members, approximately 55% have registered.

Register for ‘My Pension’ now

Increased registration ensures members have access to tools that empower them to manage their pensions effectively, reducing queries and administrative workloads for both employers and the Fund.

Going forwards our ESPF roadmap is geared towards making greater use of self service and online workflow and processes.

For registration guidance and FAQS, visit our ‘My Pension’ support page.

Our communications team can help if you need articles/wording. Email:

espf.comms@eastsussex.gov.uk.

Training

The Fund runs training sessions to support contributing and potential members. In October 2026, we will run the following courses (2 sessions per topic).

Name of course	What does the course cover?
Introduction to the Local Government Pension Scheme	Whether you are new to the Scheme or been a member for a while, this session covers the benefits of being in the LGPS.
Your Pension MOT	A course designed to help you keep up to date and engaged with your pension, with handy tips thrown in.
Preparing for retirement	This course will help if you are thinking ahead to retirement and want to know more about the process, how your benefits are calculated and answers to key retirement questions.

Find out more - https://www.eastsussexpensionfund.org/your-pension/paying-in/free-pension-training/

Please share this link with your employees, so that they can book onto future courses. If any employers would prefer face-to-face training for their members, then please email employer.engagement@eastsussex.gov.uk with your request.

Employer role training

The Local Government Association have recently launched dates for their employer role training courses – see links below.

- Employer Role training – Online 24 September 2026
- Employer Role training – Online 27 October 2026
- Employer Role training – Online 26 November 2026

For any further enquiries, please email training.lgps@local.gov.uk.

Further support for employers

The Fund offers a range of support material for employers. Here's a reminder…

Appointing a payroll provider - Find out about responsibilities you can delegate and what you need to tell us when appointing a payroll provider.

Employer Fact Card 26/27 Scheme year - A handy document with reminders of all things important to employers of the LGPS.

Redundancy fact sheet (for members) - A handy fact sheet for any members facing redundancy detailing the implications on their pension.

Employer Toolkit - It can be daunting as an employer in the LGPS. That is why the Fund provides an Employer Toolkit.

HR guide - This guide sets out the requirements for HR departments of LGPS employers.

Payroll guide - This guide sets out the requirements for payrolls in respect of the LGPS.

Ill health retirement guide - This guide helps employers understand how ill health retirement works in the LGPS. It also details your role in supporting members through the process.

Forms – we have standard and editable forms available for both employers and members.

Information key to employers can be found on a **dedicated page on our website**.

A couple of reminders

1. The annual allowance (£60,000) is the amount pension savings can increase by in a year without the member having to pay extra tax. If savings increase by more than the annual allowance, tax may need to be paid. We are writing to employers where members are potentially impacted to collect salary details, please respond as soon as possible.
2. If you are one of the eight employers impacted by councillors now being able to join the LGPS, we will be contacting you over the next few weeks to discuss how i-Connect information should be provided for them. This may be through a separate payroll file or by linking the councillor payroll data to your main payroll submission using an MPP i-Connect file.
3. Work on the McCloud Remedy is now complete for all active, deferred and pensioner members.
4. The SCAPE discount rate for public service pensions changed on 19 May 2026 from CPI plus 1.7% to CPI plus 2%. These actuarial factors used to calculate specific member benefits are derived using the SCAPE discount rate. So, calculations such as early and late retirements (pensions are likely to be lower) and transfer values will be affected.

If you have any questions, please contact employer.engagement@eastsussex.gov.uk