



## Local Government Pension Scheme

# YOUR PENSION newsletter

## SPRING 2011

### Welcome to your pension scheme newsletter.

This update provides information about pensions, some of which is relevant for active (currently contributing) members, and some of which will be of interest to all members including those with a deferred benefit or currently in receipt of a pension.



### Pensions on the web

The London Borough of Havering and London Borough of Redbridge pensions sections are pleased to announce that we now have a website for our pension scheme members.



The Your Pension website can be accessed at:  
**[www.yourpension.org.uk/handr](http://www.yourpension.org.uk/handr)**

The website gives a general overview of your pension scheme, along with specific information relating to each authority. You will also find copies of the most recent employees guide to the scheme as well as copies of previous newsletters that have been sent out.

The website has four tabs along the top of the screen. The "**Home**" tab gives an introduction to the website and how to navigate around the site. From the list of sub menus on the left hand side of the screen, you will find documents that have been issued by both boroughs.

We have also put together a set of fact sheets with further guidance on the scheme, and more will be added in due course. There are also "useful links" to **Directgov**, which gives information on state benefits which you may find useful.

"**The Scheme**" tab along the top of the screen contains general information for all scheme members. Location-specific information is contained in the **Havering** and **Redbridge** tabs, and within these areas you will find documents and forms relevant to your local authority. More information will be added as the website is further developed, and we will ensure it is updated regularly.

We also welcome your feedback. If you have any ideas or suggestions on information that could be included on the website, please email your relevant pension section at [pensions@havering.gov.uk](mailto:pensions@havering.gov.uk) or [pensions\(lgps\)admin@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:pensions(lgps)admin@redbridge.gov.uk).



## Pensions on the move

**The Havering pension section has moved.** Last August Havering's pension section moved to the top floor of Romford Central Library. The team are happy to deal with any queries you may have and you can contact them by telephone, email or in writing.

Havering Council's pension section will join **Internal Shared Services**, from 4 April 2011. From this date a new **Resolution Service Desk** will be handling telephone enquiries, with the exception of complex queries. Detailed enquiries will be passed to the pension section. This will allow the pensions section to focus its time more efficiently in the delivery of its service, by freeing up time currently spent in areas requiring less expertise.

The phone number of the Resolution Service Desk is **01708 433333**. All letters sent from the pensions section will still include relevant direct dial numbers, so that you can continue to speak directly with them when necessary.



## Important Information For members currently contributing to the scheme

### Amalgamation of previous periods of LGPS membership

The regulations have been changed to increase the choices open to members who leave the pensions scheme and later re-join following their re-employment in Local Government. You are now permitted to aggregate **any** of your previous periods of membership, not just the immediately preceding period, provided you elect to do so within the first 12 months of your new period of membership.

Also, if you have previously decided **not** to transfer a period of LGPS membership, you now have an opportunity to transfer these periods by applying to your pensions section before 1 October 2011.

If you are interested in this, please write to or email, the pension section for a form.

Alternatively, you can print off a copy from the website **[www.yourpension.org.uk/handr](http://www.yourpension.org.uk/handr)** "Aggregation of Membership" form which you need to complete and return to the pensions section.

## Co-habitees nomination forms

One of the changes to benefits included in the new scheme in 2008 was the introduction of pensions for surviving co-habitees. You are now able to nominate your partner, provided certain criteria are met, to receive a pension should they survive you.

If you have an eligible partner, it is vital that you complete a nomination form, as these partners pensions can **only** be paid out where a completed form is held by the pension section.

For information on the criteria and for a copy of the form itself, please visit the pension website **[www.yourpension.org.uk/handr](http://www.yourpension.org.uk/handr)**, or email your pension section.

Contact details are also given on the website.

You cannot nominate a co-habitee if you had already left the scheme as an active (contributing) member before 1 April 2008, and you do not need to complete this form if you are married or have a civil partner.



## Changes to civil partners survivors pension

There have also been changes to the membership used when calculating a civil partner's pension. Originally, pensions for surviving civil partners were only based on membership from 6 April 1988. Therefore any membership prior to that date was not included in the calculation of the pension that became payable on your death.

The regulations have now changed to ensure civil Partners pensions are on a level footing with spouses pensions, and will therefore be based on the whole of your membership.

A fact sheet on these changes called "Changes to Dependents Benefits" giving more information can be found on the pension website [www.yourpension.org.uk/handr](http://www.yourpension.org.uk/handr)



## Expression of wish forms and why they are a good idea . . .

The pension scheme regulations allow you to indicate who you would like to benefit from any death grant that may become payable, by completing an Expression of Wish form.

By completing the form, the payment of any death grant can be made as promptly as possible. Please note that the recipient of any payment is at the Council's discretion, however where an expression of wish form is in place, the Council will be able to take your wishes into account when making payment.

*Please note there would be no ongoing death grants payable where the pension being paid is a dependents pension.*

For a copy of the form itself, please visit the Your Pension website [www.yourpension.org.uk/handr](http://www.yourpension.org.uk/handr) or email the pension section. Contact details are also given on the website.



## Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) Pension Taxation changes for high earners

Most of you will be aware from recent news reports that new HMRC regulations were introduced from 6 April 2011 in relation to the amount of pension that you may build up, which benefits from tax relief. This is referred to as the **Annual Allowance**.

This change mainly affects those scheme members whose pensionable earnings are in excess of £100,000. A leaflet has now been produced and circulated to those people. Changes around the Annual Allowance may also affect members' growth if your pay is lower than £100,000 but you receive a promotion or above average pay rise.

If you feel that you may be affected, you can obtain a leaflet from the pension section.

A copy of the newsletter produced in 2006 which included information on HMRC regulations is amongst those held on the Your Pension website [www.yourpension.org.uk/handr](http://www.yourpension.org.uk/handr)



## Flexible retirement

It may be possible to receive payment of your pension benefits whilst remaining in employment with your current employer. However, there are certain criteria that must be met first:

- You must be aged at least 55
- Your employer must agree to a reduction in your working hours or grade
- Your employer must consent to payment of your pension benefits

You can rejoin the scheme in the continuing employment and receive a second smaller pension when you retire.

Further information on flexible retirement, including factsheets and a guide to both London Borough of Havering and London Borough of Redbridge procedures and policies for considering such cases is available from [www.yourpension.org/handr](http://www.yourpension.org/handr)

In all other cases you can contact your employer for details of their policy.

## Actuarial reductions

It is worth remembering payment of your pension benefits before age 65, with the exception of redundancy and ill health but including flexible retirement, may result in a permanent reduction to the value of your pension and your lump sum:

Nº. of years paid early	Pensions reduction Men	Pensions reduction Women	Lump Sum reduction
0	0%	0%	0%
1	6%	5%	2%
2	11%	10%	5%
3	16%	15%	7%
4	20%	19%	9%
5	24%	23%	12%

If a reduction is applicable it will be applied to the value of your benefits before any conversion of a pension to lump sum.

**We hope you have found this newsletter informative. If you have any queries or feedback about this newsletter, please contact your Pension section:  
Email: [pensions@haverling.gov.uk](mailto:pensions@haverling.gov.uk) or [pensions\(lgps\)admin@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:pensions(lgps)admin@redbridge.gov.uk)**