



# **Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures**

**Kingston Council Pension Fund**

**August 2023**

# Introduction

Scheme members expect their pension scheme to be managed effectively. Where a person with an interest in the scheme is not satisfied with any matter relating to the scheme (for example a decision which affects them), they have the right to ask for that matter to be reviewed.

This two-stage internal dispute resolution procedure applies when a person with an interest in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) isn't satisfied with any matter relating to the Kingston Pension Fund.

A person has an interest in the scheme if they:

- are a member or beneficiary of the scheme
- are a prospective member of the scheme
- have ceased to be a member, beneficiary or prospective member
- claim to be in one of the categories above and the dispute relates to whether they are such a person

These internal dispute resolution arrangements will not apply to certain disputes, eg where a court or tribunal has started proceedings relating to the dispute or the Pensions Ombudsman Service is investigating the dispute.

These procedures will set out:

- how to apply for a dispute to be resolved
- how decisions will be reached
- how applicants will be notified of the decision
- information about the Pensions Ombudsman and The Money and Pensions Service

# Procedures

## **How to apply for a dispute to be resolved**

If a person with an interest wishes to raise a dispute, they can first attempt to reach a suitable informal solution by contacting the service at [skpensions@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:skpensions@sutton.gov.uk) or by calling 020 8770 5290 (Monday to Friday, 1pm to 5pm).

If that does not provide a suitable solution or if the person wishes to use the formal procedures, they can submit an application using the following online form:

[Internal Dispute Resolution Application Form](#)

You must apply for a dispute to be resolved within a period of six months beginning immediately after the disputed matter was communicated to the applicant, or the applicant ceased to be, or claims they ceased to be, a person with an interest in the scheme.

## **How decisions will be reached**

Decisions at stages one and two will be made by suitable officers according to the administering authority discretions policy that can be found at <https://www.kingston.gov.uk/finance-budgets/pensions>.

If a decision at either stage is made contrary to the original decision, the administering authority or the relevant scheme employer will be required to proceed on that basis. However, if the decision concerns the exercise of a scheme employer's discretion, they are only required to reconsider their decision.

## **How applicants will be notified of the decision**

Decisions at both stages of these procedures will generally be made within two months of receiving the application. However, there may be cases where it will be possible to process an application sooner and the decision will not be delayed unnecessarily. In rare cases, due to the complexities of the matter, a decision may take longer. If that is the case, a reasonable deadline will be determined and communicated to the applicant.

Applicants will be notified of decisions according to these procedures by email unless they have indicated that they require notice by letter or other means.

## **Information about the Pensions Ombudsman and The Money and Pensions Service**

The Money and Pensions Service is available to assist members and beneficiaries of the LGPS and can be contacted at [contact.pensionwise@moneyhelper.org.uk](mailto:contact.pensionwise@moneyhelper.org.uk) or by calling 0800 011 3797 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). For more information go to <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/pensions-and-retirement>.

The Pensions Ombudsman is available to investigate and determine complaints or disputes of fact or law relating to the LGPS and can be contacted at

[enquiries@pensions-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@pensions-ombudsman.org.uk) or by calling 0800 917 4487 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm). For more information go to <https://www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk/>.