

London Borough of Hackney

Pension Fund



Training Policy

 **Hackney**

TRAINING POLICY

Introduction

This is the Training Policy of the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which is managed and administered by Hackney Council. The Policy details the training strategy for members of the Pensions Committee and Pension Board, and senior officers responsible for the management of the Fund.

The Training Policy is established to aid Pensions Committee and Pension Board members and senior officers in performing and developing personally in their individual roles, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund is managed by individuals who have the appropriate levels of knowledge and skills.

Hackney Council has delegated responsibility for the implementation of this Training Policy to the Group Director, Finance and Corporate Resources.

Aims and Objectives

Hackney Council recognises the significance of its role as Administering Authority to the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund on behalf of its stakeholders which include:

- around 23,000 current and former members of the Fund, and their dependants
- over 30 employers within the Hackney Council area or with close links to Hackney Council
- the local taxpayers within the London Borough of Hackney.

In relation to the governance of the Fund, our objectives are to ensure that:

- all staff and Pensions Committee members charged with the financial administration and decision-making with regard to the Fund are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to discharge the duties and responsibilities allocated to them
- the Fund is aware that good governance means an organisation is open in its dealings and readily provides information to interested parties
- all relevant legislation is understood and complied with
- the Fund aims to be at the forefront of best practice for LGPS funds
- the Fund manages Conflicts of Interest appropriately
- the Fund's relationship with its chosen asset pool, the London CIV, is well understood, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both the Fund and the pool.

This Policy has been put in place to assist the Fund in achieving these objectives and all Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers to whom this Policy applies are expected to continually demonstrate their own personal commitment to training and to ensuring that these objectives are met.

To assist in achieving these objectives, the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund will aim to comply with:

- the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Frameworks and
- the knowledge and skills elements of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and
- The Pensions Regulator's (TPR) Code of Practice for Public Service Schemes

as well as any other LGPS specific guidance relating to the knowledge and skills of Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members or pension fund officers which may be issued from time to time.

To whom this Policy Applies

This Training Policy applies to all members of the Pensions Committee and the local Pension Board, including scheme member and employer representatives. It also applies to all managers in the Hackney Council Pension Fund Management Team and the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) (from here on in collectively referred to as the senior officers of the Fund).

Less senior officers involved in the daily management of the Pension Fund will also be required to have appropriate knowledge and skills relating to their roles, which will be determined and managed by the Pension Fund Manager and his/her team.

Personnel of the third party administrator that provides the day to day administration of the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund are also expected to be able to meet the objectives of this Policy, as are all other advisers to the Fund.

Officers of employers participating in the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund who are responsible for pension matters are also encouraged to maintain a high level of knowledge and understanding in relation to LGPS matters, and Hackney Council will provide appropriate training for them. This is considered separately in the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund Administration Strategy.

CIPFA and TPR Knowledge and Skills Requirements

CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework and Code of Practice

In January 2010 CIPFA launched technical guidance for Representatives on Pensions Committees and non-executives in the public sector within a knowledge and skills framework. The Framework details the knowledge and skills required by those responsible for pension scheme financial management and decision making.

In July 2015 CIPFA launched technical guidance for Local Pension Board members by extending the existing knowledge and skills frameworks in place. This Framework details the knowledge and skills required by Pension Board members to enable them to properly exercise their functions under Section 248a of the Pensions Act 2004, as amended by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

The Framework covers eight areas of knowledge and skills identified as the core requirements (which includes all those covered in the existing Committee and non-executive's framework):

- Pensions legislation
- Public sector pensions governance
- Pension accounting and auditing standards
- Pensions administration
- Financial services procurement and relationship management
- Investment performance and risk management
- Financial markets and products knowledge
- Actuarial methods, standards and practice

In October 2016, Aon Hewitt published its 'Investment Pooling Governance Principles' guidance on behalf of the CIPFA Pensions Panel. This guidance updates the previous Knowledge and Skills framework to include additional competencies relating to asset pooling, ensuring that each area within the core requirements includes a section considering the structure and governance of the asset pools and their relationship to their constituent funds.

CIPFA's Code of Practice recommends (amongst other things) that Local Government Pension Scheme administering authorities -

- formally adopt the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Frameworks (or an alternative training programme)
- ensure that the appropriate policies and procedures are put in place to meet the requirements of the Frameworks (or an alternative training programme);
- publicly report how these arrangements have been put into practice each year.

The Pensions Act 2004, and The Pension Regulator's Code of Practice

Section 248a of the Pensions Act 2004, as amended by The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 (PSPA13) requires Pension Board members to:

- be conversant with the rules of the scheme and any document recording policy about the administration of the scheme, and
- have knowledge and understanding of the law relating to pensions and any other matters which are prescribed in regulations.

The degree of knowledge and understanding required is that appropriate for the purposes of enabling the individual to properly exercise the functions of a member of the Pension Board.

These requirements are incorporated and expanded on within the TPR Code of Practice which came into force on 1 April 2015.

Scheme Advisory Board Guidance

Further guidance for Local Pension Boards was also issued by the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) in February 2015, this sets out in more detail how the requirements of the regulations should be implemented by administering authorities. The Guidance specifies that boards should set out a policy and framework to address the knowledge and understanding requirements that apply to its members. It is permissible for this policy to cover both the Pensions Committee and Pension Board, as is the case here.

Application to the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund

Hackney Council recognises that effective financial administration, scheme governance and decision-making can only be achieved where those involved have the requisite knowledge and skills. Accordingly it fully supports the use of the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Frameworks, and TPR's Code of Practice. Hackney Council adopts the principles contained in these publications in relation to the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund and its relationship to the London Collective Investment Vehicle, and this Training Policy highlights how the Council will strive to achieve those principles through use of a rolling Training Plan together with regular monitoring and reporting.

The London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund Training Plan

Hackney Council recognises that attaining, and then maintaining, relevant knowledge and skills is a continual process for Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers, and that training is a key element of this process. Hackney Council will develop a rolling Training Plan based on the following key elements:

Individual Training Needs

A training needs analysis will be developed for the main roles of Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers customised appropriately to the key areas in which they should be proficient. Training will be required in relation to each of these areas as part of any induction and on an ongoing refresher basis.

Hot Topic Training

The Training Plan will be developed to ensure appropriately timed training is provided in relation to hot topic areas, such as a high risk area or a specific area where decisions need to be made. This training may be targeted at specific roles.

General Awareness

Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers are expected to maintain a reasonable knowledge of ongoing developments and current issues, which will allow them to have a good level of general awareness of pension related matters appropriate for their roles and which may not be specific to the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund.

Each of these training requirements will be focussed on the role of the individual i.e. a Pensions Committee member, a Pension Board member or the specific role of the officer.

The Pensions Committee agrees a training plan on an annual basis at the first meeting of the Municipal Year. The training plan is developed taking into consideration the needs of the Committee, the Board and officers to both enhance existing knowledge and skills and to develop new areas of understanding. This ensures that training is accessible to all Committee and Board members and key officers involved in the management of the Pension Fund.

Training will be delivered through a variety of methods including:

- In-house training days provided by officers and/or external providers
- Training as part of meetings (e.g. Pensions Committee) provided by officers and/or external advisers
- External training events
- Circulation of reading material
- Attendance at seminars and conferences offered by industry-wide bodies

- Attendance at meetings and events with the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund's investment managers and advisors
- Links to on-line training
- Access to the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund website where useful London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund specific material is available

In addition London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund officers and advisers are available to answer any queries on an ongoing basis including providing access to materials from previous training events.

Initial Information and Induction Process

On joining the Pensions Committee, the Pension Board or the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund Management Team, a new member or officer will be provided with the following documentation to assist in providing them with a basic understanding of London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund:

- The members' guide to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
- The latest Actuarial Valuation report
- The Annual Report and Accounts, which incorporate:
 - The Funding Strategy Statement
 - The Governance Policy and Compliance Statement
 - The Investment Strategy Statement
 - The Communications Policy
 - The Administration Strategy
- The administering authority's Discretionary Policies
- This Training Policy

In addition, an individual training plan will be developed to assist each Pensions Committee member, Pension Board member or officer to achieve, within six months, their identified individual training requirements.

Monitoring Knowledge and Skills

In order to identify whether Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers are meeting the objectives of this policy we will:

- 1) Compare and report on attendance at training based on the following:
 - Individual Training Needs – ensuring refresher training on the key elements takes place for each individual at least once every three years.
 - Hot Topic Training – attendance by at least 80% of the required Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers at planned hot topic training sessions. This target may be focussed at a

- particular group of Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members or senior officers depending on the subject matter.
- General Awareness – each Pensions Committee member, Pension Board member or officer attending at least one day each year of general awareness training or events.
 - Induction training – ensuring areas of identified individual training are completed within six months.

2) Consider whether the objectives have been met as part of the annual self-assessment carried out each year which is completed by all Pensions Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers.

Key Risks

The key risks to the delivery of this Policy are outlined below:

- Changes in Pensions Committee and/or Pension Board membership and/or senior officers potentially diminishing knowledge and understanding.
- Poor attendance and/or a lack of engagement at training and/or formal meetings by Pensions Committee Members, Pension Board Members and/or other senior officers resulting in a poor standard of decision making and/or monitoring.
- Insufficient resources being available to deliver or arrange the required training.
- The quality of advice or training provided not being to an acceptable standard.

The Pensions Committee members, with the assistance of London Borough of Hackney senior officers and Pension Board members, will monitor these and other key risks and consider how to respond to them.

Reporting

A report will be presented to the Pensions Committee on an annual basis setting out:

- The training provided / attended in the previous year at an individual level
- Attendance at Pensions Committee and Pension Board meetings
- The results of the measurements identified above.

This information will also be included in the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund's Annual Report and Accounts.

At each Pensions Committee meeting, members will be provided with details of forthcoming seminars, conferences and other relevant training events as well as a summary of the events attended since the previous meeting.

Costs

All training costs related to this Training Policy are met directly by the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund.

Approval, Review and Consultation

This Training Policy was originally approved at the London Borough of Hackney Pensions Committee meeting on 14 January 2015 and amendments to incorporate the requirements of the CIPFA Local Pension Boards Framework were approved on 23 March 2016. Further amendments to incorporate additional CIPFA guidance on investment pooling were approved on 11 September 2017. This Training Policy was also formally adopted by the London Borough of Hackney Pension Board at its first meeting, with updated policies approved where required. It is formally reviewed and updated at least every year or sooner if the training arrangements or other matters included within it merit reconsideration.

Further Information

If you require further information about anything in or related to this Training Policy, please contact:

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Further information on the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund can be found as shown below:

Telephone: 020 8356 2745
Email: pensions@hackney.gov.uk (Governance)
hackney.pensions@equiniti.com (Administration)
Pension Fund Website: <http://hackney.xpmemberservices.com>
Hackney Council Website: www.hackney.gov.uk (Minutes, Agendas, etc)