

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS)

Dispute Procedure: A Guide for Members

These notes explain what to do if you have a complaint about the way you've been treated in the Local Government Pension Scheme. This doesn't often happen, but there's a laid-down legal procedure ready for when it does.

Before Raising an Official Dispute

If you disagree with any decision about your membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme, please first of all contact the London Borough of Hackney's pension scheme administrators at the following address:-

London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund
Equiniti Pension Solutions
Russell Way
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 1UH

Most problems are easily sorted out in this way but if you're still unhappy, you're entitled to put your complaint through the official dispute procedure.

The Dispute Procedure

The dispute procedure is in 3 stages.

You must complete each stage before moving on to the next.

First Stage: Specified Person

This involves having your case looked at by a Specified Person. This is the legal name for a local 'referee' appointed by the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund (depending on which of these your complaint is against) to consider disputes: but it will be someone who's had no previous involvement in your case.

You will need to make a written appeal to:-

London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund
Equiniti Pension Solutions
Russell Way
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 1UH

Please make sure that you include full details of your complaint and what you think is wrong. You should also enclose any supporting documentation.

You should provide this information within 6 months of the event or decision you're complaining about. The Specified Person may extend this time limit if they think it reasonable to do so.

If the Specified Person feels your complaint is justified, they will issue a new decision, which will be binding on the scheme administrators. However, they can only overturn the original decision if they think it was legally wrong.

The Specified Person will normally make a decision within 2 months of receiving the complaint.

Second Stage: Administering Authority

If you're not happy with the Specified Person's decision at Stage 1, the second stage is to make a written appeal to the administering authority, the London Borough of Hackney.

The address to write to is:

The Group Director, Finance & Corporate Resources,
London Borough of Hackney
Hackney Town Hall
Mare Street
London
E8 1EA

This must be done within 6 months of the date of the Specified Person's decision.

As before, the administering authority can only correct legal errors. A decision will be made within 2 months; and once again, it would be binding.

Third Stage: Pensions Ombudsman

If you're still unhappy, the third stage is to refer your case to the Pensions Ombudsman, whose address is:

Pensions Ombudsman
11 Belgrave Road
LONDON
SW1V 1RB.

Telephone: 020 7630 2200

E-mail: enquiries@pensions-ombudsman.org.uk

You'll need to ask for their complaint form; or you could complete it online or download it from their website at: www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk

The Ombudsman is less restricted in his powers and can consider wider issues than the strictly legal ones, such as whether your case has been handled fairly or reasonably.

Even so, you must go through the first two stages before he could consider your case.

Help: The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS)

If you need help during any of these stages, an organisation called The Pensions Advisory Service is there to give you a hand. TPAS is a free and independent advice service specifically designed to help people with their pension problems. TPAS can be contacted as follows:

TPAS
11 Belgrave Road
LONDON
SW1V 1RB

Telephone: 0845 601 2923 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)
Fax : 020 7592 7000
E-mail : enquiries@pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk

They can also be contacted through your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

If you have any queries about the LGPS, please contact:

**London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund,
Equiniti Pension Solutions
Russell Way
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 1UH**

**Telephone: 01293 603085
E-mail: hackney.pensions@xfinitypaymaster.com
Website: <http://hackney.xpmemberservices.com>**