

Pension Fund Board

Title: Pensions 'Online' Update

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Local members affected:

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Summary

The “my pension online” service for LGPS members was launched in 2016 and is now standard practice for member users. i-Connect is a web-based application / data exchange hub through which employers submit data relating to their workforce to the Buckinghamshire Pension Fund. The aim is the realisation of anticipated operational efficiencies and administrative cost savings.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to note the Report.

Supporting information to include the following if a decision is being requested:

The “my pension online” service for LGPS members was launched in 2016 and is now standard practice for member users. 7,644 active scheme members have registered to date, which equates to 33.88%, 2,259 deferred members (8.50%) and 2,089 pensioner members (11.69%). A new more user-friendly version is scheduled to be implemented in Q4 2017. When the transition has been completed and once agreed by the Project Board, the project will be signed off as successfully implemented.

i-Connect is a web-based application / data exchange hub through which employers submit data relating to their workforce to the Buckinghamshire Pension Fund. The aim is the realisation of anticipated operational efficiencies and administrative cost savings.

i-Connect is marketed to the 80 LGPS funds who use Altair as their pension administration platform by third party provider Aquila Heywood via their subsidiary i-Connect Services Limited. The Buckinghamshire Pension Fund is one of approximately 17 Funds around the UK currently using or testing the system.

LGPS employers are currently required to submit spreadsheets or undertake an action with regards to the following employee information items:

- New entrants
- Changes
- Reduction in Pay
- Monthly Contributions
- Year-end Return
- Additional Contributions
- Opt-outs
- Unpaid Leave
- Estimates
- Leavers
- Retirement
- Death in Service

i-Connect minimises manual intervention as it combines the capabilities of a number of commonly used interfaces and enables the automatic transfer of data. Some manual intervention may still be necessary after payroll data upload following the detection of errors in the data by i-Connect.

Employers will in future be required to submit the above listed information items online. There is an online return option for employers with fewer than 100 active LGPS members, so employers will transmit the data either by uploading a payroll extract file (larger employers) into i-Connect or by keying the information into Altair via i-Connect (smaller employers), both on a monthly basis.

i-Connect will allow employers to amend the following details associated with scheme members: Names, Title, Marital Status, Date of Marriage, Spouse, Date of Birth, Address and Contact Details. 6 sub stages have been planned for the implementation:

- i. Configuration, Build and System Testing
- ii. User Acceptance Testing
- iii. Training, Enrolment and ongoing Support
- iv. Communication
- v. Live Implementation and
- vi. Post-launch review and follow-up

Progress to date

i-Connect Test and Live systems have been set up and configured and the Test system is currently being tested by 6 pilot employer users of varying size.

Testing has gone well, with a number of issues having been identified and rectified. One small employer with c.80 active members has recently submitted the first monthly update into the i-Connect Live system, resulting in Altair administration records being updated correctly.

The final administratively onerous year-end process has also been completed and this employer will henceforward use i-Connect for all future monthly submissions, although the existing hard copy requirement for some items such as signed leaver forms is being maintained for the time being.

A number of other employers including Thames Valley Police and Milton Keynes Council are currently testing the system and Buckinghamshire County Council is testing i-Connect individually for the 20 academies for whom they provide payroll services.

Resource implications

The aim is the realisation of anticipated operational efficiencies and administrative cost savings.

Legal implications

N/A

Other implications/issues

N/A

Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views (if relevant)

N/A

Background Papers

None
