

Newsletter

Gwynedd Pension Fund

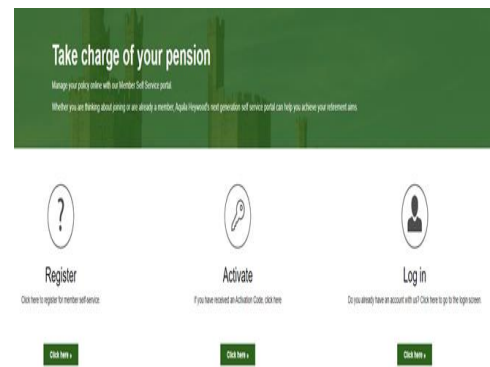


August 2021

My Pension Online (previously Member Self-Service)

From August 2021 the previously known Member Self-Service will now be referred to as **My Pension Online**. If you have not yet registered please visit our website on <https://members.gwyneddpensionfund.wales> to register. Once registered you can:

- Run pension projections
- View pension details
- View Annual Benefit Statement
- View and Amend personal details



Is your Death Grant Expression of Wish up to date?

From the very first day you join the pension scheme, a death grant lump sum of **3 times your annual payable pay** is payable if you die whilst in service, and under age 75. Each member of the scheme should complete a death grant expression of wish form. This allows you to propose 1 or more individuals or institutions to receive the relevant death grant payment. Please ensure that you have made a nomination and that it is kept up to date.

You can nominate/update by logging into the **My Pension Online** system or contact the Fund if you would prefer a hard copy. Gwynedd Pension Fund will have the final discretion as to whom the lump sum will be paid, but will always take your wishes into consideration.

How much do I pay?

As an active member of the Local Government Pension Scheme you will make contributions to the scheme. Your actual contribution rate will depend on how much you earn. The pay bands from 1st April 2021 are outlined below. The salary ranges for each contribution band will change each April in line with the cost of living:



Annual Pensionable Pay:	Contribution Rate:
Up to £14,600	5.5%
£14,601 to £22,900	5.8%
£22,901 to £37,200	6.5%
£37,201 to £47,100	6.8%
£47,101 to £65,900	8.5%
£65,901 to £93,400	9.9%
£93,401 to £110,000	10.5%
£110,001 to £165,000	11.4%
More than £165,001	12.5%

It is your employer's duty to inform you of your contribution band, and of any later changes to the percentages you will be paying. If you believe that you have been allocated to the wrong band, please contact your employer.

Pensions Increase



Deferred pensions, pension in payment and the Career average element of the pension benefits for active members are revalued each April in line with the Consumer Price Index. For April 2021 this represented a 0.5% increase to the benefits.

Money and Pensions Service

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) was set up by Government to help ensure that people throughout Wales and the UK have access to the information they need to make effective financial decisions throughout their lives. They give free, unbiased money and pension's guidance to help people make informed choices and their vision is that everyone makes the most of their money and pensions. MaPS brings together three respected providers of free, impartial financial guidance:

- Money Advice Service
- Pension Wise
- The Pensions Advisory Service

Their vision is 'everyone making the most of their money and pensions'. More information about the services that they offer can be found on their website:

<https://maps.org.uk/>

Disinvesting from Fossil Fuel

There have been recent discussions regarding Gwynedd Pension Fund disinvesting from Fossil Fuels with a number of requests received for an ambitious timetable for total de-investment of fossil fuels, but as trustees of pension fund it is more responsible for us to plan appropriately, take real action, and influence where possible for the benefits of our environment.

The Gwynedd Pension Fund has a fiduciary duty to all scheme employers, their staff and pensioners. It is this 'fiduciary duty', which informs the decisions of the Pensions Committee. The Fund does not divest solely for non-financial reasons, not least because this could lead to legal challenge.

The Pension Fund's assets are invested to provide financial returns to ensure the Financial Security of staff and pensioners. Returns also reduce the cost to employers, which in turn reduces the cost to Council Tax payers, or avoids cutting local Services. This is an important social responsibility of which the Pensions Committee is well aware.

However, managers and the Pensions Committee have been working for some time to ensure that the Gwynedd Pension Fund, our advisers and asset managers look to invest in sustainable assets. A more detailed statement regarding the disinvestment from fossil fuels can be found on our website.



McCloud Ruling

When the LGPS changed from a final salary to a Career Average Pension Scheme in 2014, protections for older scheme members were introduced (referred to as an Underpin). Similar protections were provided in other public sector pension scheme. The Court of Appeal ruled that younger members of the Judges' and Firefighters' Pension Schemes have been discriminated against because the protections do not apply to them.

The Government has confirmed that changes will be made to all the main public service pension schemes, including the LGPS, to remove the unlawful age discrimination identified in the **McCloud** ruling.

In the LGPS, the Government is proposing to provide eligible younger members with a protection equal to the protection provided to older members when the Scheme was changed in 2014. If you qualify for protection it will apply automatically - **you do not need to make a claim.**

Public Sector Exit Cap

Please note the Government will bring forward proposals to tackle unjustified exit payments. It is called the public sector exit cap. The cap will limit the amount of money a public sector employer can pay when an employee leaves their employment. The Government has not yet confirmed when the exit cap or further reforms will be introduced.

If the regulations are to change, this could mean that your LGPS benefits may need to be reduced when you retire on redundancy or efficiency grounds.

Be ScamSmart with your Pension

- If you are considering transferring your pension, you should be aware of Pension Scams. In these times of financial uncertainty, we are asking you to be very careful. Scammers can be articulate and financially knowledgeable, with credible websites, testimonials and materials that are hard to distinguish from the real thing. Scammers design attractive offers to persuade you to transfer your pension pot to them or to release funds from it. Here are four simple steps to protect yourself from pension scams:
- **Reject unexpected offers** – If you're contacted out of the blue about your pension, chances are it's high risk or a scam. Be wary of free pension review offers.
- **Check who you're dealing with** – Check the Financial Services Register (www.register.fca.org.uk) to make sure that anyone offering you advice or other financial services is FCA-authorized.
- **Don't be rushed or pressured** – Take your time to make all the checks you need.
- **Get impartial information and advice** – Look at The Pensions Advisory Service, Pension Wise and Financial Advisers.

For more information or If you suspect a scam, report it to:

- Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) – 0800 111 6768 or www.fca.org.uk
- Action Fraud – 0300 123 2040 or at www.actionfraud.police.uk
- Money Helper at www.moneyhelper.org.uk



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