

PENSIONS DIGEST

The London Borough of
Southwark Pension Fund magazine

WINTER 2020/21

This is the first
edition of your
new magazine,
packed with things you
need to know about
your pension.

www.southwarkpensions.co.uk

YOUR PENSION CONNECTION →

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HELLO AND WELCOME...

...to this first edition of your new pensions magazine 'Pensions Digest' — bringing you the latest news from the Southwark Pension Fund (the Fund) and the wider pensions world.

As I write, I am very aware that over the last nine months, the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed the lives of a number of our fellow members. My thoughts are with their relatives and loved ones at this most difficult time. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Pensions Team for keeping the business of administering the Fund open, through lockdown and beyond.

I know that many of you will prefer the convenience of digital communications, so we've also created 'Digital Pensions Digest', an interactive version of this magazine that can be found on our brand new website www.southwarkpensions.co.uk. 'Digital Pensions Digest' also contains news, views and updates that may affect your pension with the Fund, but it also runs into a little more detail with extra articles too.

We are continually striving to improve the information available to you and your fellow members. To this end I hope you'll find this magazine and your new website both interesting and a helpful resource — providing relevant and clear information on the often complex pensions landscape.

If there's any items that you would like to see covered in future issues, please let us know, by email at lbspensions@southwark.gov.uk



Mike Ellsmore
Independent Chair, Southwark Local Pension Board





Barry Berkengoff
Pensions Manager

AN INTERVIEW WITH...

Q: For those members who don't know you, can you tell us a little about your career so far with Southwark?

A: I joined the London Borough of Southwark in September 2018 at the end of a period of significant organisational change. As you'd expect, the Pensions Team had been affected by this change, so rather than just continue with how things were, we've been able to take a step back and consider the future of Pension Services within Southwark, and the role of Southwark Pension Services within the wider LGPS community.

Across public and private sectors, pensions has historically been regarded as a 'back office' function. That school of thought is now outdated in my view. Pensions form a vital part of the overall reward package the Borough provides for its employees.

Therefore, with support from my Strategic Director, the Local Pension Board and the Pensions Advisory Panel we have been able to shape the future of Pension Services and restructure the team along with a greater investment in staff, technology, training, and communication to benefit Fund members and other stakeholders. As a result, it's been a very busy but rewarding two years with much more to follow.

Q: How are you finding working during the third lockdown?

A: It took a little while to fully adapt to remote/home working following the initial lockdown back in March last year, but with the roll out of new work laptops and a more robust IT infrastructure, it has now become a way of life for myself and the team. The service we provide is business critical and we had to adapt quickly to smarter working and ensure there was no drop in service to Fund members. Fortunately, I have an excellent team who are all highly committed to the service that we provide.

Q: Is there anything members can do to help the team?

A: Yes, wherever possible members should try and contact us electronically using the email address shown on the back page of this magazine. If that's not possible then our phone lines are open from 8:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday.

Our aim is to be as accessible as possible during these exceptional times and appreciate different people have different needs. At present we only have limited staff allowed to travel into our London office. We are putting in place measures to deal with letters and office post, so that it too can be dealt with electronically and securely during this time.

Q: What are the plans for the future for Southwark?

A: That's quite a broad question! Southwark is a very dynamic and diverse London Borough so providing high quality services to residents remains its top priority.

As for Pension Services, our priority is safeguarding members' benefits and ensuring the Fund performs financially so that all future pension entitlements, for both past and present employees, can be met.

Q: And one final question, Barry what do you enjoy doing when you are not looking after our members' pensions?

A: If there has been any benefit of lockdown, it has given me the opportunity to rebalance work and life, and spend more quality time with my family. We appreciate fresh air much more and going for walks or jumping on bikes. I'm a bit of a petrolhead sorry to say and so is my son (my daughter is on the petrolhead fence but then again, she is only seven)!

I'm also a bit of a film buff so I'm looking forward to a time when it will be safe for us all to get back to a more normal way of life, which for me will include going to the cinema.





WHO LOOKS AFTER OUR FUND?

Our Fund is part of the national Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The LGPS is governed by statute, falling under the remit of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). It's administered and managed in house by Southwark Pension Services, and supported by expert professional advisers, who are listed below.

Actuaries and consultancy

Aon

Auditor

Grant Thornton UK LLP

AVC provider

AEGON

Banker

NatWest

Communications adviser

Concert, a Buck company

Custodian

JP Morgan

Investment advisers

Mercer Limited

David Cullinan,
Independent adviser

Investment managers

BlackRock Advisors (UK) Ltd

Brockton Capital LLP

Frogmore Real Estate Partners
Investment Managers Limited

Glennmont Partners

Invesco Real Estate

Legal & General Investment
Management Limited

M&G Investments

Newton Investment Management Limited

Nuveen Real Estate

Temporis Capital

Performance monitoring

PIRC Performance Analytics



You can read more about the Pensions Advisory Panel, the Local Pension Board, and who runs the national LGPS at www.southwarkpensions.co.uk/about-us



Click on 'Digital Pensions Digest' at www.southwarkpensions.co.uk to view online.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Membership

The Fund provides pensions for:

- Employees/ex-employees of Southwark Council ;
- Employees/ex-employees of a number of admitted bodies (e.g. non-profit organisations with a link to the Council); and
- Employees/ex-employees of a number of scheduled bodies (e.g. academies).

Membership	2017	2018	2019	2020
Active	6,914	6,291	6,888	6,753
Deferred	9,063	10,269	7,887	10,723
Pensioner	7,483	7,620	10,932	7,594
Total	23,460	24,180	25,707	25,070

Financial performance

During 2019/20, the Fund decreased in value by £60 million (7%) to £1,582 million.

	2017/18 (£000)	2018/19 (£000)	2019/20 (£000)
Opening net assets	1,494,992	1,530,947	1,641,986
Contributions and joiners	54,711	58,891	65,787
Benefits and leavers	(59,400)	(64,076)	(71,384)
Investment income (less taxes)	14,470	15,432	15,287
Management expenses	(6,422)	(7,508)	(8,881)
Profit on sale and change in investment value	32,596	108,300	(61,254)
Increase in Fund value	35,955	111,039	(60,445)
Closing net assets	1,530,947	1,641,986	1,581,541

A single Fund year runs from 1 April to 31 March.



IMPACT OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted us all and new ways of working have been found to make sure Southwark Pension Services, its advisers and service providers continue to operate as efficiently as possible for the benefits of the Fund members and their beneficiaries.

Despite the effect the pandemic has had on global markets, the Fund remains in a very strong financial position and has recovered quickly compared to the pension funds of many other LGPS employers; a testament to our investment strategy and key decisions made by the Pensions Advisory Panel.

We're also painfully aware that the virus has claimed the lives of a number of our members. We'd like to express our deepest sympathy to all those who have lost loved ones at this difficult time.

We know that the number of pension scams has increased during this difficult time. In the digital version of this magazine we've included an article which provides lot's of useful tips on how to spot a scam and more importantly ensure you don't become their next victim. ***Remember if something seems too good to be true, it generally is!***

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR PENSION WITH OUR NEW FUND WEBSITE

We're delighted to report that the brand-new Southwark Pension Fund website was launched in July 2020. It boasts a wealth of information to help you make the decisions that matter — decisions about your future.

Whether you're completely new to pensions, or you're approaching retirement, the new website is your first port of call.

You'll also find a number of important documents, a glossary and LGPS videos to explain how it all works and what you can do to make a positive impact on your retirement income. Just go to www.southwarkpensions.co.uk

Let's stay in touch

If you would like to receive the digital version of Pensions Digest, which includes extra articles and more detail, we'll need your email address and National Insurance number (so we can match your records). All you need to do is contact Southwark Pension Services on either:

✉ lbspensions@southwark.gov.uk; or

☎ 020 7525 4924.

Communication and engagement is really important and if we're going to make digital communication work for us, we'd really like all members (in particular, ex-employees and retired colleagues) to contact us and provide their home/personal email addresses. If you also provide your mobile telephone number we can send you text alerts as well as emails. We will never share this information with anyone else, and we have very tight controls to ensure all the information we hold about our members is kept secure.





Manage your pension online

Don't forget that you can use the secure area of the pensions database that holds your personal information. You can log on to update your basic information and run projections and retirement scenarios. It too can be accessed via the new website by clicking or tapping on the orange 'Review my account' box.

So don't delay and visit today! Whilst you're there, please give us feedback to let us know what you think by clicking on the smiley faces.

Review my account

Looking to manage your pension account?

[Member self-service](#)



IS YOUR EXPRESSION OF WISH UP TO DATE?

Remember to keep your Expression of Wish Form up to date if your personal circumstances change. This is the most effective way to ensure your loved ones receive the benefits due to them if you die. Out of date Forms, that don't match up with your wishes, can cause lengthy delays in any benefits being paid.

You can nominate anyone you like. They could be:

- Your next of kin;
- Any other person; or
- Any organisation.

Visit the 'Member forms' section in the Library at www.southwarkpensions.co.uk to download a Form. Once completed, please return it to Southwark Pension Services using the contact details on the back page.

A Spring 2021 newsletter is already being created and we will be able to share plans for the future as part of those regular updates.



GETTING IN TOUCH WITH US

If you have a question about the Fund or your benefits in particular, take a look on our website, to see if you can find the answer. Alternatively, contact the Pension Services team using the details below.

🏠 Southwark Pension Services
2nd Floor
Hub 1
PO Box 64529
London
SE1P 5LX

📞 **020 7525 4924**
Please note the phone lines are open Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 5:00pm (excluding Bank Holidays).

✉ **lbspensions@southwark.gov.uk**

Visit the member self-service portal at **pensions.southwark.gov.uk** to access your Fund information 24/7. If you have any problems using it, please telephone the number above.

For more general pension information, visit **www.southwarkpensions.co.uk/understanding-pensions/where-to-get-help**

PENSIONS NEWS

Head on over to the online version of this newsletter at **www.southwarkpensions.co.uk** and click on the blue 'Pensions Digest' button.

You'll be able to read further articles on:

- How to spot a pensions scam;
- What you can do to protect your financial self;
- Strengthened powers for The Pensions Regulator (TPR);
- What is a pensions dashboard?;
- Savings limits; and
- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) explained.

