Code of practice no.14 compliance statement

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| **Section** | **Sub-section** | **Legal requirement** | **TPR's guidance** | **How we Comply** |
| Governing your scheme | Knowledge and understanding required by pension board members  [34 – 60] | A member of the pension board of a public service pension scheme must be conversant with:  • the rules of the scheme, and  • any document recording policy about the administration of the scheme which is for the time being adopted in relation to the scheme.  A member of a pension board must have knowledge and understanding of:  • the law relating to pensions, and  • any other matters which are prescribed in regulations. | 1. Schemes should establish and maintain policies and arrangements for acquiring and retaining knowledge and understanding [38]. 2. Schemes should designate a person to take responsibility for (1) [38]. 3. Schemes should prepare and keep an updated list of documents with which they consider pension board members need to be conversant [46] 4. Clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities and duties of boards and its members should be set out in scheme documentation [47]. 5. Schemes should assist pension board members to determine the degree of knowledge and understanding needed [48]. 6. Schemes should provide board members with the relevant training and support that they require [55]. 7. Schemes should offer pre-appointment training or arrange for mentoring by existing board members [56]. 8. Pension board members should undertake a personal training needs analysis [57]. 9. Learning programs should be flexible [58]. 10. Schemes should keep appropriate records of the learning activities of board members [60]. | The Fund's existing training policy has been amended to reflect the requirements for Knowledge and Understanding.  The Fund's Financial Policy Officer is responsible for all training matters.  Terms of Reference for the Pension Board specify roles and responsibilities and these are documented accordingly.  Board members have been introduced to the new CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework for Local Pension Boards, published in July 2015.  Training and support needs will be assessed and develop in line with Board member needs. Training needs will be identified in a number of ways including self-identified (by Board members) needs and those identified or suggested by the Fund's officers.  A number of media/methods will be used to deliver training, and feedback received as to the efficacy of such will help the fund tailor future training accordingly.  Board members are encouraged to discuss their learning needs and experiences at each Board meeting and to ask for the support they need from the Fund for their ongoing learning.  Records are being maintained of all formal training attended by Board members and reported on periodically. |
|  | Conflicts of interest and representation  [61 – 91]. | In relation to the pension board, scheme regulations must include provision requiring the scheme manager to be satisfied:  • that a person to be appointed as a member of the pension board does not have a conflict of interest and  • from time to time, that none of the members of the pension board has a conflict of interest.  Scheme regulations must require each member or proposed member of a pension board to provide the scheme manager with such information as the scheme manager reasonably requires for the purposes of meeting the requirements referred to above.  Scheme regulations must include provision requiring the pension board to include employer representatives and member representatives in equal numbers. | 1. The 'Seven principles of public life' should be applied to all board members [70]. 2. Schemes should incorporate these principles into any codes of conduct (and across their policies and processes) and other internal standards for boards [70]. 3. Take professional legal advice when considering issues to do with conflict of interests [74]. 4. Schemes should ensure that there is an agreed and documented conflicts policy and procedure which should be kept under regular review [76]. 5. Schemes should cultivate a culture of openness and transparency [78]. 6. Board members should have a clear understanding of their role and the circumstances in which they may find themselves in a position of conflict of interest [78]. 7. Board members should know how to manage potential conflicts [78]. 8. Pension board members should be appointed under procedures that require them to disclose any interests or responsibilities which could become conflicts of interest [80]. 9. All terms of engagement should include a clause requiring disclosure of all interests and responsibilities which could become conflicts of interest as soon as they arise [81]. 10. All disclosed interests should be recorded [81]. 11. Schemes should consider what important matters or decisions are likely to be considered during, for example, the year ahead and identify and consider any potential or actual conflicts [82]. 12. Identify, evaluate and manage dual interests [83]. 13. Use a register of interests to record and monitor dual interests [84]. 14. Capture decisions about how to manage potential conflicts of interest in their risk register or elsewhere [84]. 15. The register of interest and other relevant documents should be circulated to the board for ongoing review [84]. 16. The register of interest and other relevant documents should be published [84]. 17. Conflicts of interest should be included as an opening agenda item at board meetings and revisited during the meeting where necessary [85]. 18. Establish and operate procedures which ensure that boards are not compromised by potentially conflicted members [86]. 19. Be open and transparent about the way they manage potential conflicts of interest [87]. 20. Seek professional legal advice when assessing any option when seeking to manage a potential conflict of interest [88]. 21. Membership of boards should be designed with regard to proportionality, fairness and transparency and with the aim of ensuring that the board has the right balance of skills, experience and representation [91]. | The Local Pension Board has been established having had regard to the requirements set out in legislation and guidance.  All Board Members have completed a Register of Interests declaration having had regard to the Board's Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interests Policy, which was approved in October 2015.  The agenda for each Board meeting includes a declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in relation to matters under consideration on that agenda. Any such declarations are minuted.  Registers of Interest will be reviewed on an annual basis and all Board Members received training at an induction session prior to the first meeting of the Board. Advice on potential conflicts can be sought from Democratic Services officers at any time.  The Board comprises representation from employers and members. All member representatives have a pensions background, and employer representatives are fully conversant with LGPS issues. |
|  | Publishing information about schemes  [92 – 99] | The scheme manager for a public service scheme must publish information about the pension board for the scheme(s) and keep that information up-to-date.  The information must include:  • who the members of the pension board are  • representation on the board of members of the scheme(s), and  • the matters falling within the pension board’s responsibility. | 1. Schemes should also publish useful related information about the pension board such as set out in 96 and 97. 2. Have policies and processes to monitor all published data on an ongoing basis to ensure it is accurate and complete [98]. | The Fund has a dedicated web page that includes details such as:   * Board membership ; * Board terms of reference; * A link to the Lancashire County Council website detailing agendas and minutes of the Board's meetings   The Fund publishes all statutory documents on the Your Pension Service website [www.yourpensionservice.gov.uk](http://www.yourpensionservice.gov.uk)  The website is reviewed at least annually and updated accordingly, as are other media such as leaflets/guides etc.  Additionally whenever regulatory or other significant changes occur, relevant media/documentation are reviewed and changed at the time. |
| Managing risks | Internal controls  [101 – 120] | The scheme manager of a public service pension scheme must establish and operate internal controls. These must be adequate for the purpose of securing that the scheme is administered and managed in accordance with the scheme rules and in accordance with the requirements of the law. | 1. Internal controls should include a clear separation of duties, processes for escalation and decision making and documented procedures for assessing and managing risks, reviewing breaches of law and managing contributions to the scheme [103]. 2. Internal controls should address significant risks which are likely to have a material impact on the scheme [105]. 3. Sufficient time and attention should be spent on identifying, evaluating and managing risks and developing and monitoring appropriate controls [105].   Identifying risks   1. Schemes should carry out a risk assessment [106]. 2. Schemes should record risks in a risk register and review it regularly [108]. 3. Schemes should keep appropriate records to demonstrate compliance [108].   Evaluate risks and develop internal controls   1. Prioritise risks where the impact and likelihood of the risk materialising is high [109]. 2. Review any existing internal controls [110]. 3. Design internal controls to mitigate main risks and consider how best to monitor them [111].   Monitor controls effectively   1. Schemes should periodically review the adequacy of internal controls [115]. 2. Internal or external audits and/or quality assurance processes should ensure that adequate internal controls are in place and being operated effectively [116]. 3. Review internal controls when substantial changes take place or where a control has been found to be inadequate [116].   Suggested internal controls   1. Internal controls that regularly assess the effectiveness of investment-related decision making. 2. Internal controls that regularly assess the effectiveness of data management and record-keeping. 3. Internal controls that ensure that new employers understand what member data is required and how it should be supplied [112]. 4. Internal controls that require internal or external auditors to audit any automated systems [112]. 5. Internal controls to ensure that systems support the maintenance and retention of good member records [112]. 6. Internal controls that ensure that data are complete (e.g. undertake a data-cleansing or member tracing exercise and review this on a regular basis (at least annually or at regular intervals that they consider appropriate) [112]. 7. Ensure that all staff completes information management training before they are given access to sensitive data. 8. Ensure that member communications are reviewed regularly [112] 9. Schemes should put in place systems and processes for making an objective assessment of the strength of an employer's covenant. | Internal controls are designed to manage risks facing the fund. As such, the starting point for the fund's approach is the risk register.  The risk register is a 'live' document which is reviewed regularly, at least every 6 months and is derived from best practice guidance developed by CIPFA and the DCLG.  The risk register categorises risks into several primary areas and ascribes ownership of these risks. Each risk is scored, with 'gross' and 'net' risk scores indicating the scale of a risk before and after mitigation which has been put in place to manage it.  Many risks cannot be controlled directly by the Fund, nor can the mitigation measures in place always affect the risk scoring, however as a dynamic document the register serves to track performance in managing risks and ensure a focus on changes in the risk landscape.  A documented internal compliance regime reviews progress in managing risk and ensures that risk owners are accountable accordingly.  Clearly, some risks are more significant than others and their relative scale drives the resource input devoted to such; for example the Investment panel and associated due diligence processes ensure a clear separation of duties and a documented decision-making mechanism. Similarly rigorous separation of duties apply to the pensions payroll function which controls around £250m of pension payments annually.  Controls are reviewed in a number of ways, such as lessons learned, internal and external audit and continuous improvement drivers.  Significant reliance is placed upon both internal and external audits, which review and test existing controls – the fund enjoys very positive feedback from both audit functions and works closely in developing audit programmes, in particular drawing attention to new developments and associated system changes which, being new, can present new and untested risks.  A good example of this in seeking audit input to system developments needed to manage very large volumes of detailed data from employers required under the new CARE regime.  Detailed monitoring takes place monthly in respect of investment performance and associated governance/control issues.  The fund manages enormous volumes of complex and dynamic data and as such commits significant resource to keeping data clean and up to date in a number of ways.  Internal data cleansing regimes apply, but just as importantly, significant resource is dedicated to supporting employers to ensure they can comply with the fund's data requirements.  Whilst data quality is important, maintaining it comes at a cost: for example the fund only marginally meets the Regulator's data quality targets simply due to the numbers of members for whom it does not have up to date data – this largely applies to deferred members who cannot be traced, despite continued efforts. There is a need to balance the cost of chasing such deferred members against the benefit of 100% accuracy of data, and choices need to be made accordingly.  It is not possible within this document to specify all areas of compliance with the Regulator's suggested internal control framework, however:   * Information governance training forms part of induction and annual review; * Member communications are reviewed and fine-tuned in the light of feedback * The Fund is putting in place processes and resources to assess employer covenant and proactively manage the outcome of such assessments. |
| Administration | Scheme record-keeping  [122 – 146] | Scheme managers must keep records of information relating to:  • member information  • transactions, and  • pension board meetings and decisions  Schemes must ensure that processes that are created to manage scheme member data meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the data protection principles. | 1. Schemes should be able to demonstrate to the regulator, where required, that they keep accurate, up-to-date and enduring records [124]. 2. Schemes should establish and operate adequate internal controls to support record-keeping requirements [125]. 3. Member data should be subject to regular data evaluation [126]. 4. Schemes should require employers to provide them with timely and accurate data [128 and 130]. 5. Schemes should seek to ensure that employers understand the main events which require information to be passed to the scheme [129]. 6. Schemes should be able to trace the flow of funds into and out of the scheme and reconcile these against expected contributions and scheme costs [131]. 7. In respect of keeping information about the pension board, schemes should also keep records of key discussions [133]. 8. Records should be retained for as long as they are needed [135]. 9. Schemes should have in place adequate systems and processes to enable the retention of records for the necessary time periods [135]. 10. Schemes should monitor data (based on a proportionate and risk based approach) on an ongoing basis to ensure it is accurate and complete [136,137]. 11. Schemes should carry out a data review exercise at least annually [138]. 12. Schemes should continually review their data [138]. 13. Upon change of admin system, schemes should review and cleanse data records [140] 14. Schemes should put in place a data improvement plan where poor quality or missing data is identified [141]. 15. Schemes should reconcile member records with information held by the employer [142]. | Details of Pension Board meetings are available via the Fund's website [www.yourpensionservice.org.uk](http://www.yourpensionservice.org.uk)  A data cleaning schedule specifies data cleaning activities during the year. The cleanliness of this data is compared to targets set out by the Pensions Regulator. YPS is working on implementing electronic data quality reporting routines, covering employers' and scheme data quality.  A records retention policy is in place. Most records are stored electronically, and paper records are in the main stored with LCC's records management team, who securely destroy records in line with the Fund's record retention policy.  Fund flows into and out of the scheme are reconciled on an aggregate basis. Work is in hand to further refine this process, at a detail level.  The Fund has a policy for chasing and tracing missing or inaccurate member records. There are a significant number of deferred members whose current details are not known. The service takes a proportionate and risk-based approach in using resource to trace and chase such records.  Comparisons of active member data with employer payroll data occur each pay period. Reconciliations between pay and contributions are carried out on a monthly basis. A backlog plan is in place to manage some outstanding work in this area.  The Fund's Pensions Administration Strategy Statement (PASS) outlines mechanisms and deadlines for employers' submission of data to the fund. A number of employers do not meet these deadlines, and an ongoing training and support programme provides support to employers to enable them to comply  Additionally the Employer Guide sets out in some detail the Fund's specific data requirements.  The Fund's Business Continuity Plan specifies actions to mitigate the impact of various scenarios including loss of IT systems. |
|  | Maintaining contributions  [147 – 186] | Employer contributions must be paid to the scheme in accordance with any requirements in the scheme regulations. Where employer contributions are not paid on or before the date they are due under the scheme and the scheme manager has reasonable cause to believe that the failure is likely to be of material significance to the regulator in the exercise of any of its functions, the scheme manager must give a written report of the matter to the regulator as soon as reasonably practicable.  Where employee contributions are not paid within the prescribed period, if the scheme manager has reasonable cause to believe that the failure is likely to be of material significance to the regulator in the exercise of any of its functions, they must give notice of the  failure to the regulator and the member within a reasonable period after the end of the prescribed period. Where there is a failure to pay employee contributions on an earlier date in accordance with  scheme regulations, schemes should also consider their statutory duty under section 70 of the Pensions Act 2004 to assess and if necessary report breaches of the law. | 1. Scheme managers should have effective procedures and processes in place to identify payment failures that are – and are not – of material significance to the regulator [150 to 151]. 2. Such procedures are likely to involve: 3. Developing a record to monitor the payment of contributions. 4. Monitoring the payment of contributions. 5. Managing overdue contributions. 6. Reporting payment failures which are likely to be of material significance to the regulator [152].   Developing a record to monitor the payment of contributions   1. Schemes should have a contributions monitoring record [155 to 157].   Monitoring the payment of contributions   1. Schemes should monitor contributions on an on-going basis [161]. 2. A risk based and proportionate monitoring approach should be used to identify employers and situations which present a higher risk of payment failure [162]. 3. Schemes should have a process in place to identify where payments are late or have been underpaid, overpaid or not paid at all [163]. 4. Scheme managers must record and retain information on transactions (including any employer and employee contributions) [166].   Managing overdue contributions   1. Where a payment failure is identified, there should be a process to follow to resolve the issue quickly (including the suggested steps set out in the Code) [169]. 2. Schemes should keep a record of their investigation and communications between themselves and the employer [170]. 3. Schemes should have a process which is able to detect deliberate underpayment or non-payment or other fraudulent behaviour by an employer [171].   Reporting payment failures which are likely to be of material significance to the regulator   1. Where schemes identify a payment failure, they should attempt to recover contributions within 90 days of their due date [174]. 2. Where a payment failure is identified it should at least ask the employer the 3 questions set out in 175. 3. Schemes should investigate the payment failure and use their judgement when deciding whether to report to the regulator taking into account the wording of the Code [177]. 4. Schemes should consider whether it is appropriate to report payment failures of employer contributions to members where it is reported to the regulator [182]. 5. Reports to the regulator should be made in accordance with the code. | A complex yet effective series of processes are in place to manage employer contributions due, and their payment.  Employers are required to submit detailed information on a monthly basis, in respect of both membership data and the associated financials. Currently two forms are submitted, which creates some reconciliation issues but does speed up the process of collecting money due to the fund.  A detailed reconciliation framework is continuously applied to the two sets of data, and employers who do not submit on time are chased accordingly.  The vast majority of contributions are collected by direct debit and if an employer doesn't inform the Fund of the exact amount to collect by the due date, an estimated sum due is collected. This ensures cash flow but does cause further reconciliation issues.    Monthly reconciliations highlight any late, overpaid, underpaid or non- payment of contributions. Thus late/missing payment or submission of data is identified and employers chased accordingly.  All employers are monitored in the same way.  All contributions are recorded and maintained monthly and kept for the required retention period.  Any non-payment issues are taken up with employers in the first instance.  The introduction of the new CARE scheme has caused problems for both funds and employers, i.e. the switch from annual to monthly data submission, in new and relatively complex formats, has presented challenges and consumed resource accordingly.  A significant effort has been put into training employers and supporting them to understand and deliver on their responsibilities.  The service is further developing the electronic interface which is used to manage data and cash collection from employers; when live this enhanced system will benefit employers (having to submit one set of data per month only) and will also enable any employer performance issues and non-payment to be identified/reported upon more easily than at present.    Non or late payment issues will be dealt with in accordance with the Code. |
|  | Providing information to members  [187 – 211] | The law requires schemes to disclose information about benefits and scheme administration to scheme members and others.  The Code summarises the legal requirements around -   1. Benefit statements [188 – 195] 2. Other information about scheme administration [196 – 197]. 3. Who is entitled to information [198 – 199] 4. When basic scheme information must be provided [200 – 201] 5. What information must be disclosed on request [202] 6. How benefit statements and other information must be provided [203 – 206]   Scheme should also comply as appropriate with other legal disclosure requirements [211]. | 1. Schemes should design and deliver communications to scheme members in a way that ensures they are able to engage with their pension [207]. 2. Information should be clear and simple to understand as well as being accurate and easily accessible [207]. 3. Schemes should attempt to make contact with their scheme members and, where contact is not possible, schemes should carry out a tracing exercise to locate the member and ensure that their member data are up-to-date [208]. 4. Where a person has made a request for information, schemes should acknowledge receipt if they are unable to provide the information at that stage [209]. 5. Schemes may encounter situations where the time period for providing information takes longer than expected. In these circumstances, schemes should notify the person and let them know when they are likely to receive the information [209]. 6. Information should be readily available at all times to ensure that members are able to access it when they require [210]. | YPS uses a wide range of communications media such as:   * An electronic self -service "my pension online" facility and the YPS website, both of which allow members to access pensions information 24/7 * Annual benefit statements that are produced annually and made available to all members via the online facility. Members who choose to opt out of e communication are provided with a paper copy. * Face to face presentations to groups and one to one appointments at pension surgeries are offered to all members * A dedicated helpdesk and email facility are available to members   All information whether electronic, written or face to face is delivered in a simple and clear manner avoiding pension jargon. The details of when and what information is provided to members is contained in the communications policy statement that is published on the YPS website at:  <https://www.yourpensionservice.org.uk/local_government/index.asp?siteid=5921&pageid=33736&e=e>  The Fund makes every attempt to contact scheme members. When contact attempts have not been possible, attempts at tracing are made as follows:   * for active members the service contacts the employer for up to date details; * for pensioner members contact is made with the member's bank in the first instance, asking the bank to forward a letter on. If this isn’t successful then the DWP letter forwarding service is tried. * for deferred members, email is used if the member is registered, if not then the DWP letter forwarding service is used   Receipt of emails to the pensions helpdesk is confirmed automatically; paper correspondence is not acknowledged, but response times form part of the service's SLA and are monitored accordingly.  Details of service standards, targets and processes are published on the Funds website in order to manage member's expectations. |
|  | Internal dispute resolution  [212 – 240] | Scheme managers must make and implement dispute resolution arrangements that comply with the requirements of the law and help resolve pensions disputes between the scheme manager and a person with an interest in the scheme. | 1. In terms of the LGPS, the requirements relating to IDRP are prescribed in the LGPS regulations. 2. Schemes should publish and make IDRP time limits readily available [225]. 3. Schemes should be satisfied that the time taken to reach a decision is appropriate to the situation and be able to demonstrate this, if necessary. [230 and 240] 4. Schemes should provide the applicant with regular updates on the progress of their investigation. They should notify the applicant where the time period for a decision is expected to be shorter or longer than the reasonable time period and let them know when they are likely to receive an outcome [232]. 5. Schemes should focus on educating and raising awareness of their internal dispute resolution arrangements and ensuring that they are implemented [233]. 6. Schemes should ensure that the effectiveness of the arrangements is assessed regularly and be satisfied that those following the process are complying with the requirements set, which includes effective decision making [234]. 7. Schemes should confirm and communicate their arrangements to members, for example, in the joining booklet [235]. 8. Schemes should make their arrangements accessible to potential applicants, for example by publishing them on a scheme website [235]. 9. Schemes should ensure they make the following information available to applicants: 10. The procedure and processes to apply for a dispute to be resolved; 11. The information that an applicant must include; 12. The process by which any decisions are reached; and 13. An acknowledgement once an application has been received [239]. | Details of the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) are published on the Fund's website and contained within the employee's brief and full guide. In addition the appeals application form, also available on the website, contains further guidance for members including the specific time limits imposed by the IDRP.  Those documents are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are in line with amending legislation and procedures. (The latest versions can be viewed at the link below)  <http://www.yourpensionservice.org.uk/local_government/index.asp?siteid=5921&pageid=33912&e=e>  Procedures for employers are also contained within the employer guide on the website. In addition a guide for employers is also available, used particularly for employers who have a new adjudicator reviewing a stage 1 case.  Training for employers and bulletins highlighting problem areas such as Ill health determinations are utilised where appropriate.    In respect of stage 1 and stage 2 IDRP cases, a task management process exists through the pensions administration system to ensure that the appropriate deadlines and notifications are provided to members and representatives involved in the IDRP and that those deadlines are adhered to. Bespoke documentation covers acknowledgements and details of extensions to time limits. Procedures for stage 2 are regularly updated.    The right to appeal a decision under IDRP is part of all YPS documentation where a decision is being taken that may affect a member or prospective member's benefits, whether that be an administering or employing authority decision.  A log of all appeal cases is kept detailing dates when cases are received, acknowledged and determined. |
|  | Reporting breaches of the law  [241 – 275] | Certain people are required to report breaches of the law to the regulator where they have reasonable cause to believe that:  • a legal duty which is relevant to the administration of the scheme has not been, or is not being, complied with  • the failure to comply is likely to be of material significance to the regulator in the exercise of any of its functions. | 1. Schemes should be satisfied that those who are responsible for reporting breaches are made aware of the legal requirement and the Code [244]. 2. Training should be provided for scheme managers and pension board members [244]. 3. All others under a statutory duty to report should ensure they have sufficient level of knowledge and understanding to fulfil that duty [244]. 4. Those with a statutory duty to report should establish and operate appropriate and effective procedures in regards to reporting breaches [245]. 5. Those procedures should be in accordance with and take into account paragraphs 245 to 262 of the Code. 6. Reports made to the Regulator should be submitted in accordance with paragraphs 263 to 271. | The Local Pension Board will be considering a proposed 'Reporting Breaches' procedure at its meeting on 18 January 2016. |