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# Complaints policy

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## Introduction

There may be a time when a member of Derbyshire Pension Fund (the Pension Fund/Fund) is unhappy with the service provided by the Fund, or disagrees with a decision made about their membership or benefits. The Pension Fund will seek to clarify, or put right, any misunderstandings or inaccuracies as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The Derbyshire Pension Fund complaints policy has been developed to provide assurance that, if a member of the Fund does wish to make a complaint, it will be dealt with promptly, respectfully and in a consistent manner.

The management of complaints is important to the Pension Fund. In addition to providing Fund members with assurance that their complaints will be properly considered, it ensures that feedback from members supports the continued improvement of services.

In general, complaints will usually relate to one of the following:

- Problems with services provided
- Failure to provide responses or information within agreed timescales
- Behaviour or attitude of a member of staff
- Disagreement with a decision
- Disagreement with how a policy/regulations have been applied
- Standard or quality of the service provided
- Incorrect use or storage of data

## Aims of the complaints policy

The application of the complaints policy aims to:

- Support members with a straightforward, appropriate and effective process for the prompt resolution of complaints
- Take complaints seriously and deal with them in a manner that is appropriate to the nature of the issue
- Guarantee that complaints are dealt with on the basis of evidence and proper investigation
- Ensure that every issue raised in a complaint receives an appropriate explanation
- Operate in a respectful and sensitive way, having due respect for confidentiality
- Ensure that the consideration and monitoring of complaints supports the improvement of services received by members
- Ensure that all complaints are handled fairly and consistently

## What is a complaint?

Many queries and minor disagreements can be resolved quickly and without being escalated to the level of a complaint. Members should, in the first instance, contact the Pension Fund, either via:

- The Pension Fund Help Line (01629 538900)
- The feedback form on the Fund's website: [derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/feedback](https://derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/feedback)
- Letter to Derbyshire Pension Fund, County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AH.

Pension Fund staff receiving a query from a dissatisfied Fund member will, wherever possible, attempt to resolve the issue within 5 working days.

A complaint arises if the Fund member still feels that the processing of their pension benefits/calculation/query has been dealt with in an unsatisfactorily manner and should be investigated.

## Making a complaint

If a member of the Pension Fund wishes to make a complaint, it should be submitted in writing via:

- The online complaint form on the Pension Fund's website: [derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/complaint](https://derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/complaint)
- By letter clearly marked complaint to ensure that all the details of the complaint are correctly recorded.

When making a complaint, a Fund member should provide all the information requested on the complaint form, specifying all of the issues requiring a response and providing specific details, such as relevant dates. Members contacting the Fund by letter should ensure that they include the following information:

- Full name
- Address
- Contact details
- Date of birth
- National insurance number.

Any information provided will always be treated in accordance with the Fund's privacy notice.

Complaints made via a third party, such as a Union Member or Councillor, will only be investigated if consent to share information has been received from the relevant Fund member. Once the Pension Fund has received consent to share information, a complaint will be subject to the normal process and timescales. A summary response will be provided to the Union Member or Councillor in accordance with the privacy notice and any consent to share information.

## Dealing with complaints

Complainants will be listened to and reassured that their issue is being taken seriously. Complaints will be considered by a suitable member of staff and will be escalated to a more senior member of staff where appropriate.

Complaints submitted via the Fund's website, or by letter, will be resolved as promptly as possible; when a complaint is not resolved within 5 working days of receipt, the complaint will be acknowledged and an anticipated response timescale provided. In circumstances where it is not possible to provide a response within 5 working days, Derbyshire Pension Fund will aim to provide a response within 10 working days.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Pension Fund may need to request information from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, usually a member's employer or payroll provider. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially and information regarding the complaint will not be shared with the 3<sup>rd</sup> party unless is absolutely necessary to do so.

To ensure that all of the relevant facts are available, and to enable a full investigation to be carried out, the target date for responding to a complaint may need to be extended. The complainant will be informed of any extension and provided with a new target date for the full response.

Anonymised summaries of complaints may be made available to the Pensions and Investments Committee and to Derbyshire Pension Board for monitoring purposes.

### **Applications for the Adjudication of Disagreements Procedure (AADP)**

If a member of the Pension Fund is still dissatisfied after the procedure set out in the Complaints Policy has been completed, they have the right to appeal under the Applications for the Adjudication of Disagreements Procedure (AADP). For further information please visit [derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/AADP](http://derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/AADP).

## Concerns and complaints: A step by step guide for pension fund members

