

27th March 2020



Office

Strathclyde Pension Fund Office (SPFO) is closed until further notice.

Service

Staff are working from home to maintain our service, but our ability to respond to individual enquiries and to process new transactions is currently greatly reduced.

Pensions Payroll

Our immediate business priority is to ensure that our current pensioners are paid on time each month as normal. We have robust business continuity and contingency arrangements to ensure that this will be the case. The April payrun will be processed early to allow additional contingency time and ensure payments are in bank accounts on 15th as normal.

Other Transactions

We are continuing to process other existing transactions, particularly retirements and deaths. We will process new transactions as quickly as we can, but there may be delays, sometimes significant ones.

Website

Current SPFO status information will be shown in the News area of our website. We will also continue to update other areas, and many general enquiries can be answered there.

Systems

All our systems are currently operational and we continue to encourage employers to use Employer Self Service (ESS), and members to use SPFOOnline wherever possible.

Important: please use the following (new) link to ESS:

<https://www.axisespfo.org.uk:6444/employerservicesweb/login>

I-connect is fully operational and employers should continue to use it.

Employer Data and Contributions

Employers should continue to pay contributions to us as normal and to submit contribution breakdown reports and other data. In particular, year-end data should be submitted in line with our requirements as previously issued. That will help us to maintain business as usual as far as possible. There is also a series of dependencies that follows from our deadlines – annual report and accounts, actuarial valuation, annual benefit statements, etc. None of the statutory deadlines for those has changed (yet).

Investments

As stock markets have fallen sharply in recent days, the current value of the Fund will also have dropped significantly. This has no impact on our ability to pay pensions right now, and we would expect markets to recover over time. But it will be reflected in the actuarial valuation and in employers' accounting disclosures as at 31st March 2020.

IAS19/ FRS102 Exercise

This exercise is underway and currently progressing as originally planned with reports due for delivery in the middle of April. One change: given the severity of recent market movements, it is no longer appropriate to use estimated investment returns. We will wait for a confirmed asset value which will add around one week to report delivery times. We will advise if anything else changes.

Actuarial Valuation

This exercise has not yet commenced, but the intention is for it to progress as planned. Clearly the funding level will have suffered as a result of recent investment falls. For employers, the more important result is the employer contribution rate. There will be pressure on this, but it is influenced as much by future return expectations as by historic returns. So it is too early to speculate as to the outcome. Much work needs to be done.

Updates

In addition to website updates we will provide updates to employers as and when anything significant changes.

Contact

If you need to contact us please use email. Try your usual contact in the first instance. If they're not available and it's urgent, contact Linda Welsh (linda.welsh@glasgow.gov.uk) or Daniel Hughes (daniel.hughes@glasgow.gov.uk).