

Cronfa Bensiynau Clwyd
Clwyd Pension Fund



FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Administering Authority for
Clwyd Pension Fund

TRAINING POLICY

~~November 2014~~
~~Updated November 2015~~ **August 2018**

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TRAINING POLICY

Introduction

This is the Training Policy of the Clwyd Pension Fund, which is managed and administered by Flintshire County Council. The Policy details the training strategy for members of the Pension Fund Committee and Pension Board, and senior officers responsible for the management of the Fund.

The Training Policy is established to aid Pension Fund Committee and Pension Board members and senior officers in performing and developing personally in their individual roles, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that Clwyd Pension Fund is managed by individuals who have the appropriate levels of knowledge and skills.

Aims and Objectives

Flintshire County Council recognises the significance of its role as Administering Authority to the Clwyd Pension Fund on behalf of its stakeholders which include:

- over 46,760 current and former members of the Fund, and their dependants
- over 43 employers within the Flintshire, Denbighshire and Wrexham Council areas
- the local taxpayers within those areas.

Our Fund's Mission Statement is:

- We will be known as forward thinking, responsive, proactive and professional providing excellent customer focused, reputable and credible service to all our customers.
- We will have instilled a corporate culture of risk awareness, financial governance, and will be providing the highest quality, distinctive services within our resources.
- We will work effectively with partners, being solution focused with a can do approach.

In relation to knowledge and skills of those managing the Fund, our objectives are to:

- Ensure that the Clwyd Pension Fund is appropriately managed and that its services are delivered by people who have the requisite knowledge and expertise, and that this knowledge and expertise is maintained within the continually changing Local Government Pension Scheme and wider pensions landscape.
- Those persons responsible for governing the Clwyd Pension Fund have sufficient expertise to be able to evaluate and challenge the advice they receive, ensure their decisions are robust and well based, and manage any potential conflicts of interest.

All Pension Fund Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers to whom this Policy applies are expected to continually demonstrate their own personal commitment to training and to ensuring that these objectives are met.

To assist in achieving these objectives, the Clwyd Pension Fund will aim to comply with:

- the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Frameworks,
- [the knowledge and skills elements in the CIPFA Investment Pooling Governance Principles guidance](#) and
- the knowledge and skills elements of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and The Pensions Regulator's (TPR) Code of Practice for Public Service Schemes.

To whom this Policy Applies

This Training Policy applies to all members of the Pension Fund Committee and the local Pension Board, including scheme member and employer representatives. It also applies to all managers in the Flintshire County Council Pension Fund Management Team, the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), (from here on in collectively referred to as the senior officers of the Fund).

Less senior officers involved in the daily management of the Pension Fund will also be required to have appropriate knowledge and skills relating to their roles, which will be determined and managed by the Pension Fund Manager and his/her team.

Advisers to the Clwyd Pension Fund are also expected to be able to meet the objectives of this Policy.

Officers of employers participating in the Clwyd Pension Fund who are responsible for pension matters are also encouraged to maintain a high level of knowledge and understanding in relation to LGPS matters, and Flintshire County Council will provide appropriate training for them. This will be covered further in the Clwyd Pension Fund Administration Strategy.

CIPFA, ~~and~~ TPR and MIFID2 Knowledge and Skills Requirements

CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework and Code of Practice

In January 2010 CIPFA launched technical guidance for Representatives on Pension Fund Committees and non-executives in the public sector within a knowledge and skills framework. The Framework details the knowledge and skills required by those responsible for pension scheme financial management and decision making.

In July 2015 CIPFA launched technical guidance for Local Pension Board members by extending the existing knowledge and skills frameworks in place. This Framework details the knowledge and skills required by Pension Board members to enable them to properly exercise their functions under Section 248a of the Pensions Act 2004, as amended by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

The Framework covers eight areas of knowledge and skills identified as the core requirements (which includes all those covered in the existing Committee and non-executives framework)-

- Pensions legislation
- Public sector pensions governance
- Pensions administration
- Pension accounting and auditing standards
- Financial services procurement and relationship management
- Investment performance and risk management
- Financial markets and products knowledge
- Actuarial methods, standards and practice

CIPFA's Code of Practice recommends (amongst other things) that Local Government Pension Scheme administering authorities -

- formally adopt the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Frameworks (or an alternative training programme)
- ensure that the appropriate policies and procedures are put in place to meet the requirements of the Frameworks (or an alternative training programme);
- publicly report how these arrangements have been put into practice each year, including what assessment of training needs has been undertaken and what training has been delivered against the identified needs.

CIPFA – Investment Pooling Governance Principles for LGPS Administering Authorities

CIPFA's guidance highlights that, with the introduction of investment pooling arrangements, comes a need for a wider range of knowledge. The principles guidance supplements the existing CIPFA Knowledge and Skills framework and specifies that - As a result of investment pooling arrangements administering authorities will need to -

- ensure elected members or other individuals who are members of the oversight committee have a more in-depth level of knowledge in relation to investment pooling arrangements
- ensure any officers involved in working groups or subgroups of the oversight committee have a more in-depth level of knowledge in relation to investment pooling arrangements

The Pensions Act 2004 and The Pension Regulator's Code of Practice

Section 248a of the Pensions Act 2004, as amended by The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 (PSPA13), requires Pension Board members to:

- be conversant with the rules of the scheme and any document recording policy about the administration of the scheme, and
- have knowledge and understanding of the law relating to pensions and any other matters which are prescribed in regulations.

The degree of knowledge and understanding required is that appropriate for the purposes of enabling the individual to properly exercise the functions of a member of the Pension Board.

These requirements are incorporated and expanded on within the TPR Code of Practice which came into force on 1 April 2015.

Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFIDII)

The implementation of MiFIDII led to the need for the administering Flintshire County Council authority to be opted up to professional status to allow the Fund to continue to access the full range of vehicles and managers needed to meet the needs of the investment strategy. As part of this process the Fund Flintshire County Council had to provide evidence that Pension Fund Committee members had an appropriate level knowledge and that adequate governance arrangements were in place. In order for the Fund to be opted up to "professional status" In order to maintain this status the fund Council will need to continue to demonstrate the competency of existing and new Pension Fund Committee members and this Training Policy will support the fund in this aim.

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Application to the Clwyd Pension Fund

Flintshire County Council fully supports the use of the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Frameworks, and TPR's Code of Practice, as well as understanding the need for appropriate knowledge and skills to allow professional status to be awarded for MiFIDII purposes. Flintshire County Council adopts these principles and requirements contained in these publications in relation to Clwyd Pension Fund, and this Training Policy highlights how the Council will strive to achieve those principles through use of a rolling Training Plan together with regular monitoring and reporting.

The Clwyd Pension Fund Training Plan

Flintshire County Council recognises that attaining, and then maintaining, relevant knowledge and skills is a continual process for Pension Fund Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers, and that training is a key element of this process. Flintshire County Council will develop a rolling Training Plan based on the following key elements:

Individual Training Needs

A training needs analysis will be developed for the main roles of Pension Fund Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers customised appropriately to the key areas in which they should be proficient. Training will be required in relation to each of these areas as part of any induction and on an ongoing refresher basis.

Hot Topic Training

The Training Plan will be developed to ensure appropriately timed training is provided in relation to hot topic areas, such as a high risk area or an area of change for the Fund. This training may be targeted at specific roles.

General Awareness

Pension Fund Committee members, Pension Board members and senior officers are expected to maintain a reasonable knowledge of ongoing developments and current issues, which will allow them to have a good level of general awareness of pension related matters appropriate for their roles and which may not be specific to the Clwyd Pension Fund.

Each of these training requirements will be focussed on the role of the individual i.e. a Pension Fund Committee member, a Pension Board member or the specific role of the officer.

Training will be delivered through a variety of methods including:

- In-house training days provided by officers and/or external providers
- Training as part of meetings (e.g. Pension Fund Committee) provided by officers and/or external advisers
- External training events
- Circulation of reading material
- Attendance at seminars and conferences offered by industry-wide bodies
- Attendance at meetings and events with the Clwyd Pension Fund's investment managers and advisors, [either directly or as part of the Wales Pensions Partnership](#)
- Links to on-line training
- Access to the Clwyd Pension Fund website where useful Clwyd Pension Fund specific material is available

In addition Clwyd Pension Fund officers and advisers are available to answer any queries on an ongoing basis including providing access to materials from previous training events.

Initial Information and Induction Process

On joining the Pension Fund Committee, the Pension Board or the Clwyd Pension Fund Management Team, a new member, officer or adviser will be provided with the following documentation to assist in providing a basic understanding of Clwyd Pension Fund:

- The members' guide to the Local Government Pension Scheme ([provided via the Clwyd Pension Fund website](#))(~~LGPS~~)
- The latest Actuarial Valuation report
- The Annual Report and Accounts, which incorporate:
 - The Funding Strategy Statement
 - The Governance Policy and Compliance Statement
 - The Investment Strategy Statement including Clwyd Pension Fund's statement of compliance with the LGPS Myners Principles
 - The Communications Policy
 - The Administration Strategy
- The administering authority's Discretionary Policies
- [This Training Policy](#)
- [Other policies as relevant](#)

In addition, an ~~individual~~ training plan will be developed to assist each Pension Fund Committee member, Pension Board member or officer in achieving, within six months, their identified individual training requirements.

Monitoring Knowledge and Skills

In order to identify whether we are meeting the objectives of this policy we will:

- 1) Compare and report on attendance at training based on the following:
 - Individual Training Needs – ensuring refresher training on the key elements takes place for each individual at least once every three years.
 - Hot Topic Training – attendance by at least 80% of the required Pension Fund Committee members and senior officers at planned hot topic training sessions. This target may be focussed at a particular group of Pension Fund Committee members, Pension Board members or senior officers depending on the subject matter.
 - General Awareness – each Pension Fund Committee member, Pension Board member or officer attending at least one day each year of general awareness training or events.
 - Induction training – ensuring areas of identified individual training are completed within six months.
- 2) Ask our Independent Adviser to provide an annual report on the governance of the Fund each year, a key part of which will focus on the delivery of the requirements of this Policy.

Key Risks

The key risks to the delivery of this Policy are outlined below. The Pension Fund Committee members, with the assistance of the Clwyd Pension Fund Advisory Panel, will monitor these and other key risks and consider how to respond to them.

- Changes in Pension Fund Committee and/or Pension Board membership and/or senior officers potentially diminishing knowledge and understanding.
- Poor attendance and/or a lack of engagement at training and/or formal meetings by Committee Members, Pension Board Members and/or other senior officers resulting in a poor standard of decision making and/or monitoring.
- Insufficient resources being available to deliver or arrange the required training.
- The quality of advice or training provided is not an acceptable standard.

Reporting

The following information will also be included in the Clwyd Pension Fund's Annual Report and Accounts and, as part of that, also shared with :

A report will be presented to the Pension Fund Committee on an annual basis setting out:

- The training provided / attended in the previous year at an individual level
- The results of the measurements identified above.

This information will also be included in the Clwyd Pension Fund's Annual Report and Accounts.

At each Pension Fund Committee meeting, members will be provided with details of forthcoming seminars, conferences and other relevant training events as well as a summary of the events attended since the previous meeting.

Costs

All training costs related to this Training Policy are met directly by Clwyd Pension Fund

Approval, Review and Consultation

This Training Policy was originally approved at the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee meeting on 5 November 2014 and [further](#) amendments [to incorporate the requirements of the CIPFA Local Pension Boards Framework](#) were approved on 26 November 2015 [\(by the Pension Fund Committee\)](#) and in September 2018 [\(using officer delegations\)](#). It will be formally reviewed and updated at least every three years or sooner if the training arrangements or other matters included within it merit reconsideration.

Further Information

If you require further information about anything in or related to this Training Policy, please contact:

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