

# AVON PENSION news



THE NEWSLETTER FOR AVON PENSION FUND MEMBERS

## Making sure your expression of wish form is up-to-date



A key feature of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is that benefits can be paid in the event of your death. You can tell us who you would like to receive any death grant by completing an Expression of wish form. You can nominate anyone you wish. If you wish to nominate someone under 18 years old, you should obtain independent legal advice. If you nominate more than one person you must show how much of the grant each person is to receive, for example 40%, 60%. It must add up to 100%. You can change this as many times as you

like, and at any time.

Normally, the expression of wish form will be followed. But forms can become out of date and occasions do arise where the Fund must use its discretion where the form no longer appears appropriate. So, it is important that you submit a new form if your wishes change.

If the person nominated dies before you do then you will need to complete a new form to nominate your new beneficiary. If you have listed more than one

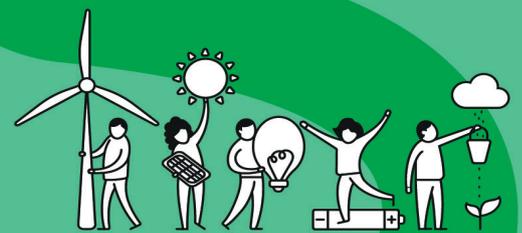
person and any one of them dies you will also need to complete a new form.

If you have nominated a spouse or civil partner and you divorce or the partnership is officially dissolved via a court process, the nomination will no longer stand. You may then wish to make a new nomination.

You can update your nomination by logging onto my pension online or by downloading a form from our website at [www.avonpensionfund.org.uk/nomination-forms](http://www.avonpensionfund.org.uk/nomination-forms)

## Investing in our sustainable future

> Find out more at [avonpensionfund.org.uk/climate-emergency](http://avonpensionfund.org.uk/climate-emergency)



AVON PENSION FUND IS ADMINISTERED BY BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

# Welcome to Avon Pension News

## Local Government Association (LGA) publish McCloud member FAQs

When the Government reformed public service pension schemes in 2014 and 2015 they introduced protections for older members. In December 2018, the Court of Appeal ruled that younger members of the Judges' and Firefighters' Pension schemes had been discriminated against because the protections did not also apply to them.

The Government has confirmed that there will be changes to all main public sector schemes, including the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), to remove this age discrimination. This ruling is often referred to as the 'McCloud judgment' after a member of the Judges' Pension Scheme involved in the case.

The changes will apply to members who were in the scheme on 31 March 2012 and also have membership after 31 March 2014 (without a break of

more than five years in any public service pension scheme).

**The Government has also confirmed that LGPS scheme members who qualify for protection do not need to make a claim for the changes to apply to them.**

*The LGA have published McCloud FAQs for scheme members on the national member website at: [https://lgpsmember.org/news/story/mccloud\\_qanda.php](https://lgpsmember.org/news/story/mccloud_qanda.php)*

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have begun the consultation process into proposals on how to remove age discrimination from the LGPS.

The MHCLG welcome views on the proposals from all interested parties, including scheme members. The consultation process closes on 8th October 2020, and full details are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-pension-scheme-amendments-to-the-statutory-underpin>

## How to get in contact

If you need to get in touch with us, wherever possible please use email. If you have an enquiry, please email: [avonpensionfund@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:avonpensionfund@bathnes.gov.uk)

You can also use the 'Contact us' facility on our website, to send your enquiry with your contact details by visiting the following webpage: <https://www.avonpensionfund.org.uk/contact-us>

As we continue to work remotely and have limited access to both our building and incoming post, we have introduced two online services, which for example, will help with processing the payment of retirement benefits.

### Sending and receiving documents electronically

SecureShare is a secure portal which allows you to safely receive and then return your completed documentation, forms and certificates electronically.

### Identity Checking

We have also introduced a secure electronic identity checking service operated by LexisNexis. Using this service will enable us to carry out any necessary identification checks online rather than requiring the original certificates or documents.

Full details on how to use both these services are available in the news section of our member website. <https://www.avonpensionfund.org.uk>



If you are not able to communicate digitally you can send the documents to the Avon Pension Fund at the usual address, however, incoming post is currently retrieved on a limited basis, and as such there may be a significant delay in our ability to retrieve your documents for action.

You can also access your pension account using our secure self-service website my pension online. Where you can view your pension details, access your annual benefit statement, perform estimates and update your expression of wish nominations and contact details.

If you have not already signed up for the service, it's a simple process, visit the registration webpage <https://myaccount.avonpensionfund.org.uk> with your National Insurance number, click on 'Register' and follow the instructions.

You can still contact us by telephone, please call 01225 395100. Our telephone service is operating weekdays, between 10am and 3pm.

# Focus on Investments: Sustainability and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The economic and societal impact of Covid-19 is now becoming more apparent and poses many additional challenges for companies, consumers, governments and investors alike. In our last newsletter we communicated our plans to directly address the risks posed by climate change. As we start to adjust to the 'new normal' it is important we redouble our efforts to transform our portfolio for a lower carbon world.

Amidst the unprecedented market volatility in March, companies responding positively to the challenges of climate change, environmental sustainability and social well-being were able to demonstrate their value. Over the first three months of the year, the Fund's low carbon global equities outperformed the mainstream equity market and our sustainable equity portfolio experienced roughly half of the severe declines suffered by its benchmark.

We continue to make progress in the following areas, which remain critical if we are to achieve our ambitious climate change goals: -

## 1. Reduce carbon exposure:

The Fund analyses its carbon footprint every year. This year saw a 12% year-on-year improvement in its carbon exposure (measured on a Weighted Average Carbon Intensity basis) meaning that the Fund invests in less carbon intensive sectors and companies than the wider market.

## 2. Invest sustainably:

Historically as oil prices fall renewable energy becomes more expensive in comparison and therefore a less attractive means of generating power. However, this has not happened due to the underlying demand for 'clean' energy and government policies which has lowered generation costs for renewables and made them more competitive when the price of fossil fuels fall. This is positive for the Fund as it means we will continue to benefit from increasing our investment in renewable energy infrastructure.

## 3. Engage:

In our last newsletter we published details of a landmark shareholder resolution we supported as part of Brunel calling on Barclays to phase out lending to non-Paris aligned companies. The bank has since committed to becoming net carbon zero by 2050 and will see it consult with shareholders on how to achieve this. The result is a great example of the power of Pooling and highlights the value of shareholder engagement as the Fund seeks to deliver on its ambitious climate change objectives.



**Examples of how we are delivering on our objective to deliver sustainable returns in a lower carbon world**

### Case Study 1: Engaging with key policy makers

Avon Pension Fund calls on EU leaders to ensure a sustainable economic recovery from COVID-19 which supports the EU Green Deal & upholds the Paris Agreement. The letter, prepared by the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change (IIGCC), and sent to EU heads of state and government received support from 109 investors representing €11 trillion in assets.

This follows recent engagement, co-ordinated by the IIGCC and supported by Avon Pension Fund in a letter to the UK Prime Minister calling for a recovery from the pandemic which builds a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient UK economy.

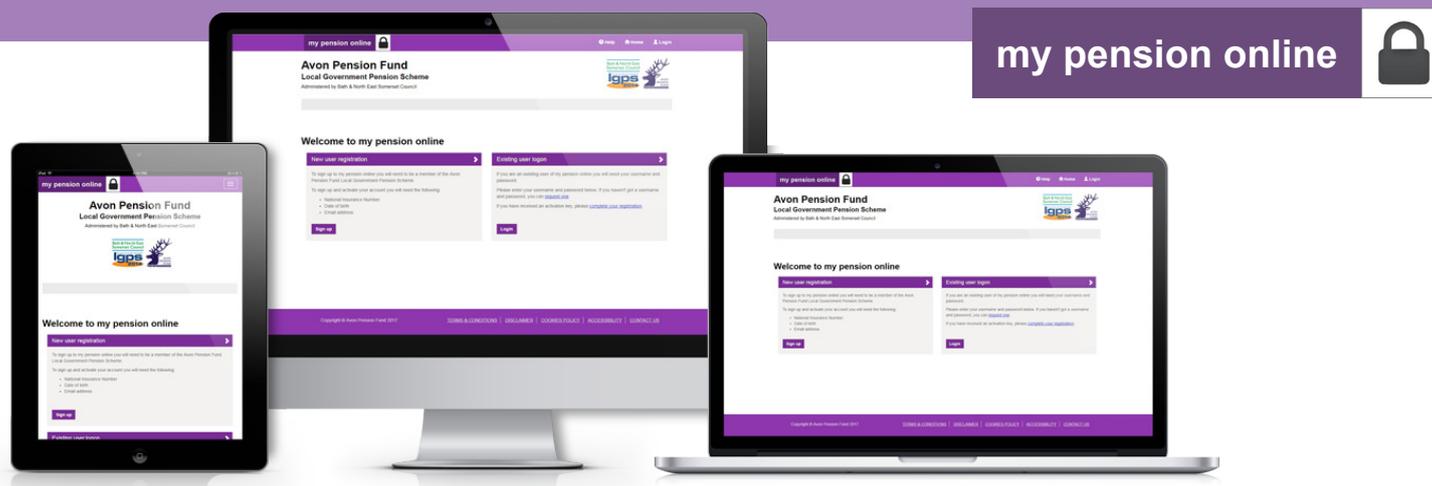
### Case Study 2: Investing sustainably

Through one of the portfolios managed by Brunel, the Fund has recently invested capital in the construction and operation of two new-build glasshouse projects covering 29 hectares; size enough to provide the UK market with 10% of its yearly consumption of tomatoes and sweet peppers!

The glasshouses are heated using waste heat from a nearby water treatment facility and qualify for the Renewable Heat Incentive scheme. The electrical power for the heat pumps comes from on-site Combined Heat and Power engines and the CO<sub>2</sub> from these engines is cleaned up and pumped into the glasshouses to improve crop yields. The overall result is a carbon footprint that is circa 75% lower than produce grown in a comparable gas-heated facility.

Find out more at:  
[www.avonpensionfund.org.uk/climate-emergency](http://www.avonpensionfund.org.uk/climate-emergency)

# Check your pension account online today!



The quick way to access details about your own pension is through **my pension online** the member self-service facility on the Avon Pension Fund website.

## Sign up today at [www.avonpensionfund.org.uk](http://www.avonpensionfund.org.uk)

These are some of the things you can do on my pension online:

- Use the pension calculators to carry out estimates – you can see what your pension could be if you were to stay paying into the scheme until you retire or if you were to leave the scheme
- Update your contact details – address, telephone and email details can all be updated
- Update your expression of wish form to tell us who you would like to nominate to receive any death grant if you were to pass away
- Calculate how much tax-free cash lump sum you could get using the conversion graph
- See the current value of your pension and view your pension account history year-by-year
- View your annual pension statements
- View your personal, employment and financial details – showing your current and previous employment
- Submit online enquiries or requests for services to us – such as name changes, requests for formal estimates or divorce quotes

## Going digital

We are aiming to be a “digital” fund and go paperless!



In the future we will be communicating through our website, email and “my pension online” (the online self-service facility where you can view your pension details). You can sign up to my pension online at: [www.avonpensionfund.org.uk](http://www.avonpensionfund.org.uk) and click on the “my pension online” logo.

But if you don't want to use these electronic methods or don't have online access you can continue to receive paper communications, you just need to write into us to let us know (please include your name, date of birth and National Insurance number).

## Communications preference

On **my pension online** you can also choose how you want us to communicate with you. On the dashboard go to the **My details** box and the **Communications preference** link. You can choose “email” (so we email you information) or you can choose “post” (to continue to receive information such as your annual statement in paper format). You can change your preference at any time.

## National Fraud Initiative

The Avon Pension Fund participates in the government's National Fraud Initiative (NFI) run by the Cabinet Office. We may have to provide member details to other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, for comparison. If you would like to know more about the NFI there is an article on our website at: [www.avonpensionfund.org.uk/national-fraud-initiative](http://www.avonpensionfund.org.uk/national-fraud-initiative)