

# Local Government Pension Scheme



THE ROYAL COUNTY OF  
**BERKSHIRE**  
PENSION FUND

**Making contributions following a period of absence**



Whilst a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) there may be occasions when you are away from work and in some cases do not pay pension contributions. This may be because of:

- A period of sickness
- A period of child-related leave (maternity, paternity or adoption leave)
- A period of agreed absence
- A trade dispute (strike)
- Jury service
- Reserve forces leave.

If you do not pay contributions for a period of absence your LGPS membership will reflect a break in service. There is, however, always an opportunity for you to pay contributions to avoid a break in membership and this leaflet explains how this works.

### **Sickness leave**

During any period of sickness, even if you enter a period of no pay, you are deemed to have paid your contributions in full. Therefore, you are credited with the LGPS membership that you would have received had you not been away on sick leave even though you may have been paying reduced or even no contributions throughout your period of sickness. In this case there are no contributions required from you to make good any break in membership, as a break in membership will not be recorded on your pension record.

### **Child-related leave**

Whilst a member of the LGPS, if you enter into a period of maternity, paternity or adoption leave you have to pay contributions with regard to any part of your absence for which you are entitled to receive pay, including any statutory pay such as Statutory Maternity Pay or Contractual Maternity Pay. This benefits you, as your membership of the LGPS will count in full even though you pay contributions on a reduced rate of pay.

If you enter into a period of no pay you will be given the chance to pay contributions in order to avoid a break in your membership. These contributions will be based on the rate of pay you were receiving immediately before the period of no pay commenced. So again, this is likely to be a reduced rate of pay or statutory pay. If you elect to pay these contributions your LGPS membership will count in full.

If you wish to pay contributions for any period of no pay you need to notify your employer, in writing, within 30 days of returning to work (although your employer can extend this period at their discretion). If you choose not to return to work, you can still pay contributions for your period of no pay in order to extend your period of LGPS membership to your date of leaving.

If you return to work and choose not to pay contributions for any period of no pay, your LGPS membership will reflect a break.

### **Agreed absence**

If you are away from your job for a period of time with the agreement of your employer (for any reason other than sickness or injury) for a continuous period of less than 31 days you must pay contributions on the rate of pay that you would otherwise have received but for being absent.

If your agreed period of absence extends beyond 30 days (up to a maximum of 36 months) you can elect to pay contributions for that period based on the pay you would have received had you not been absent. If you elect to pay these contributions you must notify your employer in writing of your decision, within 30 days of returning to work or 30 days from the point that your employment ceases if you do not return to work. Your employer does have discretion to extend this 30-day period.

If you return to work and choose not to pay contributions for your period of absence after the first 30 days, your LGPS membership will reflect a break.

If, before your period of absence, you had elected to pay additional contributions the following will apply:

- Purchase of added years (only applicable if you were a member of the LGPS before 1 April 2008) – you must continue to pay these additional contributions during any period of absence
- Additional Regular Contributions (ARCs) – you must continue to pay these contributions during any period of absence
- Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) – you can choose not to pay these contributions during any period of absence.

In the unlikely event of your death during an agreed period of absence, your personal representatives will be given the opportunity to pay contributions in respect of your period of absence, thereby improving the benefits payable from the LGPS on behalf of your dependants.

### **Trade dispute**

If you are away from work without the permission of your employer due to being involved in a strike, your LGPS membership will show a break for any days that you are absent unless you pay contributions to avoid that break.

The rate at which you have to pay contributions to avoid this break in membership is 16% of the pay that you would have received but for being on strike. This rate is set out in the Scheme regulations and, as any strike period is unauthorised leave, your employer does not make a contribution.

If you wish to pay contributions for any strike period you need to notify your employer, in writing, within 30 days of returning to work (although your employer can extend this period at their discretion).

If, before your strike absence, you had elected to pay additional contributions, the same rules will apply as outlined in the section 'Agreed absence'.

### **Jury service**

Absence due to a period of jury service is treated in exactly the same way as periods of agreed absence. Therefore, please refer to the section headed 'Agreed absence'.

### **Reserve forces leave**

If you enter into a period of reserve forces leave, you will only be required to pay contributions if your reserve forces pay during that period of service equals or exceeds the pay you would have received if you continued in your normal employment. If this is the case, you will be required to pay contributions on the actual pay that you receive (including any additional contributions that you may have elected to pay as outlined in the section headed 'Agreed absence').

If you are not obliged to pay contributions during your period of reserve forces leave, your membership of the LGPS will be deemed to have continued in full as if your contributions had been paid.

If you die, reach retirement age or become incapable of working in local government because of ill health whilst in reserve forces leave, your LGPS benefits, and those of your dependants where relevant, will come into payment as if you had remained in your employment.



More detailed information about the Scheme is available from the Pension Team:

Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund  
3rd Floor  
Thames Tower  
37 – 45 Station Road  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG1 1LX

Tel: 0845 602 7237  
Fax: 0118 950 2672  
E-mail: [info@berkshirepensions.org.uk](mailto:info@berkshirepensions.org.uk)  
Website: [www.berkshirepensions.org.uk](http://www.berkshirepensions.org.uk)

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The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is the administering authority to the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund.

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