

CHESHIRE CHAT

APRIL 2017

CPF CHESHIRE
PENSION FUND

Welcome to the 2017 edition of CHESHIRE CHAT, the newsletter for pensioner members of Cheshire Pension Fund. We welcome this opportunity to keep in touch, and hope you find this newsletter of interest. Keeping up to date on recent developments helps you to manage your retirement income effectively. In this edition we have a number of articles that we hope will be of interest to you.

As you will no doubt have noticed there's been a little change to the Cheshire Pension Fund branding. Don't worry, this has no effect on your benefits. We have just modernised our logo. We hope you like it!

1 Your Scheme retirement income

Now that your pension is in payment, check your Payslip to understand how much income you will receive from your pension over the next year. Information about your pension increase, pay dates for 2017/18 and the launch of our new e-payslip facility can be found on page 2.

2 Your State Pension and when you can claim it

Although you have started receiving your pension, you might not have reached State Pension Age yet. If not, make sure you check what your different sources of income will be. Find out what the State will provide at www.gov.uk/check-state-pension

Note: unless you were born before 6 October 1954, your State Pension won't be paid until you're at least 66. More information about changes to the state pension age and topping up your state pension can be found on page 5.

3 Keeping track of your pensions

If you've built up pension savings with another employer, make sure you keep in touch with them so they can pay your pension when it's due. If you've lost track of previous pensions, the Pensions Tracing Service can help. Visit www.gov.uk/find-pension-contact-details

4 Make sure you keep up to date

Find the latest pension news and Scheme information online at www.cheshirepensionfund.org

5 Who will receive benefits when you die?

If you have retired within the last 10 years, the Fund may pay a death grant lump sum to your beneficiaries when you die. The administering authority has absolute discretion over the payment but they will make every effort to comply with your wishes where practicable to do so. You can help the authority decide who your beneficiaries should be by completing an Expression of wish form, forms can be downloaded from our website or by contacting the pension helpdesk. Contact details are on the back page.

6 Other benefits payable to your dependants?

When you die, your spouse or financial dependants may be entitled to a pension based on the value of your own pension. Eligible dependent children are also entitled to a pension following your death. You can find more information about this at www.cheshirepensionfund.org

Pensions increase

Your Local Government pension is increased annually in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).

The 2017 increase will be 1% and will apply from **Monday, 10th April 2017**. The increase is calculated in line with the CPI figure at September 2016.

If your pension began before **11th April 2016**, you will receive the full increase, however if your pension began on or after this date, you will receive a proportionate increase this year. This proportion will depend on how many months your pension has been in payment.

Your pension payment and payslip for April will include two different pension increase rates. The current rate, which will be applied from 1st April to the 9th April and the increased rate from 10th April for the remainder of the month.

You should have already received a payslip in March and will receive another in April. For the rest of the year, you will only receive a payslip if the amount of pension paid to you differs by more than £1 compared to the previous month.

For those pensioners who have reached State Pension Age and who retired after 5 April 1978, the pension increase may be split between the State Pension and the LGPS pension. If you were a member of the LGPS before 6 April 1997 your pension may include something called a "Guaranteed Minimum Pension" (GMP). If so, the Department for Work & Pensions may have to pay some or all of the increase on this part of your pension, the value of which is included in your pension from us. The GMP increase will be paid with your State Pension.

Pension Pay Dates

Your pension will be paid on the following dates in the year 2017/18.

Month	Pay Date
Apr 2017	18 Apr 2017
May 2017	18 May 2017
Jun 2017	19 Jun 2017
Jul 2017	18 Jul 2017
Aug 2017	18 Aug 2017
Sep 2017	18 Sep 2017
Oct 2017	18 Oct 2017
Nov 2017	20 Nov 2017
Dec 2017	18 Dec 2017
Jan 2018	18 Jan 2018
Feb 2018	19 Feb 2018
Mar 2018	19 Mar 2018

e-Payslips

Later this year a new and convenient way of accessing your payslips will be introduced.

The **e-Payslip** system is an electronic online portal that you can log on to from any internet-enabled device, including personal computers, tablets and smartphones.

It is designed to be easy to use and provides all of your pay information at a glance, as well as full payslips that can be downloaded and saved or printed.

The system will give you access to all your payslips each and every month for up to seven years, as well as access to your annual **P60**.

If you would rather continue to only receive a paper version in April and May each year as you do now, then don't worry you will be able to '**opt out**' should you wish to.

Further information on how to access your payslips on-line will be issued later in the year.

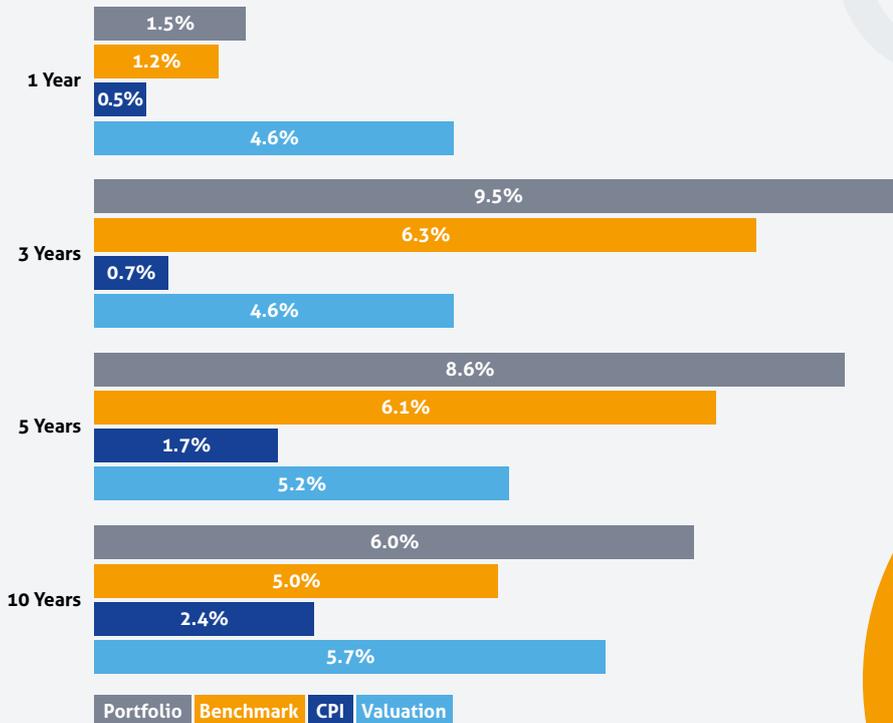
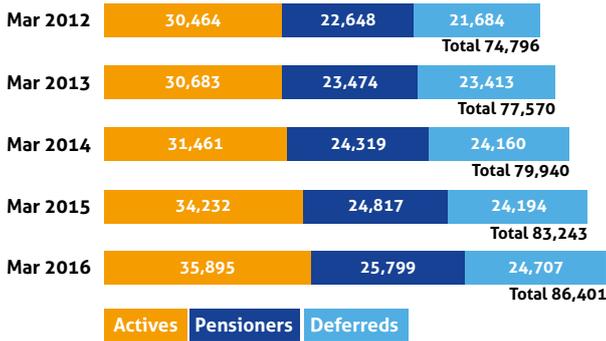


Key Stats

Here's some key stats about the fund as at 31 March 2016



Membership Profile

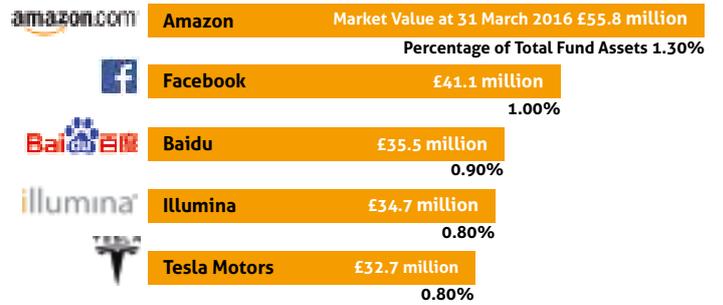


Investment Performance

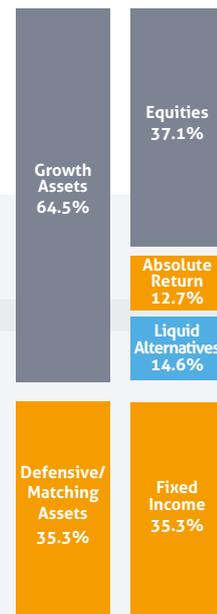
The Fund uses a tailored benchmark that reflects its specific asset allocation. The chart above shows the performance of the Fund relative to its strategic benchmark, inflation (CPI) and the return assumption used by the actuary as part of the triennial valuation. Returns for periods of greater than one year are annualised.



Top Five Direct Equity Investments



Cheshire Pension Fund Asset Allocation as at 31 March 2016



Want to know more?

You can find more information about the figures in these pages in the Scheme Report and Accounts, which can be found by visiting the Cheshire Pension Fund website at: www.cheshirepensionfund.org



Top tips for staying steady

Unfortunately many people aged 65 and over will be admitted to hospital across Cheshire this year with an injury related to a fall. By following these simple steps, or recommending them to an older family member or friend, you can improve strength and balance and prevent injuries sustained from falls:

- Exercise regularly take part in activities that challenge your balance and strengthen your legs like gardening and dancing
- Check your eyes and ears have regular sight tests and speak to your GP about any difficulties with hearing as this can affect co-ordination
- Ask about medicines certain medicines can make you feel faint or affect your balance. If you feel like this, let a GP or pharmacist know, as they may want to change your dosage or look at alternatives
- Eat a balanced diet calcium and Vitamin D is essential for keeping bones strong so include foods such as dairy products, oily fish, eggs and fortified soya products.
- Check home for hazards make sure your home is hazard-free and well lit - organise things so that you've not at risk of tripping over any wires, clutter or loose or lose carpets
- Look after your feet be sure to wear well-fitted shoes and slippers and report any foot problems to a GP or chiropodist

Re-Employment

Taking up new employment will not usually affect your pension. However there are some exceptions.

If you have been awarded an ill-health pension on either tier 1 or 2 since 1 April 2008 and have subsequently been re-employed by an LGPS scheme employer, please tell us straight away as your basic pension may be subject to reduction or suspension while you remain in employment.

If you commence new employment after retiring you will not be issued with a P45 as your tax free allowances will be used against your pension.

You will need to complete a '**Starter Checklist**' which can be found on hmrc.gov.uk and provide it to your new employer. Your new employer will then give this information to HMRC and it will help them to use the correct tax code.

For more information visit your local Council website.

Know your State Pension?

If you reached State Pension Age before 6 April 2016, you need to have completed at least 30 qualifying years of National Insurance contributions (NICs) to receive the full Basic State Pension.

If you reach State Pension age on or after 6 April 2016, your past NICs to that date will be used to calculate a **'Starting Amount'** for the new State Pension.

If you reach state pension age on or after 6 April 2016 you may not get the full new State Pension.

As you have probably paid into a **'contracted out'** pension scheme, between 6 April 1978 and 5 April 2016 the amount of new State Pension you receive will be reduced in respect of this period (A gap in your National Insurance record), to reflect the fact that you and your employer paid a lower rate of National Insurance (NI).

You can get an individual forecast of your state pension at: www.gov.uk/check-state-pension.

Changes to the State Pension Age

The current State Pension Age for men is age 65, and will increase incrementally to 65 for women by 2018. Following this, State Pension Age will rise to 66 for both men and women by October 2020. More increases are planned, which will raise State Pension Age from 66 to 67 between 2026 and 2028. Reviews will take place every five years thereafter, accounting for any changes in life expectancy. Find out your State Pension Age at www.gov.uk/state-pension-age



News Round Up Asset Pooling Progress

We told you in last years newsletter that the Cheshire Pension Fund was collaborating with seven Local Authority Pension Funds to develop a proposal that meets the governments pooling criteria. The collaboration is known as LGPS Central.

Over the last 12 months much progress has been made. In July 2016, the Partner Funds submitted a business case and this was subsequently formally approved by Government in November 2016.

LGPS Central Ltd has been set up as limited company jointly owned by the seven Partner Funds and the process of appointing key individuals has begun.

Partner Funds will continue to retain their separate identities and local accountability and the governance arrangements offer each Fund an equal say in the oversight of the new company.

A lot of hard work will be required again in 2017-18 to ensure that the project will meet the daunting timetable that will allow a launch of the investment pool by 1st April 2018.

What this means for you

Whilst Government want Local Authority Pension Funds to pool their investments your pension will continue to be administered locally here in Cheshire by the Cheshire Pension Fund and your benefits will not be impacted in any way. In terms of where the Cheshire Pension Fund invests its money, these decisions will still be set locally by the Cheshire Pension Fund Committee to ensure that the Fund has sufficient money to meet all its pension payments for many years to come.

Benefits of scale
(at least £25bn in assets)

Strong governance and decision making

Reduced costs and excellent value for money

An improved capacity and capability to invest in infrastructure

have your say

Under new investment regulations introduced in November 2016, all LGPS Funds are required to publish a new Investment Strategy Statement (ISS) before 1st April 2017.

They are also required to consult with any interested stakeholders. A formal consultation closed in March 2017. However, we are still interested in hearing your views on how the Fund invests its money. Further information can be found at:
www.cheshirepensionfund.org/?page_id=6979

If you have any comments or questions on the ISS please contact the Fund using the contact details below.

Email: **Pensions@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**

Please quote "ISS Response" in the subject title.

Post: **Cheshire Pension Fund, Council Offices,
4 Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BE**

The Local Pension Board



Last year I wrote to you to introduce, what was then a new Local Pension Board (LPB) and to explain its role and purpose.

The role of the LPB is not to be involved in the day to day running of the Pension Fund but rather to review the work carried out by the Fund and ensure that it complies with laws and regulations, including the requirements of the Pensions Regulator.

Since we were established last year we have met nine times and have received appropriate training to understand our requirements of the role. We were also able to take on a number of roles and make recommendations to the Pension Fund Committee.

If you are interested in finding out more about the LPB and its activities, why not read our first Annual Report which is available on the Pension Fund's website and covers the year ending 31 March 2016.

The LPB places a great importance on being open and transparent. You can find a wealth of additional information relating to the LPB, including minutes of meetings, on the fund's website using the link: **www.cheshirepensionfund.org/?page_id=5091**

There is also a facility to contact the Board should you have any questions/issues that you would like to raise with us.

Peter Raynes, Chairperson, Local Pension Board

GMP Reconciliation

A GMP (Guaranteed Minimum Pension) is the minimum amount an occupational pension scheme has to provide for those members who were contracted out of the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme (SERPS) between 6 April 1978 and 5 April 1997.

In April 2016 when contracting-out ended and the Single State Pension was introduced, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) issued closure schedules to pension schemes so they could compare the amounts of GMP held on both the HMRC system and the relevant schemes databases.

The Cheshire Pension Fund is currently comparing the values it holds with those held by HMRC to ensure the correct increases are being applied to the pension payments we make.

We may be in touch to discuss the results of the review if there are major differences in the amounts of GMP held on the Cheshire Pension Funds and HRMC records.



Your chance to win high street vouchers

The lucky recipient of last year's £50 high street vouchers was **Miss P H** from Macclesfield, who chose to receive Marks and Spencer vouchers.

Again this year there is no competition, instead we would be really interested to hear your thoughts on how informative you have found this newsletter. All responses will be entered into a prize draw for a chance to win **£50 in high street vouchers**. A winner will be randomly chosen on the closing date **30 June 2017**.

We will call the winner and send notification in writing. Entries are restricted to Pensioners of the **Cheshire Pension Fund only**.

Feedback questions – simply **circle** your answer

Do you have access to the internet? Yes / No

Have you visited our website www.cheshirepensionfund.org? Yes / No

If yes how often do you visit the site? Once a year / once a month / once a week

Is there anything additional you would like to see on the site? Yes / No

If Yes What?

If there were additional content from Cheshire Chat available only online, how likely are you to go to the website and read it? Very Likely / Likely / Moderately / Not at All

What do you most like about Cheshire Chat?

What do you like the least about Cheshire Chat?

How likely are you to access the e-payslips option? Monthly / Quarterly / Annually / Not at all

Please send your completed questionnaire to: **Cheshire Chat 2017, Cheshire Pension Fund, Cheshire West & Chester Council, 4 Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BE.**

Full Name (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Address

Telephone Number

Useful Links

Below is a list of some websites we think may be of interest to you.

Prescriptions and health costs: <http://bit.ly/2ejKQFc>

Winter Fuel Payment: <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/overview>

Free Museums and Art Galleries: <http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/>

Free or discounted TV licence: <https://www.gov.uk/free-discount-tv-licence>

Age UK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

The Cheshire Pension Fund or Cheshire West and Chester Council do not endorse or necessarily support the views of any the organisations listed or guarantee the accuracy of any information therein.

National Fraud Initiative

Cheshire Pension Fund will once again be participating in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) in 2017, which is an exercise undertaken every two years.

Detected cases of fraud and corruption are on the increase and cost the taxpayer hundreds of millions of pounds each year. Our involvement in the NFI and internal data matching is a vital tool in this fight against fraud and corruption.

Cheshire Pension Fund is under a legal duty to protect the public funds we administer, and to this end may use the information you have provided to us for prevention and detection of fraud. We may share this information internally across Council services and also with other bodies responsible for auditing and administering public funds. For further information about NFI and the Code of Practice go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-fraud-initiative>

For more information about the purposes for which the Council uses your information please see the data controller registration on the Information Commissioner's Office website at www.ico.org.uk or visit www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/data-protection-and-freedom-of.aspx

Tax Allowance

We receive a large number of queries from pensioners about their tax codes.

Unfortunately we are unable to explain why HM Revenue & Customs has set or amended your tax code to a particular level. In the first instance these queries should be made to **HM Revenue & Customs**.

You should have your National Insurance Number available and quote the Tax Reference **083/CCC** (for Local Government).

Telephone HM Revenue & Customs: **0300 200 3300**

Contact Details

Querying the amount of your Pension

Please call the Pensioner Payroll helpdesk quoting your Pension Number, phone: **01244 972125**

Notification of bank account changes

For security reasons we cannot accept this information by telephone. Please send your details in writing to:
**Transactional Service Centre,
Pensioner Payroll,
Cheshire West & Chester Council,
Goldsmith House, Hamilton
Place, Chester, Cheshire CH1 1SE.**

Please remember to provide your **National Insurance Number** and **Pension Number**. We would ask that you ensure you inform the Pension Fund before closing your current bank account as payment will be sent back to us if your account is closed.

Notification of address changes

If you change your address it is important you notify us so we can keep your records up to date. You can keep us informed by either writing to us at the following address, by telephoning the office, or completing the online form at www.tinyurl.com/nhl6ye6

For security reasons please quote your **National Insurance** and **Pension Numbers** together with your **date of birth**.

Write to:
**Cheshire Pension Fund,
Cheshire West & Chester Council,
Council Offices, 4 Civic Way,
Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BE.**

Other contact details

Some changes to personal details can be made via email but you must ensure your **National Insurance Number** is included in the message and the email must come from **your own email account**. Our email address is: pensions@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk.

Visit our website: www.cheshirepensionfund.org for information and updates relating to the LGPS.

Other enquiries

For all other enquiries or if you wish to speak to a member of the Pensions Team please call the Pensions Helpdesk on **01244 976000**.

The information in this newsletter can also be provided in large print, audio tape or braille format if requested.