

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Pension Board</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 September 2023</b>
<b>By:</b>	<b>Chief Finance Officer</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Communications Report</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>To inform the Pension Board of communication activity delivered in the last quarter</b>

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Pension Board is recommended to note the report.**

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### **1. Background**

1.1 This report is brought to the Pension Board to provide an update on communication tasks that directly affect the East Sussex Pension Fund (the Fund).

1.2 The Fund has a Communications Strategy which defines the main methods of communication we provide for our key stakeholders. This includes making the best use of technology where appropriate, to provide quicker and more efficient communications for the Fund's stakeholders. The Fund will ensure that communication methods are accessible to all.

### **2. Newsletters**

2.1 All newsletters now sit on the respective pages of the website and are promoted through page banners. They are also available through the Forms and Publications menu of the website.

2.2 An employer newsletter was issued in May 2023 with all relevant employers emailed. [Employer newsletter - May 2023 | East Sussex Pension Fund](#).

This newsletter contained some important updates on pension transfers and divorce, HR and Payroll guides, reminder of deadline for consultation on changing policies, employer training and backdated pay awards guidance.

2.3 The active and pensioner newsletters due to be issued in Q1 2023 were replaced by a posted Member update booklet. Since the last meeting the Fund have been able to assess the impact of the posted booklet on engagement by members. Key statistics following the distribution are below:

1. Average task volume per month (for 2023) = 335 compared to the volume of tasks in May 2023 = 558, showing a 166% increase
2. MSS activation requests of 219 in May 23, compared to an average of 133 in 2023, showing a 165% increase.
3. MSS log in issue tasks were 233 in May 23, compared to an average of 141 in 2023, showing a 165% increase.
4. Total mainline call volumes in May 2023 were 977, compared to 721 in May 2022, a rise of 35%.
5. On 29 April 2023, the date in which the first batch of booklets landed on doorsteps was the highest call volume in a day in ESPF history at 119 calls to both main and MSS lines.

6. 196 MSS related calls were taken in May 2023, double than we had in May 2022.
7. The 'Brief Guide to the LGPS' was downloaded 132 in May 23, compared to an average of 82 times in 2023, a 160% increase.

#### 4. Website

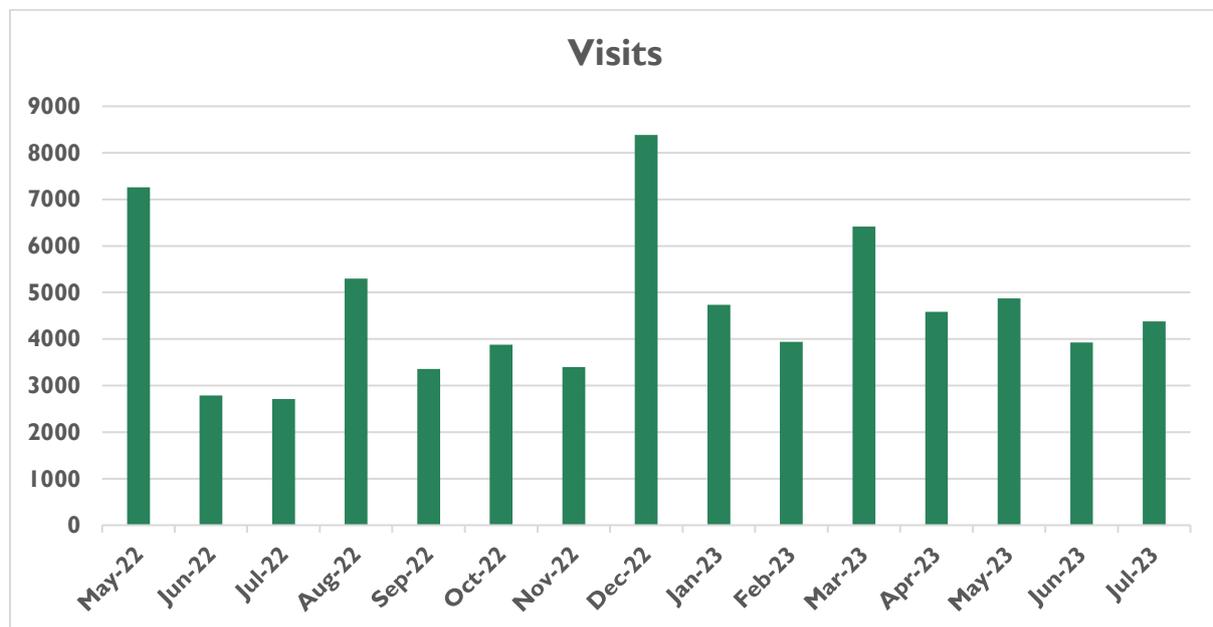
4.1 Work continues to ensure the Fund's website is relevant and engaging. Recent changes include:

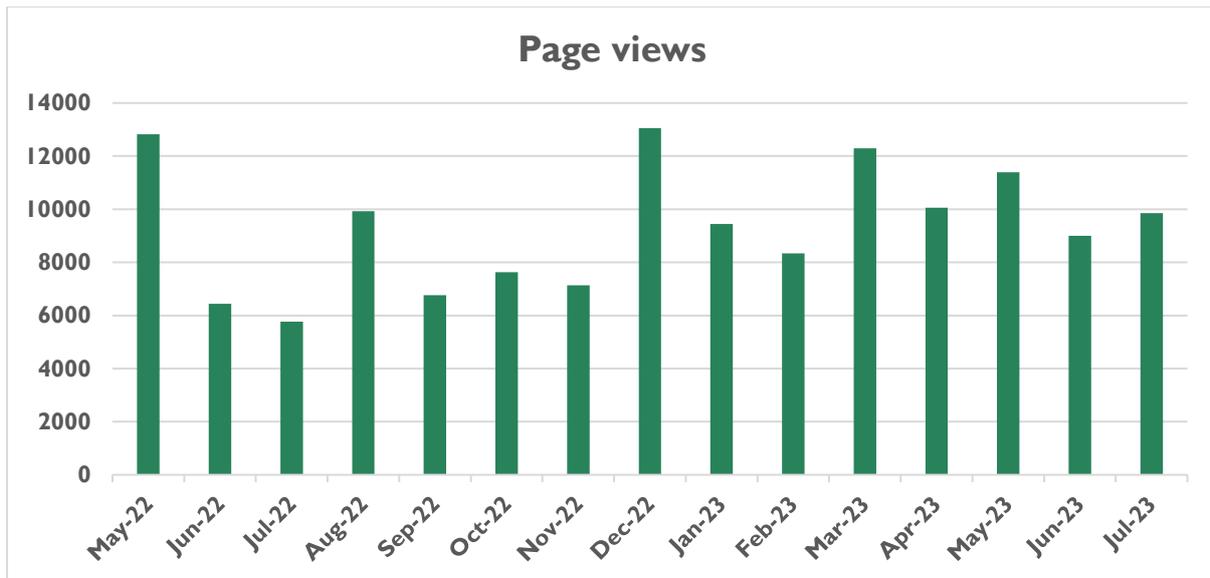
- Homepage – addition of important information about pension transfers & divorce, a general tidy up and format changes.
- Employer webpage has been updated to delete out of date information and promote various guides produced to support employers.
- Investments - the Q1 2023 ESG engagement report is now available.

4.2 The Fund continues to work with the software provider to make better use of website analytics which provides collection, reporting, and analysis of website usage. Better data will allow the Fund to determine the success or failure of activity and to drive strategy while improving the user's experience.

Hymans the software provide, have started to provide more detailed website analysis using google analytics and there is talk of Funds being given access to the underlying data so that we can produce our own bespoke reports.

Visitor numbers to the Fund's website continue to be healthy and includes a number of new visitors, with peaks around the times where the Fund issue communications – subsequently driving people to the site.





## 5. Bite-sized LGPS member training

5.1 The Fund are currently preparing a range of bite-sized training modules for employees. These will be run both virtually and face to face from September into 2024 for ESCC staff initially. Promotion will be via the ESCC Corporate training facility as well as within staff newsletters. The long-term aim is that these sessions will then be made available to other employers in the Fund. The sessions are:

- Introduction to the LGPS – Part 1 - virtual
- Introduction to the LGPS – Part 2 - virtual
- Introduction to the LGPS (in person)
- Your pension MOT
- Preparing for retirement
- The process of retiring from the LGPS

## 6. Annual benefit statements 2023

6.1 Work has begun on issuing the 2023 Annual Benefit Statements before the regulatory guideline of 31 August 2023. The statements have been simplified this year with a new design. The detailed notes now sit on the website. A further update is included in the Pensions Administration report.

## 6 Other communications work

6.1 Ongoing work across the Fund continues in implementing the Fund's brand, ensuring consistency in messaging, simplifying content available to members and employers and ensuring accessibility guidelines are adhered to. Accessibility scoring for the Fund website is now 90 (excellent) for content following the focus on this area.

6.2 The Communications Team has been heavily involved in reshaping the letters/templates/forms within the Pensions Administration software to issue to scheme members to ensure the format works when the Fund moves print supplier to the ESCC postal hub, and to ensure all letters are appropriately branded in line with our guidelines.

6.3 Work has been undertaken with the administration team to produce a new look payslip and P60 (in line with HMRC guidelines). Once complete the Fund aim to have these available via 'My Pension' – the member self-service portal.

## **7. Conclusion**

7.1 Pension Board are recommended to note this report.

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