

**Report to:** **Pension Board**

**Date:** **12 February 2026**

**By:** **Chief Finance Officer**

**Title:** **Employer Engagement and Communications Report**

**Purpose:** **This report provides an update on activities by the Employer Engagement team and on Fund Communications activities.**

---

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Pension Board is recommended to note employer engagement and communications updates detailed in this report.**

---

**1. Background**

1.1 This report is presented to the Pension Board to provide an update on employer engagement tasks that directly affect the East Sussex Pension Fund (the Fund) and Communications activity of the Fund.

1.2 Scheme Employers (scheduled and admitted bodies) must pay both employee and employer contributions to the Fund monthly, no later than 19 days of the following month in which the contributions were deducted from payroll. The contribution rates for members are set annually by the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and are based on salary bandings. The Employer contribution rate is set at the triennial valuation and recorded in the rates and adjustment certificate issued by the Fund's actuary or set on admission to the Fund agreed by the Fund's actuary.

1.3 The Fund has a [Communications Strategy](#) (updated in June 2025) which defines the main methods of communication provided for 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. Employer Engagement Activities**

**Employer Contributions**

2.1 Employer contributions - The below table sets out the number of late payments received after 19 days have elapsed following contributions deducted from payroll between January and December 2025.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Payments Due</b>	155	155	154	148	151	151	152	152	153	153	154	154
<b>Late Payment</b>	1	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	1	1	3
Existing employers late	1	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	1	1	3
New employers late	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2.2 From January 2025 until December 2025 there have been 16 late payments of contributions out of 1,832 expected payments.

**Late payment(s) for past quarter**

2.3 Regarding the late payment in October 2025, this is an existing employer with no other instances in the past 12 months

2.4 Regarding the late payment in November 2025, this is an existing employer whose responsible person has been absent and therefore currently cannot make payments through online banking, the Employer Engagement (EE) team have reached out to offer support.

2.5 Regarding the late payments in December 2025, (3 existing employers), 2 of the 3 were due to the deadline falling on a weekend and it being likely the employers didn't allow enough time for clearing and processing payments, and the other is the same employer as November where the responsible person is absent and support has been offered.

### 3. Projects

3.1 The employer engagement team have been assisting in several projects over the last quarter including:

- assisting with the timely submission of the pension regulator return alongside governance, ensuring statutory compliance;
- providing support with the testing of the Fund's website chatbot - contributing to improvements in the digital support that will be offered to members;
- attending and providing support at the employer forum held at the Amex stadium in November 2025;
- issuing contributions reports to all employers following the employer forum and triannual valuation and emailed consultation communications to employers as part of the funding strategy statement and pension administration strategy reviews, inviting and collating feedback.

### 4. Communications Update

#### Scheme Member training

4.1 The communications team continue to work closely with the Employer Engagement team to develop a booking process for training sessions, promotion via Scheme employers, scripts, YouTube videos and sending out and collating feedback. Six training sessions will be run by the end of January 2026.

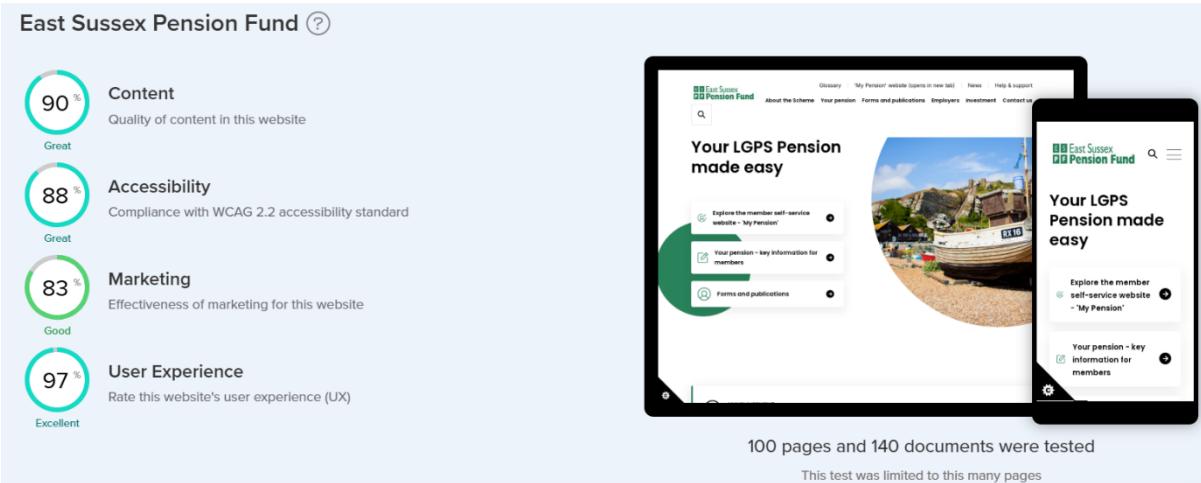
#### East Sussex Pension Assistant (ESPA)

4.2 The Communications team have been heavily involved in pulling together a knowledge base of over 200 questions and answers to test as part of the new digital assistant (which will sit on designated pages of the website as an automated tool to support members). Three stages of user acceptance testing are now complete. The project team are currently analysing results and making minor tweaks with launch currently planned around March 2026.

#### East Sussex Pension Fund main website

4.3 The website continues to be updated with relevant and engaging information for members and employers.

4.4 The Communications team continue to check the website (including all PDF documents) to ensure accessibility guidelines are adhered to. The primary tool used to manage accessibility is 'Silktide' which is a web governance platform that helps improve



website quality and user experience by finding and fixing issues related to accessibility, content, and marketing. A snapshot of the Silktide results (as of 22 January 2026) is shown below:

4.5 Website analytics data are detailed in Appendix 1.

#### 'My Pension' - member self-service website

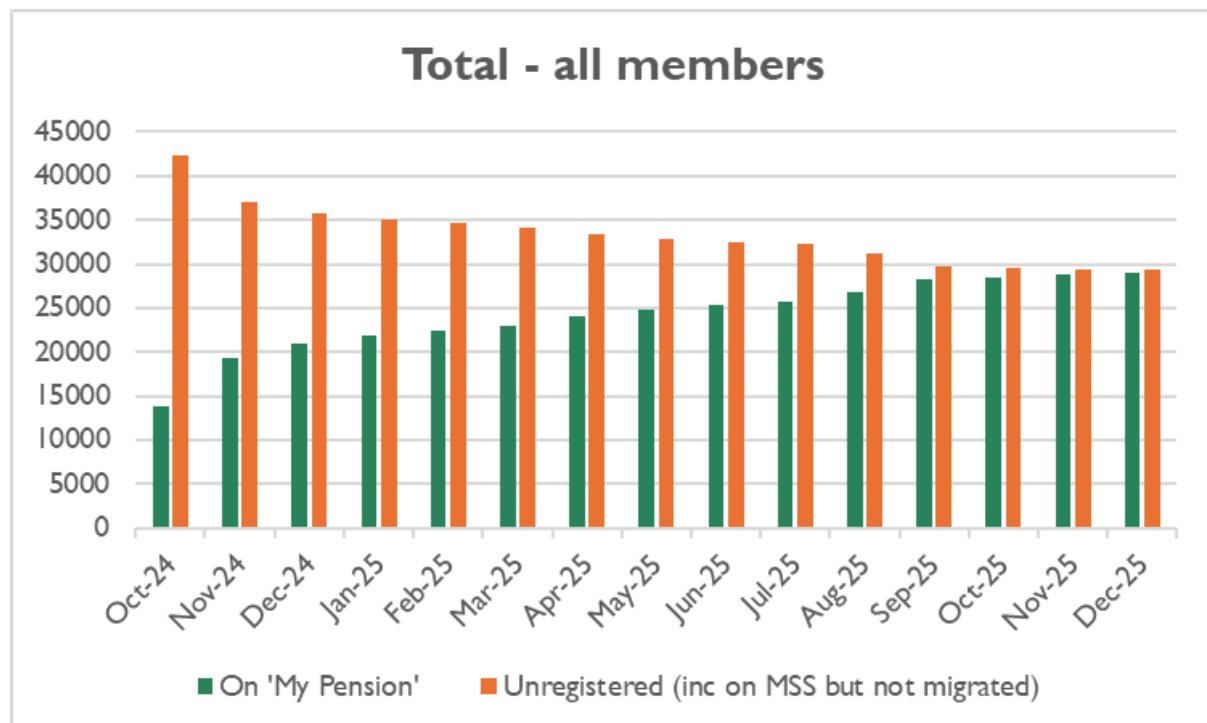
4.6 An updated version of the member self-service website, 'My Pension' went live in July 2024. The launch of this updated functionality is helping transform the way members access and engage with vital pension information online. The Fund will continue to promote 'My Pension' through newsletters, the website and through employers.

4.7 Several of the annual benefit statement communications issued in late August asked members to register for 'My Pension'. The figures below include over 3,300 new registrations since that date.

4.8 Shown below (as of 21 January 2026) are current registration levels (excluding electronic opt outs).

Type of member	On Engage (number)	% registered for 'My Pensions'	Old MSS % registered
Contributing	11,208	52.3	51
No longer contributing	8,723	39.7	46
Pensioners	8,752	64.3	50
Widow/dependant	608	36.2	19

4.9 The chart below shows the progress in member registration from October 2024 to date.



## 5 Other Communications activity

5.1 [Active member newsletter](#) issued, interim contribution reports issued, Funding Strategy Statement and Pension Admin Strategy consultations opened and administered, links to generic LGPS information added to some 'My Pension' pages, McCloud letters updated, Annual Reports and Accounts finalised, letters amended to take account of increased minimum threshold for issuing payslips.

## 6 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

6.1 The Pension Board is recommended to note the updates provided in the report.

**IAN GUTSELL**  
Chief Finance Officer

Contact Officer: Susan Greenwood, Head of Pensions  
Email: Susan.Greenwood@eastsussex.gov.uk