

## **Pensions administration – service provision during Covid-19 restrictions for staff**

On 23 March the Prime Minister asked that everyone stay at home except for a few restricted activities one of which was:

‘Travelling to and from work, but only where work absolutely cannot be done from home’

Previously (19 March 2020) the Government published [a list of key workers](#) in the advice to schools who are critical to the Covid-19 response. These include local government administrative staff ‘delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits’.

Administering authorities will be making their own decisions on the combination of home working staff and those who will be asked to continue to attend their place of work based on the above advice and their own circumstances (e.g. remote access to systems).

It may well be the case that authorities will not be able to deliver a full range of services in support of their pension scheme (or schemes) with such a combination of staff availability.

The [Pension Regulator’s advice for administrators](#) (20 March 2020) asks that the focus of service delivery at this time should be on the following areas applicable to DB schemes:

- payment of benefits
- employer contributions
- minimising the risk of scams
- supporting good decision making.

TPR also provides some comfort to administrators by recognising that some administrative breaches may occur at this time but that they will maintain a ‘proportionate and fair approach’ to any action they take.

We are currently working on a set of Q&As for administrators to include areas such as furloughed workers, enforced unpaid leave and staff transferred to the NHS, which we hope to publish next week. We are also talking to the relevant government department on matters such as delaying ABS requirements, the possibility of suspending transfers, moving the deadline for annual reports and the implications of a late and incomplete end of year process.

We are also working on a Q&A for scheme members and hope to publish this on [www.lgpsmember.org](http://www.lgpsmember.org) early next week.

There will no doubt be issues with employers not being able to provide timely and accurate data. We appreciate there is also a concern about the ability of some employers to continue to pay contributions - we are discussing this with MHCLG and fund actuaries.

In order for us to make the best case on your behalf to Government and TPR and ensure that we provide the support and guidance you need, it would be of great benefit if you could provide us with the information requested in the [online survey](#).

**Jeff Houston**  
**Head of Pensions - 24 March 2020**

The LGA pensions team is continuing to work as normal but is located at home. We can all be contacted by email or by mobile phone. Video calls can be arranged via MS Teams or Skype for Business. We are also continuing to liaise closely with other LGA teams such as Workforce, Finance and Legal in order to deal with issues which require a multi team approach.