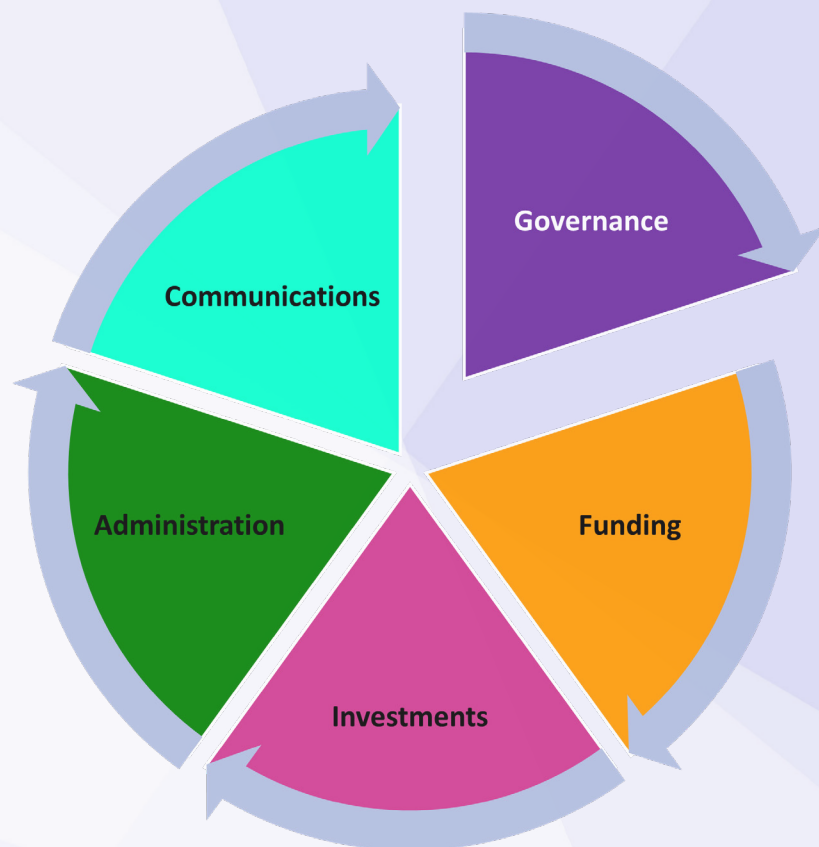


# Essex Pension Fund

## Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP)

January 2024



### Contents

Note	3
To whom this Policy Applies	3
Enquiries	3
Decisions	3
Complaints	3
Essex Pension Fund Resolution Process	4
First Stage of IDRP	5
Second Stage of IDRP	6
Additional Help	7
Application under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure	9
Time limits under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure	13
Further Information	14

# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

---

### Note

This document provides a straightforward guide to how the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP) operates in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), and is provided for general information only. It does not cover every aspect. It is not an interpretation of the Scheme Regulations. In the event of any unintentional differences, the **Scheme Regulations** will prevail. This guide does not confer any contractual or statutory rights.

### To whom this Policy Applies

This IDRP applies to any stakeholder whose rights or liabilities under the Scheme are affected by:

- a decision under regulation 72 (first instant decisions); or
- any other act or omission by a Scheme Employer or Administering Authority.

### Enquiries

If you are not sure which benefits you are entitled to, or you have a problem with your benefits, please either telephone the number on the letter your Employer or Administering Authority sent you, or contact your Administering Authority at Essex Pension Fund, Seax House, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH. They will try to deal with the problem as quickly and efficiently as possible. The Administering Authority is the authority that looks after the Fund. Many problems that Scheme Members have are, in fact, resolved in this way. They may be caused by misunderstandings or wrong information, which can be explained or put right easily. An informal enquiry of this kind may save you a lot of time and trouble.

### Decisions

From the day a person starts a job with an Employer, to the day when benefits or dependant's benefits are paid, the Employer and the Administering Authority have to make decisions under the Pension Scheme rules that affect stakeholders. When a stakeholder is notified of a decision they should check, as far as they can, that it is based on the correct details and that they agree with the decision.

### Complaints

If you are not satisfied with any decision affecting you, made in relation to the Scheme, you have the right to ask for it to be looked at again under the formal complaint procedure. You also have a right to use the procedure if a decision should have been made by your Employer or Administering Authority, but it hasn't been. The complaint procedure's official name is the IDRP.

# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

There are also a number of other regulatory bodies, such as the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), which may be able to help you. They are described in the “[Additional Help](#)” section.

The formal complaint procedure has two stages. Many complaints are resolved at the first stage. Any complaint you make should be treated seriously and considered **thoroughly and fairly**.

You can ask someone to take your complaint forward on your behalf. This could be, for instance, a trade union official, welfare officer, your spouse or partner, or a friend.

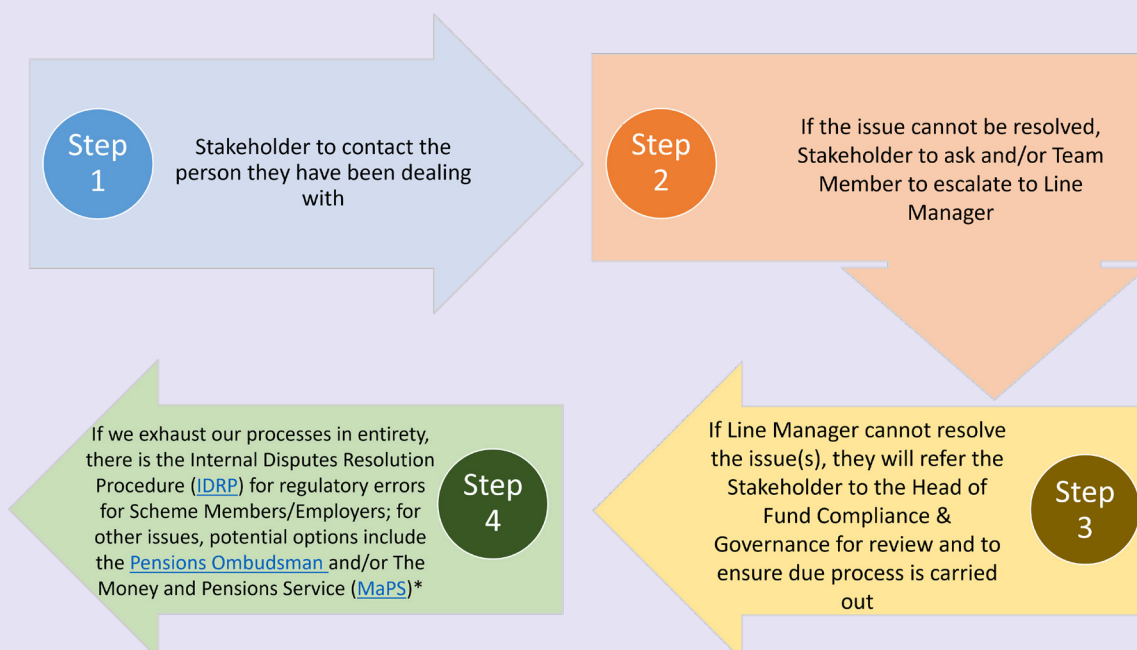
No charge is made at any stage for investigating a complaint under the IDRP. But expenses that you will have to meet are your own (and/or your representative’s) time, stationery and postage.

At any stage during the formal complaint procedure you can contact MaPS for information and **advice** (see “Additional Help” section).

Please remember that, before going to the trouble of making a **formal complaint**, your Administering Authority may welcome the opportunity to try to resolve the matter about which you are dissatisfied in an informal way. It may be worth checking again that they know you are concerned, and why.

## Essex Pension Fund Resolution Process

The Fund will always strive to deliver to all Stakeholders the best service and resolve any issues, that are within the Fund’s control, in a timely manner. For those instances where we have been unable to resolve the issues, the Fund takes the following approach to a **resolution**.



# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

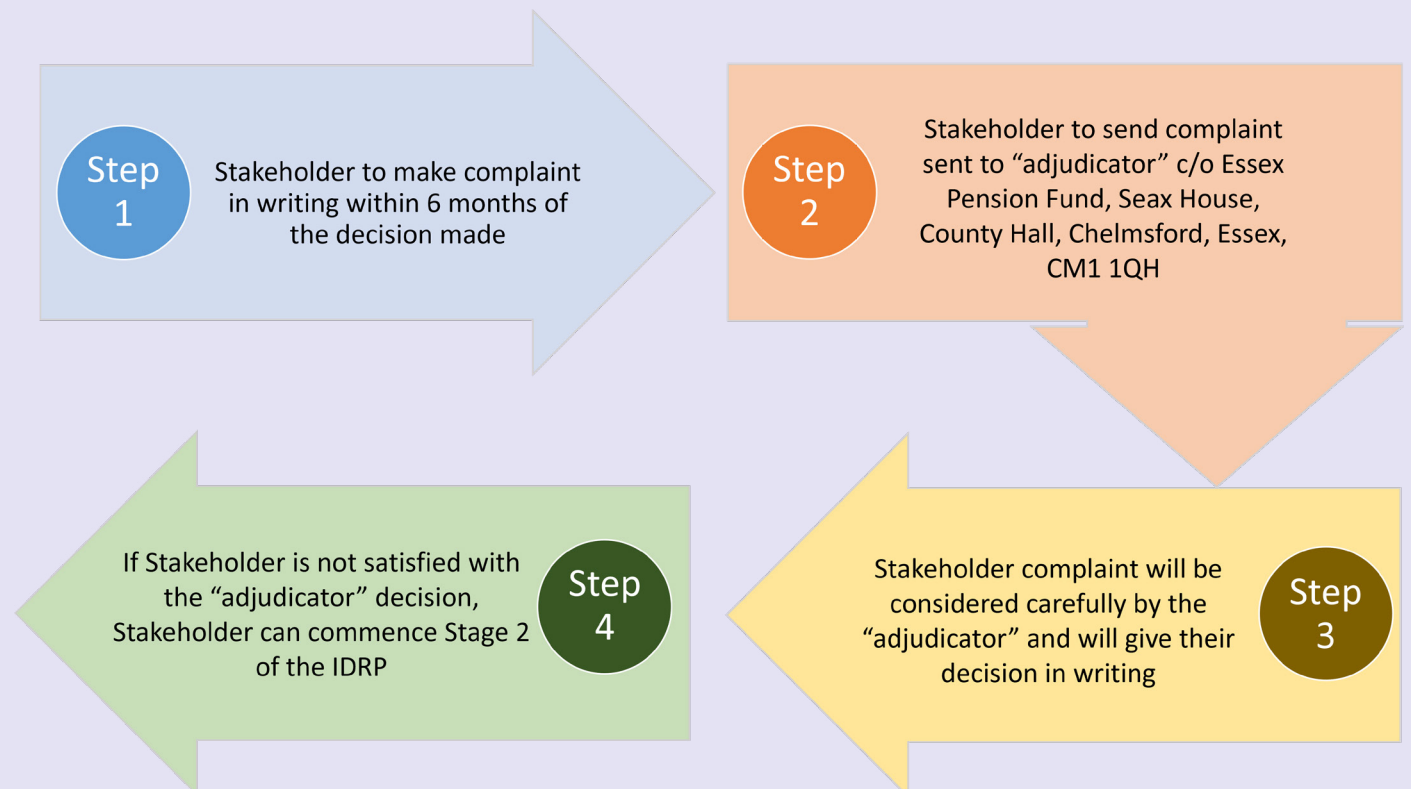
### First Stage of IDRP

If you need to make a formal complaint, you should make it:

- in **writing**, using the application form at pages 9 - 12; and
- normally within **6 months** of the day when you were told of the decision you want to complain about.

Your complaint will be considered carefully by a person appointed by the body that made the decision against which you wish to complain. This guide calls them the “**adjudicator**”. That person is required to give you their decision in writing.

If the adjudicator’s decision is contrary to the decision you complained about, the Employer or Administering Authority who made that original decision will now have to deal with your case in accordance with the adjudicator’s decision.



# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

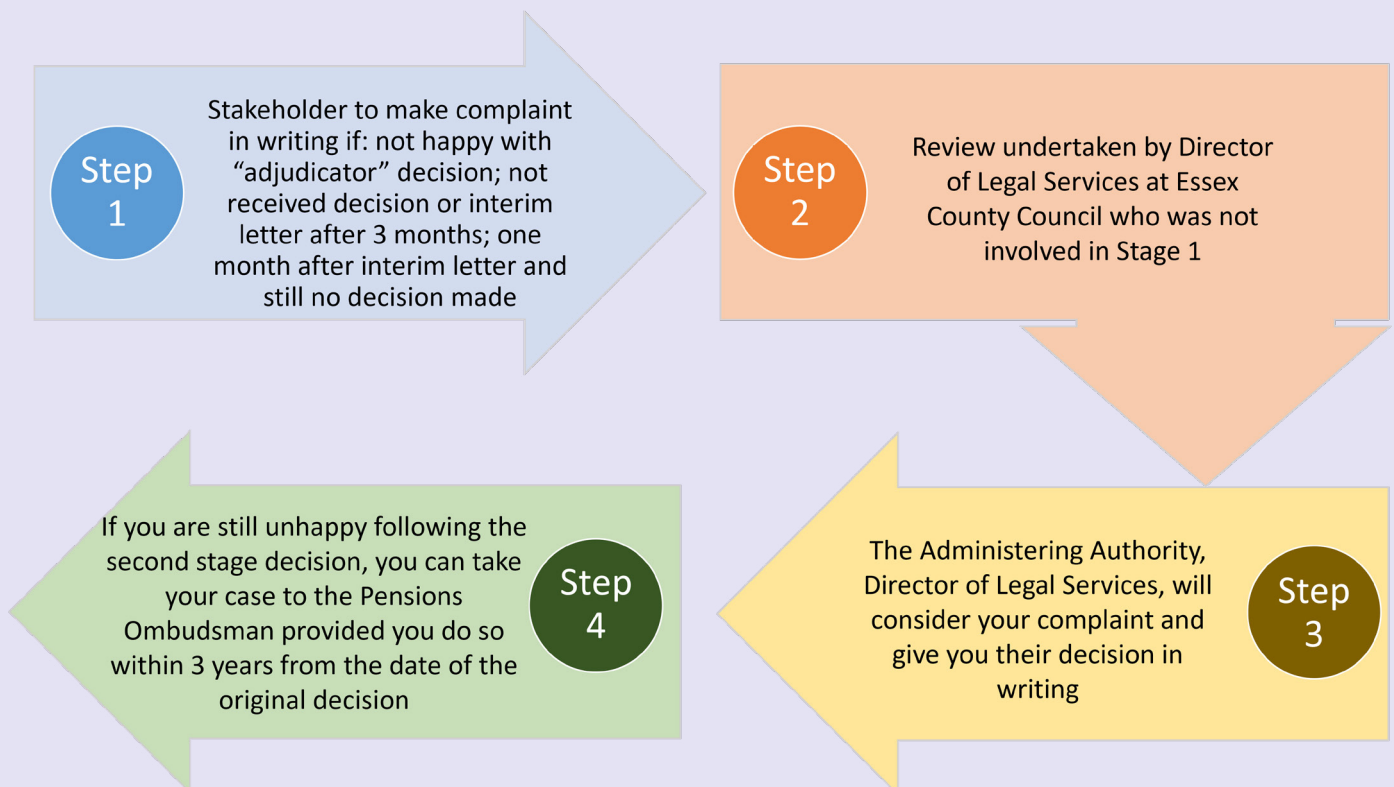
### Second Stage of IDRP

You can ask the Administering Authority to take a fresh look at your complaint in any of the following circumstances:

- you are **not satisfied** with the adjudicator's first-stage decision;
- you have not received a decision or an interim letter from the adjudicator, and it is **3 months** since you lodged your complaint;
- it is one month after the date by which the adjudicator told you (in an interim letter) that they would give you a decision, and you have still not received that decision.

This review would be undertaken by a person **not involved** in the first stage decision. You will need to send the Administering Authority your complaint in writing. The time limits for making the complaint are set out in the table on pages 13 - 14. The Administering Authority will consider your complaint and give you their decision in writing.

If you are **still unhappy** following the Administering Authority's second stage decision, you can take your case to the **Pensions Ombudsman** provided you do so within 3 years from the date of the original decision (or lack of a decision) about which you are complaining.



# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

---

### Additional Help

#### Money and Pensions Service (MaPS)

**At any time** if you are having difficulties in sorting out your complaint, you may wish to contact MaPS.

MaPS can provide **free advice** and information to explain your rights and responsibilities. To get information or guidance or to submit an enquiry online you can visit their website at [www.maps.org.uk](http://www.maps.org.uk) or you can contact MaPS by phone or post.

The **Helpline number** is: 01159 659570 or you can write to:  
Money and Pensions Services  
Brough Hall  
Cauldwell Street  
Bedford  
MK42 9AP

Or email: [contact@maps.org.uk](mailto:contact@maps.org.uk)

If you have received a second-stage decision under the LGPS IDRP, are not satisfied with that decision, and still think your complaint is well-founded, MaPS may be able to help to resolve your complaint or dispute. Before asking the MaPS to help in **resolving** a dispute, you must have already tried to settle it using the LGPS IDRP described above.

A MaPS adviser cannot force a pension scheme to take a particular step but, if they think your complaint is **justified**, they will try to resolve the problem through conciliation and mediation. MaPS would need copies of all relevant documents, including the correspondence about your complaint under the IDRP and how it was dealt with.

#### Pensions Ombudsman (PO)

The Ombudsman investigates complaints and **settles disputes** about pension schemes. However, before contacting the Ombudsman, the Pensions Ombudsman's Office would normally expect you to have:

- been given first-stage and second-stage IDRP decisions by the LGPS; and
- asked for the help of MaPS.

The Pensions Ombudsman is **completely independent** and acts as an impartial adjudicator. Their role and powers have been decided by Parliament. There is no charge for using the Pensions Ombudsman's services.

# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

---

The Ombudsman **cannot** investigate matters where legal proceedings have already started but, subject to that, they can settle disputes about matters of **fact or law** as they affect occupational pension schemes.

They can also investigate and decide any complaint or dispute about the **maladministration** of a pension scheme. “Maladministration” is about the way that a decision is taken, rather than about the merits of the decision. Examples of maladministration would be unreasonable delay, neglect, giving wrong information and discrimination.

The Ombudsman’s decision is **final** and binding on all the parties, subject to any appeal made to the High Court on a point of law.

You must refer your complaint to the Ombudsman **within 3 years** of the event about which you are complaining, or within 3 years of when you first became aware of the problem.

The Pensions Ombudsman can be contacted:

In writing:                10 South Colonnade  
                                  Canary Wharf  
                                  E14 4PU

By telephone:            0800 917 4487

By email:                 [enquiries@pensions-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@pensions-ombudsman.org.uk)

Website:                 [www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk) (where you can submit an online complaint form)



# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

### Application under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP)

You can use this form:

- a.) to apply to the adjudicator at stage 1 of the IDRP if you want them to investigate a complaint concerning your pension;
- b.) to apply to the Administering Authority if you want them to reconsider a determination made by the adjudicator.

Please write clearly in ink, and use capital letters in boxes 1, 2 and 3.

#### 1. Member's details:

If you are the member (the person who is or was in the Scheme), or a prospective member (a person who is eligible to be a member of the Scheme), please give your details in this box. You can then go straight to box 4.

If you are the member's dependant or beneficiary/potential beneficiary (for example, their husband, wife or child), please give the member's details in this section, and then go to box 2.

If you are representing the person with the complaint, please give the member's details in this section, and then go to box 2.

Full Name	
Address	
Date of Birth	
Employer	
National Insurance Number	

# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

---

### 2. Dependant's (or beneficiary/potential beneficiary's) details:

If you are the member's dependant, or beneficiary/potential beneficiary, and the complaint is about a benefit for you, please give your details in this box and then go to box 4.

If the complaint is about a benefit for a dependant and you are the dependant's representative, please give the dependant's details in this box and then go to box 3.

Full Name	
Address	
Date of Birth	
Relationship to member	

### 3. Representative's details:

If you are the member's or dependant's representative, please give your details in this box.

Full name	
Address	
The address response letters should be sent to	

# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

---

### 4. Your Complaint

Please give full details of your complaint in this box. Please try to explain exactly why you are unhappy, giving any dates or periods of Scheme membership that you think are relevant.

If there is not enough space, please go on to a separate sheet and attach it to this form.

Remember to write your name and national insurance number at the top of any separate sheet if you are a member. Or, if you are not a member, put the member's name and national insurance number at the top of any separate sheet.

# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

---

### 5. Your Signature

I would like my complaint to be considered and a decision to be made about it. I am a:

- Scheme Member / former Member / prospective Member \*
- Dependant or beneficiary / potential beneficiary of a former Member \*
- Member's representative / dependant's representative \*

\* delete as appropriate

Signed:

Date:

### 6. Please enclose a copy of any notification of the decision you are complaining of which has been issued by the Employer or Administering Authority.

Also enclose any other letter or notification that you think might be helpful.

**Please send this form to:**

#### Stage 1 of the IDRP

The adjudicator, C/O Essex Pension Fund, Seax House, County Hall, Chelmsford CM1 1QH.

#### Stage 2 of the IDRP

Paul Turner, Director for Essex Legal Services, Seax House, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH.

# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

### Time limits under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure

Your situation	To complain to	Time limit
You have received a decision on your benefits under the pension scheme from your employer/administering authority, and there seem to be good grounds for complaining.	The adjudicator under the first stage of the procedure.	6 months from the date when you were notified of the decision.
You have received a first stage decision on your complaint from the adjudicator, but you are not satisfied.	The relevant administering authority under the second stage of the procedure.	6 months from the date of the adjudicator's decision.
You made your complaint in writing to the adjudicator, with all the information they needed but, 3 months later, you have not received their decision on your complaint or any interim reply.	The relevant administering authority under the second stage of the procedure.	9 months from the date when you submitted your complaint.
You received an interim reply to your complaint to the adjudicator, within 2 months of applying to them. Their reply promised you a decision by a specified date but, one month after the specified date, you still have not received their decision.	The relevant administering authority under the second stage of the procedure	7 months from the date by which you were promised you would receive a decision.
Your complaint is that your employer or administering authority have failed to make any decision about your benefits under the pension scheme.	The adjudicator under the first stage of the procedure.	6 months from the date when the employer or administering authority should have made the decision.
Your complaint went to the administering authority under the second stage of the procedure. You received their decision but you are still not satisfied.	The Pensions Ombudsman. Note that the Ombudsman will normally expect you to have asked MaPS for help first.	3 years from the date of the original decision about which you are complaining.

# Essex Pension Fund

## IDRP

Your situation	To complain to	Time limit
You have taken your complaint to the administering authority under the second stage of the procedure but, 2 months after your complaint was received by the authority, you have not received their decision on your complaint or any interim reply.	The Pensions Ombudsman. Note that the Ombudsman will normally expect you to have asked MaPS for help first.	3 years from the date of the original decision about which you are complaining.
You received an interim reply to your second stage complaint to the administering authority, within 2 months of applying to them. Their reply promised you a decision by a certain date but, by that date, you still have not received their decision.	The Pensions Ombudsman. Note that the Ombudsman will normally expect you to have asked MaPS for help first.	3 years from the date of the original decision about which you are complaining.

### Further Information

If you require further information about this IDRP, please contact:

Amanda Crawford, Head of Fund Compliance and Governance, Essex Pension Fund  
 Email – [Amanda.crawford@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Amanda.crawford@essex.gov.uk)

Jody Evans, Director for Essex Pension Fund  
 Email – [Jody.evans@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Jody.evans@essex.gov.uk)

Essex Pension Fund  
 Seax House  
 County Hall  
 Chelmsford  
 Essex  
 CM1 1QH