

# Teachers' pensions

Are you ready to consult with your teachers?



*We understand the significance of deciding to consult with your teachers on a change to their benefits. In uncertain times, ensuring your consultation and communication strategy is well thought out and well prepared is key. This quick checklist will help you focus on the issues that matter and make sure you are ready for what lies ahead.*

The four key things you need to do are:

**Make a well-informed decision** – Entering a consultation process with your teachers should not be taken lightly. We have created a separate [decision-making checklist](#) to help you focus on the issues that matter and make a decision with confidence at the right time.

**Plan your consultation** – the key to a well-run and engaging consultation is planning. Not only will this make sure you have everything and everyone you need in place, it will give your teachers a clear picture of what to expect throughout the process.

**Prepare communications** – There are many ways to communicate with your teachers during a consultation. However you decide to communicate, the communications should be clear, credible and empathetic to how to your teachers are likely to feel. The communications must also be consistent with each other, so preparation is important.

**Be ready to engage** – Any meaningful consultation will require engagement with your teachers and allow time to reflect on feedback. It is important to know your process for responding to questions and who will be involved in that process.

The rest of this document provides an action plan for you to work through to ensure you're ready. If you would like advice and support in planning and running a consultation with your teachers, please contact our dedicated specialist TPS advisory team using the details below. We would be pleased to give you more information on the way we are helping independent schools and how we can tailor our support to your school.

## Contact LCP

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June 2020

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# Are you ready to consult with your teachers?

## Make a well-informed decision

**Get up to speed** – Pensions are complex, and the landscape is moving. With a new TPS valuation underway, ongoing court cases and potential future reforms to the TPS it's important to ensure that your decision-making process starts with the facts.

**Understand your options** – There isn't a "one size fits all" answer, and the range of options individual schools can consider is broad. It'll be important to evidence that you've considered the full range of options and considered why they might be right or wrong for you.

**Consider the impact** – Your teachers are essential to the success of your school. The impact on your teachers' benefits (both during and after their working lifetime) of any course of action will need to be balanced with the cost and risk implications for you as a school.

**Make a decision** – Any proposal you make to your teachers will need a robust business case and rationale for change.

Whilst much of this may seem like common sense, we have seen consultations falter where decisions have not been well thought through. We have created a detailed [decision-making checklist](#) to help you focus on the issues that matter and make a decision with confidence at the right time.

## Plan your consultation

Area	Action	Done?
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide who will run the consultation at your school, and who will be the voice of the Governors. The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team should be onboard and capable of answering questions from teachers about the process, but be aware of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.</li> <li>Understand the likely employee representatives and whether there is likely to be union representation. Communication with this group will be vital to a well-run consultation.</li> <li>Consider any outside support you may need (e.g. actuaries, lawyers, financial advisors, HR support) and engage early to allow time for their appointment and advice to be incorporated. This may include support in planning, developing a strategy and drafting/reviewing communications, as well as legal advice on contractual changes and ensuring that the consultation requirements are met.</li> </ul>	
Communications strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan how you want to communicate with your teachers. Consider your preferred forms of communication, the tone you wish to use and when to issue them.</li> <li>Consider how your communications will fit with any ongoing projects and how the school and teachers may be operating during and following the pandemic.</li> </ul>	
Timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree a detailed timetable for your consultation. Whilst the proposed date of change is important, you should allow time for: preparation; drafting and agreeing communications; appointing employee representatives and holding regular meetings with them; and potential notice periods.</li> </ul>	

Having a clear plan and communications strategy will help both you and your teachers understand what you are trying to achieve. The level of support you will need along the way will depend on your level of internal resource and expertise. We would be happy to discuss drafting a detailed consultation plan for you.

# Are you ready to consult with your teachers?

## Prepare communications

Area	Action	Done?
Written communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the forms of written communications you would like to issue to teachers, which could include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an announcement from the Governors ahead of consultation</li> <li>nomination procedures and forms for employee representatives</li> <li>consultation document detailing your proposal and rationale for change, potentially including illustrations of the changes to teachers' benefits</li> <li>frequently asked questions document (to be updated as needed)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Decide who will draft and review these communications. External advisors can use their experience from other consultations to help ensure these communications contain the required information and are written in a way that is clear, credible and empathetic to your teachers.</li> <li>Put a plan in place to issue the communications in line with your consultation timetable.</li> </ul>	
Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the forms of oral communications you would like to use. Presentations from Governors are a powerful way to convey your schools' message. External experts can be used to educate teachers on the TPS and your proposals to help them understand how their benefits will change.</li> <li>Consider the timings and number of presentations. Smaller groups are likely to increase engagement, but this needs to be balanced with the logistics and cost of additional presentations. We find that groups of c.25 work well.</li> </ul>	
Other communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider if further support is needed. 1-to-1 sessions, email and telephone helplines, and online benefits modellers for teachers can enhance teacher engagement and understanding.</li> </ul>	

Please visit [teacherspensions.lcp.uk.com](https://teacherspensions.lcp.uk.com) for more information on how we are helping schools communicate with their teachers, or contact us on +44 (0) 1962 454 661 / [teacherspensions@lcp.uk.com](mailto:teacherspensions@lcp.uk.com)

## Be ready to engage

Area	Action	Done?
Responding to queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide who will be the school's main point of contact for questions from teachers and unions, and the way queries can be escalated to the Governors, if needed.</li> </ul>	
Making adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be prepared to make adjustments to your proposal and consultation timetable. Allow time for contingency, further communications and plan regular meetings of decision makers. Deciding points of flexibility and consideration of options in advance will help make meetings and decisions more efficient.</li> </ul>	

**It will be important for your teachers to feel their views and voices are heard. Being ready to engage will show that your teachers' views are important to you and that the consultation is not a foregone conclusion.**