

West Midlands Pension Fund Employer Self-Service (ESS) Frequently Asked Questions

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Employer Self-Service (ESS) FAQs

General Processing

How do I access Employer Self-Service (ESS)?

Access to ESS is through our website: [Employer Self-Service Landing Page](#).

Please bookmark this page because it contains important information about any scheduled downtime or known issues.

Please access the platform by using Google Chrome (preferred) or Microsoft Edge. Internet Explorer is no longer supported by Microsoft, and therefore does not receive the required updates in order to support ESS use.

Where do I go for help with ESS?

In the first instance, please check our website which contains guidance documents and videos to help you: [Employer Self-Service](#).

You can also book onto our upcoming webinars which focus on individual processes in ESS like submitting your Monthly Data or Exit Interface files: [WMPF Webinars](#)

Alternatively, please email us on WMPFEmployerSystemSupport@wolverhampton.gov.uk, or call us on 0300 111 6516. For queries regarding loading interfaces on ESS, please select option 1, otherwise please select option 2.

How can I search for an employer record?

You can view individual employer details by running an 'ESS Employer Maintenance View Only' workflow from your schedule.

How do I access documents on a member or employer record?

- Employer documents: these are stored in the Employer EDM section within the 'Management Information' area in ESS.
- Member documents: these are stored in the Member EDM and are visible upon accessing a member's record through the 'Member Access' browse.

As a team leader will I have visibility of open cases for my entire team?

When an ESS user logs into their account, they will see all the work allocated to users in their user group. There is a filter to cut the list down to cases allocated to a specific user.

How would we advise WMPF of TUPE out?

The TUPE process remains the same. If members of staff are transferring to your organisation as a result of a contract gain, you will continue to provide a data file of the transferring members, and the Fund would action the transfer.

Members

Can we see if the member has a nomination form?

You can see whether or not a member has completed a nomination form by accessing the member's Self-Service view from the member browse. You are not able to view the nomination form itself, only whether or not a form has been completed.

Can I run an active member list?

There are two ways that you can view membership data/run active member lists:

- Management Information tab: live dashboards where real-time data can be viewed.
- Reporting workflow: where reports can be run, scheduled, emailed, and exported to Excel.

What search criteria can be used to access a member's record?

Anything entered into that search will return in the results any whole or partial matches from the following fields in the Member Basic Details set:

- Member Number
- Forename (1)
- Forename (2)
- Forename (3)
- Surname
- Payroll Number
- NI Number

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Processes

Are we able to access colleagues' cases if they are off work and move them to another user?

When an ESS user logs into their account, they will see all the work allocated to users in their user group. There is a filter to cut the list down to cases allocated to a specific user, along with an option to reallocate the case.

Is the user who submitted a Standard Interface file to detail changes on member records recorded for audit purposes? We would normally keep a copy of this on our records.

As soon as a Standard Interface file is loaded and makes it through validation, updates will be made automatically. A data document will be uploaded to the member's EDM to show what inputs were sent in the interface file.

Are we able to delete workflows that are no longer required?

The option to abandon workflows is built into some of the processes at relevant points e.g., the monthly submissions interface up to the point of creating the web remittance advice. The Fund will be able to abandon a workflow on request if needed.

Can I view two windows (e.g., process and member record) at the same time?

Yes, you can snap your windows so that they sit side-by-side, here is a [Microsoft guide](#).

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Monthly Submissions

How does the monthly submission workflow work for an employer with multiple subsidiaries?

As per previous Employer Hub functionality, multiple employers can be uploaded on the same file, or individually. The remittance advice documents will then be saved to each employer's EDM.

Currently we submit all of our clients' monthly submissions on one data file. Will this still be possible?

As per previous Employer Hub functionality, multiple employers can be uploaded on the same file, or individually. The remittance advice documents will then be saved to each employer's EDM.

If you submit one file for multiple employers is one Web Remittance Advice (WRA) produced for each employer?

If you submit multiple employers on one file, one web remittance advice (WRA) per employer will be produced because you have to create WRAs for each employer as part of the process.

Will we still be able to view/save the remittance advice?

The remittance advice will be saved within the employer EDM.

Will the web remittance advice (WRA) be available to everyone with access to the employer or just the person who submitted the return?

The web remittance advice will be available to anyone that has access to the employer through the employer EDM.

Are we using the same .CSV file template for the new ESS when uploading Monthly Submission Interface files?

The CSV file format is the same and has not changed, with one exception; you will be required to leave the header row (i.e., the row with the column titles) in your file and not delete it. Please note that the monthly submission interface is to be used for submitting the following data only:

- New joiners to the scheme
- Monthly contribution data
- Immediate opt-outs (i.e., members that opted out within three months and were refunded via the payroll).

All member changes (including hours changes and service break reporting) must be submitted via the Standard Interface file.

Opt-outs after three months and all leavers and must be submitted via the Exit Interface file.

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Are there any changes to the monthly submission process?

Whilst the current monthly submission file layout will remain (with the exception that the header row must not be deleted), there are some key process changes that you need to be aware of:

- To prevent the Fund having to contact employers with queries after your files have been submitted, more validations will be run before you submit your file to the Fund, giving you the opportunity to investigate and rectify issues in real-time.
- Your data file must include the 8-digit pension reference numbers for ALL members. If the member is a new joiner please leave the membership reference number field blank.
- Your data file must include a unique payroll number for each post/pension record per member.
- Most validations are run against members' records during the process, and not after submission to the Fund.
- Your monthly data file, which must still be submitted as a .CSV file, will require the header row to be included.
- Error resolution will be done by downloading, amending, and re-uploading a resubmission file.
- Your remittance advice will not be produced, and the contribution data will not be posted to member or employer records, unless all errors have been cleared.
- You will not be able to submit your next file until the previous file has been submitted. For example, if you have not uploaded, validated, corrected errors.

Are new joiners still submitted on the monthly data submission?

Yes, new joiners should be added to the file in the month that they joined the scheme if possible. New joiners can be notified on a Monthly Submissions Interface with a start date of up to 6 months before the month submitted. This should be noted in columns S and AW. For example, if you had a joiner who started on 08/01/2023, this could be submitted on the July 2023 monthly submission with that start date entered in both column S and AW, however this could not be submitted on the August submission as the date of joining would be more than 6 months prior to the date of the submission. If you are unsure what your file should contain please review the [File Layout](#) document on our website.

Exit Interface

What is the Exit Interface?

The Exit Interface is a .CSV file that allows you to submit your leaver notifications to us in bulk and replaces the former S4 leaver notification in Employer Hub.

Is there a standard format for the Exit Interface?

The file schema for the Exit Interface is available [here](#).

What can be submitted on the Exit Interface?

The following types of leaver must be submitted via the Exit Interface:

opt-outs with more than three months but less than two years' service (i.e., refunds)

any early leaver (i.e., leaving employment, opting out with more than two years' service)

- ill-health retirement
- early retirement
- normal age retirement
- Redundancy/business efficiency
- Death in service.

If retirements are being submitted, the workflow will recognise that documents are required (as long as you indicate in the correct field on your data file, and an upload document case will be started against the relevant member(s) to allow you to submit the requisite documentation. It is important that the 'Record Type' field is entered correctly on your Exit Interface to ensure that retirements are correctly identified by the workflow.

When submitting retirement notification documentation (e.g., birth certificate, RB1, RB1D) is it possible to upload multiple documents or should they be collated into one PDF?

The document upload workflow gives the option to upload three documents. If you have more than three documents to submit you will need to consolidate some into one PDF to allow you to upload them.

Can I still submit leaver notifications on an individual basis, like the S4 process in Employer Hub?

The Exit Interface fully replaces the individual S4 process: you are able to submit as many or as few notifications on an interface as you wish so yes, in practice, you are able to submit a leaver notification via the Exit Interface for only one person.

Standard Interface

What is the Standard Interface?

The Standard Interface is a .CSV file that allows you to submit member changes to us in bulk and replaces the former S10 member changes notification in Employer Hub.

Is there a standard format for the Standard Interface?

The file schema for the Standard Interface is available [here](#).

What can be submitted on the Standard Interface?

The following current (within the scheme year) member data changes must be submitted via the Standard Interface:

- Title
- Forename(s)
- Surname
- Date of Birth
- Marital Status
- Pay Reference Number
- National Insurance Number
- Address
- Contribution Rate
- 50/50 Membership commencing/finishing
- Hours Changes
- Breaks in Service.

Can I still submit member change notifications on an individual basis, like the S10 process in Employer Hub?

The Standard Interface fully replaces the individual S10 process. You can submit as many or as few notifications on an interface as you wish, so you are able to submit a member change notification via the Standard Interface for only one person if desired.

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Admin and Employer Referral Workflows

What is the Admin Referral Workflow?

The Admin Referral Workflow allows an ESS user to securely raise a general query online, either about an employer or member, which gets referred to the Fund. The user is able to attach documents relevant to the query. The workflow is designed to facilitate secure two-way communication between employers and the Fund. This workflow can also be used to tell us historic (outside of the scheme year) member data changes.

What is the Employer Referral Workflow?

The Employer Referral Workflow allows a Fund officer to securely raise a query, either about an employer or member, which gets referred to an ESS user. The user is able to attach documents relevant to the query. The workflow is designed to facilitate secure two-way communication between the Fund and employers and will be our primary method of querying employer or member data, particularly as part of the leaver process.

Will existing S15 email queries be transferred to my case load?

No. S15 queries currently assigned to Employer Hub users will not be transferred to ESS.

What type of cases will be received via the Employer Referral Workflow?

In principal, the Employer Referral workflow replaces and enhances the former S15 'employer webtrays' process. The Employer Referral workflow will be the Fund's preferred method of communicating queries to, and receiving answers from, employers.

Who will the Fund issue Employer Referral cases to?

The Fund will issue queries to the person that submitted an interface, where relevant. For queries not related to data submitted on an interface we may contact the designated day-to-day contact that the Fund holds for the employer.

How will I know who to send the query back to at the Fund?

The case will automatically assign back to the Fund officer that sent the query.

Is a notification sent to notify users that a referral has been submitted?

No, notifications are not sent. We recommend that users periodically check their schedule for returned cases.

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Are you able to view who has any referrals allocated to them?

Yes, you will be able to see all the workflows allocated to users in your user group. The list can be further filtered by selecting a user from the allocated user filter.

If someone has been allocated a referral and then is away from work, can someone else go onto their schedule and reassign it to someone else?

When an ESS user logs into their account, they will see all the work allocated to users in their user group. There is a filter to cut the list down to cases allocated to a specific user, along with an option to reallocate the case.

Is there a timescale within which the Fund expects a response to queries to be returned?

The Fund's Pension Administration Strategy (*PAS*) sets out expectations in respect of response times; specifically in relation to S15 queries (queries in respect of leaver notifications) this is within ten working days of the Fund raising the query with you, the employer.

If the Fund does not receive a reply to a query how will it remind or prompt an employer to respond?

The Fund will periodically review the number of queries outstanding and where necessary and/or appropriate will engage with employers directly.

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Access

Do we have to set ourselves up on ESS, or will our current Hub user log in details be migrated?

At the point your organisation went live, all active Employer Hub accounts were migrated to the new system by the Fund – you will not be required to create user access for existing accounts. You will, however, be required to reset your temporary password.

We outsource our payroll processing to a third-party: would you recommend that someone within our payroll provider is made a Super user in order to give appropriate access rights within the payroll provider?

Yes, there should be at least one Super user at each organisation that will be submitting data to us. It is encouraged that each organisation has two Super users.

There are two users at my organisation – can both have Super user access?

Yes, employers are not limited to a set number of Super users. However, for security we would recommend this is kept to a minimum.

Would our payroll provider be granted Super User Access for their clients? Would we be able to update the contacts in-house or would we need to go via the employer?

The system is configured to enable both employers and payroll providers to have super user access to enable the granting of access to team members.

ESS allows super users to update the contacts for their organisation using the 'ESS Maintain Employer Contacts Super User' workflow.

Changes in payroll provider must still be notified to the Fund as early as possible prior to the change.

Please contact us at WMPFEmployerLiaison2@wolverhampton.gov.uk if you are changing payroll provider.

How can I tell if I have Super User access?

This is determined by your user group level (Normal, Super, or Read Only). The user group determines the access level and permissions in ESS. If you are a Super user you will have access to the contact update and user creation workflows.

I used to have access to Employer Hub but now I'm unable to access the system.

If you did not access your Employer Hub account prior to 30 June 2023 your access will not have been transferred to ESS. Speak to your organisation's super user to request access. If no one else at your organisation has access, please contact the Fund at WMPFEmployerLiaison2@wolverhampton.gov.uk.

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My organisation uses a third-party payroll provider, do I have to have access as the employer?

If you outsource your payroll to a third-party you do not need access ESS yourself; however, you may wish to have access in addition to your payroll provider if you wish to access member records to view their data, or to monitor interface submission, for example. We would remind employers that the submission of data and ensuring that member data is accurate is the responsibility of the employer, regardless of whether or not your payroll function is outsourced.

Is a reset password link available for users?

Yes, the 'forgot password' link is still available.

Employer Self-Service (ESS) FAQs

Troubleshooting

ISSUE	RESOLUTION
The system will not accept my new password	The password requirements are: Upper case letter, lower case letter, number, and a special symbol e/g @ or # (! or * are not accepted), it must also be 8 characters or more.
I am receiving errors that will not allow me to upload my file	Check: You are using the correct file layout. There are no commas in your file. There are no full stops in your file name. You have saved the file as a CSV (comma delimited).
Not received your new access details?	Please check your spam/junk folders. If you cannot locate the email, please contact WMPFEmployerSystemSupport@wolverhampton.gov.uk
'Unsupported file format' when attempting to load an interface	Ensure that you are loading a CSV (comma delimited) file. Check that the header row is in the file. Check that you are using the updated file layout.
'File extension not recognised' when uploading an interface file	Ensure there are no full stops in the file name.
My interface file disappears, and no workflow is started when I load my file	0 is not accepted in front of the employer number in column A. For example, 750 should be entered as 750, not 0750.