

Case study - The White Horse Federation

Consolidating academies into one LGPS Fund

The White Horse Federation is a Multi Academy Trust of primary schools, secondary schools and special schools. Operating under four main hubs meant participation in four different Local Government Pension Scheme funds. White Horse were keen to reduce the administrative complexities of operating across different funds and only pay one single level of LGPS contribution rate.

The challenge

In May 2018, Hymans Robertson were asked to look at the feasibility of White Horse consolidating all their academies into one LGPS fund.

Key drivers:

- to streamline their payroll processes and administration
- pay a single LGPS contribution rate
- to enable greater input into investment and funding strategies as a single larger employer within one fund
- ensure Ill Health Liability Insurance was available to all their academies

The solution

Feasibility stage

Hymans Robertson's specialist LGPS employer team carried out an initial feasibility study into the issues and options for consolidating into a single LGPS fund. This considered the individual funding strategies for each of the four current LGPS funds with commentary on the immediate and longer-term implications for contribution rates. We also considered the past investment

performance and current investment strategy across the funds, in addition to wider commentary on non-funding related items that would influence the decision-making process, such as number of schools, geographical location and pension fund processes.

Following the feasibility study, we discussed the outcomes with White Horse so they were making an informed decision when identifying the fund for consolidation. We also provided support by communicating directly with all the LGPS funds affected to ensure all stakeholders were informed of White Horse's intentions. Following the agreement of the receiving fund, White Horse were able to commence the consolidation.

Implementation stage

In May 2019, Hymans Robertson's project management team were appointed to lead the set-up and ongoing management of the consolidation project, working with key stakeholders to successfully implement the changes required. The project management team's experience of working on the Ministry of Justice LGPS pension consolidation meant they already understood the complexities and potential challenges of a large scale LGPS consolidation and were able to take steps to ensure the process went smoothly.



The team provided a formal project plan and also supported the governance of the project by bringing together and collaboratively working with stakeholders from each fund and their third party advisers. This ensured both legal and regulatory requirements were met, along with the support required to complete and reach consensus on the formal Secretary of State Direction which enables consolidation.

Further support was provided during the transfer of member data and pensioner payroll to the receiving fund, which allowed single fund administration to commence from 1 November 2019.

We also helped support the asset transfer process and implementation of a successful communications strategy, providing tailored communications for active, deferred and pensioner members.

The involvement of Hymans Robertson's project management team was critical to the success of the implementation.

A successful result

Through good governance and effective decision making, the consolidation was fully achieved on 1 November 2019. This was a successful outcome for the White Horse Federation, who now have the benefit of reduced pensions related administration and better representation in funding related matters.

"I am delighted that this project has been so successful. The idea of consolidating our 4 LGPS funds was initiated following a Hymans Robertson briefing in 2018 in Birmingham. We worked closely with the team from Hymans Robertson, initially asking them to develop the feasibility study and establishing the factors to consider in proceeding with the consolidation.

Following receipt of the report and the advice and guidance provided we took the decision to appoint Hymans Robertson to project manage the consolidation on our behalf. Their knowledge and professionalism throughout has been high and they have made the process of obtaining the Secretary of State direction and working with all the funds straightforward. All of the funds have also worked very well together and supported the project.

The key drivers for this project were to improve administration, ensure ill health liability insurance was available to all academies, standardise contribution rates and for the WHF to have more input into the investment and repayment strategies. As a result, we have achieved the aims of the project on time, to budget and at a high standard."

**Steve Brimfield, Director for People
The White Horse Federation**

Get in touch

If you would like to understand the benefits or process involved in consolidating your academies into a single fund, or would like any further assistance with your LGPS participation, please contact:



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