

PENSION AND ASSURANCE SCHEME FOR LAY EMPLOYEES OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

(the Scheme)

Internal Disputes Procedure

The Trustee aims for the Scheme to be run in a way that does not give members cause for complaint. However, as required by law, the Trustee does have a procedure in place to enable any person with an interest in the Scheme to make an application to them for a decision on a matter in dispute.

Any issues you may have should be raised with the Pensions Office in the first instance.

Can I use this procedure?

You can use this procedure

- if you are a Closure, deferred or pensioner member of the Scheme, or
- if you are not a member of the Scheme but could have been eligible to join the Scheme, or
- if you are a widow, widower or surviving dependant of a deceased Scheme member, or
- if you are a surviving non-dependent beneficiary of a deceased Scheme member, or
- if you ceased to be in any of the categories above within the last six months, or
- if you are not being treated as someone in one of the above categories but believe you should be.

However, you cannot use this procedure if proceedings relating to your dispute have begun in any court or tribunal, or if your complaint is under investigation by the Pensions Ombudsman.

What sort of disputes can I use this procedure for?

You can use this procedure for any disputes that you have with the Trustee of the Scheme. For instance, a disagreement over the amount of benefit you are due, or over the way in which the Trustee has exercised its powers, could be referred to this procedure.

If your dispute is not with the Trustee of the Scheme (for instance it might be with the Methodist Council or your employer instead) then this procedure is not available to you.

Can anyone help me use the procedure?

You can appoint anyone as a representative to help you; for instance, a member of your family, a friend, a solicitor or a trade union representative.

If you were to die before your complaint had been resolved, your personal representative would be able to continue with the dispute procedure on your behalf.

If you are under 18 or for whatever reason are unable to act for yourself, a member of your family or another suitable person may represent you.

How do I apply to use the procedure?

If you wish to apply to the Trustee for a decision on a matter in dispute you should write to the Pension Scheme Secretary with details of your complaint.

In order to consider your complaint the Trustee will need to have sufficient information to enable it to consider the issues raised.

The Trustee has produced a standard form which you may choose to use, to help you set out details of your complaint. If you wish to use the procedure, you can fill in and sign the form (attached to this note), or ask your representative to do this for you.

You are not obliged to use this form, although you do have to provide details of your complaint in writing. The details you provide must include all the information set out on the form and your application must be signed by you or on your behalf.

You should then send your completed form or application to:-

Secretary to the Trustee
Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme
Methodist Church House
25 Tavistock Place
LONDON
WC1H 9SF

✉ pensionshelp@methodistchurch.org.uk

What happens next?

Your application to use the dispute procedure will be acknowledged within 14 days of receipt. The Pension Scheme Secretary will also, at that stage, request any additional information that the Trustee might find helpful or ask you to clarify any issue on your form which is unclear. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please check that your application has been received.

The Trustee will then consider the matter.

The Pension Scheme Secretary will also indicate to you when you can expect a decision to be made. The maximum length of time you will have to wait is four months from the date of receipt of your dispute application and all relevant information.

You will be informed of the Trustee's decision in relation to your dispute, in writing, within 15 working days of the decision being made. A copy will be sent to your representative if you have so requested. The decision will refer to any legislation or any section of the Scheme's rules on which the decision is based, and will explain what you can do if you wish to take the complaint further.

If for any reason the Trustee is unable to provide a full response within four months, the Pension Scheme Secretary will inform you of the delay and the reasons why it is necessary to extend the time period. You will also be informed of the revised target date for responding to your dispute application.

What happens if I am still not satisfied?

If you have been through the formal dispute procedure, and are still not satisfied, then you may take your case to the Pensions Advisory Service or the Pensions Ombudsman. However, these bodies will normally only consider your case if you have used our formal dispute procedure first.

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS)

MaPS is available to assist pension scheme members and beneficiaries with any pension queries, or in connection with difficulties which have failed to be resolved with trustees or administrators. It is sponsored by the Department of Work and Pensions. Contact details are:

The Money and Pensions Service
120 Holborn
London
EC1N 2TD

☎ 0800 011 3797

✉ pensions.enquiries@moneyhelper.org.uk

Pensions Ombudsman

If MaPS is unable to resolve the difficulty, the matter can be taken to the Pension Ombudsman for their assistance. The Pensions Ombudsman was appointed under the Social Security Act 1990 to deal with disputes and complaints completely independently and acts as a free of charge, impartial adjudicator. Contact details are:

The Pensions Ombudsman
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
E14 4PU

☎ 0800 917 4487

✉ enquiries@pensions-ombudsman.org.uk

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Application to use the Internal Disputes Procedure

You can fill in this form yourself, or ask a representative to fill in the form for you. Fill in all white sections of the form, but fill in shaded sections only where you are instructed to.

A.	Information relating to complaint
<p><i>You can use the internal disputes procedure if you are in one of the categories below, if you ceased to be in one of the categories below in the last six months, or if you claim to be in one of the categories below.</i></p> <p>Tick which box describes your circumstances</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1. A closure, deferred or a pensioner member of the Scheme.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2. Someone who is not a member of the Scheme but could have been eligible to join the Scheme.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3. The widow, widower or a dependant or a non-dependent beneficiary of a deceased Scheme member</p>	

B.	Basic Details	
		<p>FILL IN THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU TICKED BOX 3 ABOVE</p>
Information relating to complainant		Information relating to deceased Scheme member
Full name of complainant		Full name of member
Address		Last Address
Date of Birth		Date of Birth
National Insurance Number (Fill in only if you ticked Box 1 or Box 2 above)		Relationship of member to complainant
		National Insurance Number

C. Information about representative of complainant

FILL IN THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU ARE ACTING AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A COMPLAINANT

Full name of representative

Address of representative

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Address for correspondence relating to this complaint
(if different from the address above)

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D. Details of Complaint

Set out full details of your complaint in this section. It would be helpful if you could describe any conversations you have had regarding your complaint, for instance with any staff at the Pensions Office. Refer to any written correspondence about your complaint and if possible attach copies of letters to this form. If you cannot fit everything you want to say on this page, then continue on a separate page and attach it to this form.

Signed Date
(this should be signed by the person filling in this form)