

# firstactuarial

## Actuaries & Consultants

First Actuarial brings a fresh approach to actuarial consultancy. We are a new organisation, with relatively youthful directors, all of whom are qualified actuaries.

These factors, along with the fact that the directors own the business entirely, enable us to adopt a pro-active ethos where we put clients' needs first.

First Actuarial offers a comprehensive range of services designed to meet the needs of both scheme trustees and employers. In addition, we are delighted to accept further projects on an ad hoc basis.

- **Services to Trustees**

- Scheme Actuary Services
- Administration
- Investment Consultancy
- Communications
- Trustee Training

- **Services to Employers**

- FRS17
- FAS87 and IAS19
- Schemes in Wind-up
- Corporate Transactions

- **Consultancy services**

- Benefit Review and Scheme Design
- Bespoke Consultancy

There are a myriad of rules and regulations that employers and pension scheme trustees now have to deal with, despite attempts by successive Governments to simplify pensions. Legislative changes, combined with the long histories of many occupational pension schemes, have resulted in many schemes having poor quality data and inefficient administration processes.

These factors, combined with the volatile investment markets experienced over recent years, have resulted in dramatic increases in both the financial and management burdens faced by those running a pension scheme.

In response to these pressures, many schemes are in the throes of winding-up and a large number of schemes will be, or are already, closed to new members.

Against this background, it is arguably more important than ever for employers and trustees to receive high quality advice that will ensure that they find the most appropriate solutions for their own particular circumstances.

With offices in Basingstoke, Leeds, Manchester, Peterborough and Tonbridge, First Actuarial is the exciting result of a successful buy-out of part of Hazell Carr, one of the UK's Largest actuarial firms.

Our pension consultancy services focus mainly on small and medium-sized enterprises, many of which are struggling to decide how best to manage their final salary pension schemes.

## Services to Trustees

Our services to trustees allow you to know that you will satisfy the requirements of all the relevant legislation and regulation relating to the running of your pension scheme.

### Scheme Actuary Services

A core aspect of our business is providing top quality Scheme Actuary services to pension scheme trustees. As would be expected, we provide the full range of actuarial services that are required to run a pension scheme.

Where suitable, we have a process-driven approach to elements of actuarial work. This means that we will implement an organised process, specific to your requirements, which would be applied to the calculations. When combined with the excellent quality standards delivered by our highly qualified staff, the result is an extremely efficient, accurate and economical service. For the elements of actuarial work where a process-driven approach does not fit well, we offer a bespoke service tailored to the needs of small and medium-sized companies.

Our ability to perform calculations accurately and efficiently can be relied upon. However, this is of limited value if our clients do not fully understand the results and implications of those calculations. We are therefore passionate about making the results of our calculations clear and easily accessible to our clients.

### Administration

Good administration is critical to the smooth operation of pension schemes. Our pensions administration services are closely integrated with other services to ensure overall efficiency. By employing highly skilled staff and using modern and proven technology, we can lessen the burden on employers and trustees.

In addition, being a relative newcomer to pensions administration means we have the advantage of not being encumbered by legacy systems and the problems that they entail.

As well as providing day-to-day administration, we offer the following services:

- **Trustee Accounting**

We prepare your Trustee Report and Accounts and will work closely with your appointed Auditor, to ensure that the Trustee Report and Accounts are signed in a timely manner.

- **Trustee Secretarial Service**

Our trustee secretarial service can be tailored to fit the needs of each set of trustees and can vary from arranging a venue for your meeting, to providing a full service of preparing the meeting papers, minuting the meeting and then carrying out the action points for the trustees.

### Investment Consultancy

Developing and adopting a coherent investment strategy is integral to managing the risks of your scheme and to decisions relating to funding. We can examine the relationship between the profiles of the assets and the liabilities of your scheme in order to comment on whether a fundamental review of the scheme's investment strategy is required. We have developed ModelScheme, an extremely effective interactive tool, that will help the trustees and employers to understand fully the investment decisions that they need to make.

### Communications

We believe that both trustees and employers should communicate more frequently and in a much more user-friendly manner with their members and employees.

Given the increasingly complex legislative and compliance controls imposed on occupational pension schemes over the last decade, trustees have a much greater need to communicate with the members of their scheme. High profile press comment about pension schemes makes regular communication even more important. Any such member communication needs to be clear, concise and accurate, ensuring that scheme members understand and appreciate the benefits being provided.

It is clear that employers are having to pay an increasing amount, in order to provide pension benefits for their staff. A more carefully thought out process of communication should result in greater staff appreciation of the value of the benefits provided. If this is not the outcome,

then the employer might want to question whether its pension contribution is money well spent.

First Actuarial provide services such as member communications and presentations, formal literature and total reward statements. We can undertake the provision of a communication package for a specific scheme or a 'one-off' communication event.

### Trustee Training

Trustees are now expected to have a far greater understanding of the issues affecting their pension schemes than ever before.

To help trustees satisfy their legal obligations we offer a number of different courses for trustees regarding pensions and trusteeship. The courses cover a wide range of topics, at all levels, for both final salary and money purchase schemes. Existing courses are geared towards individual client needs and range in duration from a few hours to a number of days. We do feel that, in order to allow an efficient use of time, courses should be tailored to the specific details of a scheme. This promotes a thorough understanding of the issues facing the scheme in question, rather than a broad understanding of trustee issues in general.

## Services to Employers

The services that we offer to Employers primarily relate to one-off projects and accounting calculations such as FRS17, IAS19 or FAS87. It is important to note that it does not have to be the Scheme Actuary that carries out this work. Frequently we find that we are able to carry out this work more cost effectively, and to a shorter timescale, than the incumbent adviser.

### Financial Reporting Standard 17

FRS17 has revolutionised the way pension funds are shown in employer accounts and raises many difficult issues. At First Actuarial, we are ideally placed to help you deal with the changes that have occurred as a result of the introduction of this accounting standard. Our work in this field is carried out to a fixed fee and to an agreed timescale.

### Financial Accounting Standard 87 and International Accounting Standard 19

FAS87 and IAS19 are important pension accounting standards for UK companies with overseas parents. We can undertake the required calculations and prepare the necessary disclosures on a fixed fee basis and to an agreed timescale.

### Schemes in Wind-up

Although winding-up a pension scheme is a complicated process, this is a core service offered by First Actuarial.

If you have a pension scheme that is no longer appropriate for your needs, First Actuarial will help you to establish a more suitable arrangement. This may ultimately lead to the old scheme being wound up. We may be required to start off the process or take responsibility for a wind up that has perhaps been dragging on for some considerable time.

Despite the uncertainties involved in wind-up, our structured approach often allows wind up projects to be carried out on a fixed fee basis.

### Corporate Transactions

Whether buying or selling, pensions cannot be ignored. There are many examples where insufficient attention to the pensions issues within corporate transactions has resulted in the financial benefits of the deal being overshadowed by the impact of the pension scheme and its liabilities. We advise on all aspects of corporate transactions in relation to benefit arrangements.

"We have found First Actuarial at all times to be extremely professional in their approach. The work that they have produced for our pension schemes has been of the highest standard. We are happy to recommend First Actuarial to any prospective clients".

David Archer,  
Partner of Pitmans Solicitors and  
Director of Pitmans Trustees Limited

## Consultancy Services

Our consultancy services provide you with individual practical solutions to your pension problems.

### Benefit Review and Scheme Design

Our benefit review service evaluates your current pension arrangements and suggests alternatives to help you find the best solution for the various stakeholders (ie the employer, the employees, shareholders etc).

We can consult on a full range of options for your pension scheme – including final salary, cash balance, occupational defined contribution and "off the shelf" solutions such as stakeholder plans. We have experience of all types of scheme and have the knowledge to guide you to the right scheme for your needs.

Our experience has shown that many employers persist with inefficient, inappropriate and sometimes costly aspects of scheme design. Our benefit review highlights where changes could be made, the benefits those changes would bring and sets out the process for implementing the changes.

Should you decide to modify your scheme design, we will work with you to implement changes as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### Bespoke Consultancy

Our consultancy service helps trustees and employers keep up to date and comply with changes affecting their scheme. An example of this would be providing advice about the impact of Pensions Simplification from both the employer's and the trustees' perspectives.

If you have specific or unusual issues regarding any element of your benefit provision we can work with you to deliver the right solutions.

This company is not authorised under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 but we are able in certain circumstances to offer a limited range of investment services to clients because we are members (as defined under that Act) of the Institute of Actuaries, a Designated Professional Body. We can provide these investment services if they are an incidental part of the professional services we have been engaged to provide.

## Why use

### First Actuarial?

#### We present our results in a clear and understandable format

We appreciate the enormous value to clients of presenting actuarial results in an understandable and accessible format. This is vital for the trustees or employer to appreciate fully the significance and impact of adopting a particular set of actuarial assumptions.

Because we care about making our results clear and easily understandable to our clients, we have developed a number of interactive tools, such as Valuation Viewer and FRS17 Tracker, specifically for aiding this process.

We are also extremely aware of the growing burden of responsibility that trustees and employers face, so we have implemented an ongoing education program for our clients. This enables them to reach both appropriate and informed decisions on pension matters.

#### We treat every client individually

Our clients' needs are our priority and so we work hard to determine what is best for each individual client. There is no shoe-horning of our clients into irrelevant or unnecessary services. You can rely on First Actuarial's excellent technical knowledge, processes and professionalism to deliver the most appropriate solution for your particular circumstances. After all, satisfied clients stay with us and we value those long-term relationships.

#### We provide an extremely high quality service at very competitive rates

Whilst we are totally committed to delivering services of the highest quality, we are fully aware that obtaining good value for money is important to our clients. We therefore ensure that our rates are very competitive.

Unlike many of our competitors, we are happy to offer most of our services on a fixed-fee basis. We are also happy to work on the more traditional time-cost arrangement if that suits the needs of our client. With fixed fees the feeling of being on the clock is eliminated, as clients are not charged by the minute, allowing them to ask questions without the

worry of pushing up the cost. This approach means that our clients know what to expect, when to expect it and how much it's going to cost.

By adopting a fixed fee approach for the majority of our appointments, we ensure that staff training and development is not subsidised by our clients.

We are committed to achieving value for money through using high quality, well-paid staff. At First Actuarial, we believe that using highly qualified staff is much more cost effective than employing inexperienced people on lower salaries. Experienced personnel will carry out a calculation speedily and accurately, therefore avoiding the cost overruns and missed deadlines associated with the repeated reworking of calculations.

#### We provide a local service with strong, centralised support

As a result of First Actuarial's geographical spread, our directors have the opportunity to get to know you better and understand your requirements more fully. Our local offices enable us to provide our clients, regardless of size, with the level of services, accountability and personal attention that they require from a pensions consultancy.

Another benefit of our national presence is that it is simply easier to meet with our clients more regularly and keep up to date with proceedings. We are willing to travel and meet with you at your convenience.

In addition to the benefits of our regional offices, First Actuarial enjoys the advantages of having the back-up of a centralised, dedicated support team. This extremely knowledgeable team reviews policy changes and current issues in the pensions industry. This information is summarised and distributed to all members of staff, throughout the regional offices. Consequently, our staff are kept up to date with legislation and current issues, enabling them to answer your technical queries efficiently and accurately. In addition, the support team is responsible for providing help-desk and peer review facilities, ensuring that our high standards of quality are maintained.

#### Our interests are fully aligned with yours

All of First Actuarial's Directors hold a significant equity stake in the company. This, by its very nature, means that we have a vested interest in ensuring that our clients are delighted with our services. This achieves alignment of our interests with those of our clients.

#### We take our responsibility to you seriously

At First Actuarial, we are committed to acting with integrity and openness. We operate our business in a fair manner and we are dedicated to fulfilling our obligations, whilst providing quality and value for our clients. Every member of our staff takes individual responsibility for producing work of the highest standard to time and to budget.

[www.firstactuarial.co.uk](http://www.firstactuarial.co.uk)

#### Basingstoke

Keith Williams 07979 504 826,  
[keith.williams@firstactuarial.co.uk](mailto:keith.williams@firstactuarial.co.uk)  
Peter Shellswell 07775 657 626,  
[peter.shellswell@firstactuarial.co.uk](mailto:peter.shellswell@firstactuarial.co.uk)

#### Leeds

David Joy 07803 892 266,  
[david.joy@firstactuarial.co.uk](mailto:david.joy@firstactuarial.co.uk)  
Mark Riches 07812 165 446,  
[mark.riches@firstactuarial.co.uk](mailto:mark.riches@firstactuarial.co.uk)  
Michael Hulme-Vickerstaff 07740 484 778,  
[michael.hulme-vickerstaff@firstactuarial.co.uk](mailto:michael.hulme-vickerstaff@firstactuarial.co.uk)

#### Manchester

Hilary Salt 07799 134 966,  
[hilary.salt@firstactuarial.co.uk](mailto:hilary.salt@firstactuarial.co.uk)

#### Peterborough

Alan Smith 07860 435 894,  
[alan.smith@firstactuarial.co.uk](mailto:alan.smith@firstactuarial.co.uk)

#### Tonbridge

Chris Martin 07855 355 260,  
[chris.martin@firstactuarial.co.uk](mailto:chris.martin@firstactuarial.co.uk)  
James Smith 07966 008 963,  
[james.smith@firstactuarial.co.uk](mailto:james.smith@firstactuarial.co.uk)

**firstactuarial**  
Actuaries & Consultants