



Schoolteachers Friendly Society



MEMBER RELATIONS STRATEGY



1. Introduction

Schoolteachers Friendly Society is a 'mutual organisation' which means that we have no shareholders. Instead, we are owned by our members. This means that everyone who has an eligible policy with us can have a say in how we operate and this is very important to us. Members over the age of 18 years can vote on resolutions at annual and special meetings.

This strategy sets out the Society's commitment to engage with our members, the encouragement of members' involvement in the democratic running of the Society, and the mechanisms which will ensure that all members are able to have their say.

2. Objectives

The prime objectives of our Members Relations Strategy are:

- To ensure all members are treated fairly through the provision of an effective members' relations strategy.
- To provide promptly to members all necessary information on the governance of their Society.
- To ensure that all members have the opportunity and facility to express their views on appropriate and important matters which affect their membership by facilitating contact between members and the Society's Secretary, the Board of Management and the Senior Independent Board Member.
- To encourage and help members to take an active interest in the governance of their Society in the most effective and cost efficient manner.
- To report to the Board of Management on member feedback so that the Board better understands the needs and views of members.

The strategy is the responsibility of and owned by the Board of Management. Its day to day implementation is delegated to the Society's Secretary and Chief Executive.

3. Provision of Information to Members

Our aim is to provide members with realistic, timely, appropriate and proportionate information about the governance of their Society.

Our main commitments are:

- To ensure that all members receive appropriate information about any significant changes in the operation or future strategy of the Society.

- To ensure that all members receive a summary of the Annual Report and Accounts and have access, free of charge, to a full copy on request.
- To ensure that all members receive advanced notice and supporting information in regard to the Annual General Meetings.
- To ensure that all members receive an annual Statement outlining the current value of their policy/account with the Society.
- To be proactive in encouraging contact between individual members and the Board of Management through Board member attendance at the:
 - Annual meeting of the Lincoln Agency.
 - NASUWT annual conference.
 - Society's AGM.
- To facilitate contact (where requested) between individual members and the appropriate representative of the Society/Board of Management.
- To facilitate the provision and maintenance of a dedicated members section on our Website which will include the following information:
 - Information about the member relations strategy.
 - Current Society Rulebook.
 - Annual Report and Accounts.
 - Details of the Board of Management including biographies.
 - Terms of Reference of Committees.
 - Specimen of letters of appointment used for Non-Executive Directors.
 - Details of the Annual General Meeting.
 - Proxy Form for those members who cannot attend the AGM.
 - Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.
- To respond to general questions from members in connection with governance and membership issues, whether submitted through the Website, by telephone, email or in writing.
- To make available in hard copy the information on the Website to those members who do not have internet access.

4. Complaints

If a member wishes to make a complaint, the Society has a well-established Complaints Policy and further details are available from the Society's website or in hard copy on request.

The Board of Management will keep abreast of the concerns of members by:

- Reviewing at the Board meetings details of the Society's complaints records and any regulatory breaches.

- Reviewing reports on internal audit or compliance and examining the handling of any regulatory breaches and complaints in order to judge whether they are dealt with fairly.
- The periodic conducting of a sample check of complaints by the Senior Independent Board Member who will report to the Board of Management on the findings.
- Ensuring that all Society staff are aware that barriers should not be placed in the way of complaints by members being communicated to senior management/Board of Management.

5. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Society holds an Annual General Meeting each April/May in order to receive statutory reports, debate and agree changes to the Rulebook, elect Board members and consider propositions. At the AGM we:

- Encourage members to participate in the debate on motions and any associated voting.
- Provide practical and procedural guidance and hospitality to those members attending.
- Have an open session at the end to enable members to raise any questions, concerns, points of interest or seek clarification on any topic not covered by the agenda.

Notice and details of the AGM will:

- Be sent to all members at least 20 working days prior to the AGM.
- Include a review of the Society's operations during the year and information on its future strategy.
- Include the Report and Accounts or Summary Financial Statement.
- Include a clear description of the resolutions to be voted on together with sufficient information for an informed decision to be reached.
- Include details of Board members/new candidates standing for re-election/election including the Board's views on those candidates.
- Include details of when and where the AGM is to be held.
- Ensure that personal attendance will not be required in order that a member can vote.

- Provide details of how members can obtain a proxy form explaining how the proxy voting process works and the deadline for the receipt of proxy votes will not be less than 48 hours before the day of the AGM.

The Society's Rules do not impose unreasonable requirements on members' ability to requisition a meeting or to propose a resolution.

6. Review and Reporting

The member relations strategy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

The Society will look widely and draw on the experience of others in order to continue to learn and ensure that its governance arrangements are as effective as possible. We will ensure that members of the Society receive a proper account of the Society's work and are as fully involved in it as is possible.

We will ensure that any issues that appear to warrant the immediate attention of the Senior Independent Director or the Chairman are reported to them.

7. Your Views

We welcome your views on the way in which your Society is governed. If you have any comments to make in this regard please contact us by:

Telephone: 0151 724 1930

or

Letter: The Society Secretary, Schoolteachers Friendly Society, 30
Mather Avenue, Liverpool L18 5HS

or

Email: info@schoolteachers.org.uk