

## **Forester Life Limited – Directors’ Annual Report to planholders in the Deferred Pensions Fund - 2019**

### **Introduction**

The Deferred Pensions Fund was established as a separate ring-fenced fund in late 2016, and in November 2018 published its Principles and Practices of Financial Management (PPFM). The PPFM is the document that sets out how the company will manage the fund. A copy of the PPFM can be found on our website [www.foresters.com](http://www.foresters.com).

Having introduced the PPFM and as part of good governance practices, we are producing an annual report to planholders in the fund.

This annual report explains how we managed the Deferred Pensions Fund in 2019. In particular, it considers:

- if our operation of the Deferred Pensions Fund during 2019 complied with the fund’s Principles and Practices of Financial Management (PPFM);
- the way we have exercised management discretion in making key decisions during 2019 and whether this was consistent with the PPFM; and
- how we have addressed any competing or conflicting rights, interests or expectations of the fund’s planholders.

In order to ensure that the PPFM is maintained and complied with, we have established a Forester Life Funds Advisory Panel. The panel acts in an advisory capacity in order to inform and monitor the decision-making of Forester Life in its management of the Deferred Pensions Fund and thereby protect the interests of the planholders in the fund.

In addition to taking advice from the panel, we also receive advice from our With Profits Actuary (WPA) on the management of the fund. The WPA is required to produce an annual report to planholders and a copy of the report for 2019 is also available on our website. The panel, although not required to do so, can choose to write to planholders if they feel it appropriate. However, as the panel considers that this report provides a full and fair view of the fund’s operation during 2019, it does not intend to produce a separate report.

### **Statement of Compliance**

Forester Life, having considered the advice of the panel and the WPA, believes that in respect of the calendar year 2019 it has complied with the PPFM in all material respects. In particular, management discretion has been exercised appropriately and the competing or conflicting rights, interests or expectations of different groups of planholders have been taken into account.

## **Overview of 2019**

In managing the fund, key areas of management discretion concern payouts, investment management, expenses, management of the fund's surplus assets and changes to the PPFM. Each of these areas is now considered below.

### **Payouts**

Forester Life aims to provide the fund's planholders with a fair return on their investment. This is achieved through the setting of crediting rates and final bonuses, and determining the amounts to be paid for plans leaving the fund before their selected retirement date. To do this, we calculate a value known as an asset share for sample plans that are representative of all the plans in the fund. An asset share consists of the payments made into the sample plan, less management expenses and other charges, plus any allowances for exceptional miscellaneous profits and losses. These amounts are then built up at the rate of investment return allocated to the plan.

In addition, as the Deferred Pensions Fund is closed to new business, payouts will include a distribution of the fund's surplus assets. This surplus is the excess of the assets required to meet the plans' guaranteed payments and is currently paid as an enhancement to payouts.

During 2019 there were small increases to the crediting rates, whilst final bonus rates were amended from 1 April 2019. In respect of smoothing, there were no changes to the methodology set out in the PPFM during 2019.

Similarly there was no change in the way payments are calculated for plans leaving the fund early. However, a change was agreed to this methodology and letters were written to planholders during September to explain that from 1 January 2020 we will be changing the PPFM to allow a final bonus to be paid for plans leaving the fund before their selected retirement date, in the same way as for plans that have reached their retirement date.

### **Investment Management**

Investment management of the Deferred Pensions Fund is undertaken by Schroders.

The aim of the investment strategy is to secure the guaranteed liabilities of the fund with a high degree of confidence and to maximise the investment return on Planholders' assets by taking an acceptable level of risk. The investment strategy was reviewed during 2019, and some changes made to reduce the proportions of government and index-linked bonds and increase the proportion of corporate bonds.

### **Management of Expenses**

The expenses charged to the fund in 2019 were based on the number of plans in force, the number of claims and the funds under management. The methodology is considered

to represent a fair allocation of expenses between the different funds managed by Forester Life.

### **Changes to the PPFM**

Changes were made to the PPFM with effect from 1 June 2019 to reflect the investment strategy changes outlined above. No further changes were made, although a letter was sent to planholders regarding the proposed changes for plans leaving the fund before their selected retirement dates. These changes were made with effect from 1 January 2020.

### **Further Information**

If you have any questions regarding this document, please write to the following:

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