

Forester Life Limited – Directors’ Annual Report to Communication Workers Fund’s With-Profits Planholders – 2024

Introduction

The Principles and Practices of Financial Management (PPFM) is a document that we are required by law to produce and which sets out how the company will manage the fund.

Each year, the Forester Life Board considers whether the business has been managed in line with the PPFM and we report to our planholders on compliance, how we managed the business over the year and on the exercise of discretion.

This is the report for the Communication Workers Fund.

This annual report explains:

- if our operation of the Communication Workers Fund during 2024 complied with the fund’s Principles and Practices of Financial Management (PPFM);
- the way we have exercised management discretion in making key decisions during 2024 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.

A copy of the latest PPFM can be found on our website www.foresters.com/wp

Governance

The Board is responsible for decisions that affect the with-profits business, after considering advice from the With-Profits Actuary and the Forester Life Funds Advisory Panel.

The With-Profits Actuary is required to produce an annual report to planholders and a copy of the report for 2024 is also available on our website.

The Advisory Panel, although not required to do so, can choose to write to planholders if it feels it appropriate. However, as the panel considers that this report provides a full and fair view of the fund’s operation in 2024, they do not intend to produce a separate report.

Statement of Compliance

Forester Life, having considered the advice of the panel and the With-Profits Actuary, believes that in respect of the calendar year 2024 it has complied with the PPFM. 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 2024

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 with-profits planholders with a fair return on their investment. This is achieved through the setting of bonuses, smoothing of returns and determining surrender values. To do this, we calculate a value known as an asset share. An individual plan's asset share consists of the payments made into it, less management expenses, tax 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 Communication Workers 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.

There were no changes to the annual bonus rates in 2024, whilst final bonus rates were amended from 1 May 2024.

We believe that the methodology of setting final bonus rates for maturing plans based on asset shares for those plans together with any allowance for distribution of the inherited estate means that maturity pay-outs are appropriate and fair.

Similarly, the methodology for surrender pay-outs is based on the asset share of the individual surrendering plan together with an allowance for distribution of the inherited estate, set to the same level as for maturities, and we consider this to also be appropriate and fair.

In respect of smoothing, there were no changes to the methodology set out in the PPFM during 2024.

All of these actions ensured that almost all pay-outs during 2024 were within the target ranges set out in the PPFM. Of those outside the range, most were due to smoothing, preventing some final bonus rates for longer term plans from being reduced by as much as they would have been.

Investment Management

Investment management of the Communication Workers Fund is undertaken by Schroders.

The investment objective of the Communication Workers Fund is to maximise the investment return on the with-profits planholder assets by taking an acceptable level of risk, subject to being able to meet plan benefits with an appropriate level of certainty and taking into account the amount of surplus, expected strains and past communications made to planholders.

We made no changes to the target proportion of the fund invested in equities, corporates or gilts during 2024.

Management of Expenses

The expenses charged to the fund in 2024 were in line with the methodology specified in the transfer agreement that led to the establishment of the Communication Workers Fund.

Further Information

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

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