

Ethical investments your views

Over the past few years many changes have led organisations such as The Pensions Trust to review their existing investment offerings to its customers. The market approach and products available to ethical investors has developed significantly since the Trust's original product was set up in 1988.

The Board of Verity Trustees, the trustee company of The Pensions Trust now believes the time is right to assess the socially responsible investment options available to its members to ensure they remain appropriate and aligned with members' ethical values.

As part of this process, two member related surveys were issued to approximately 20,000 existing Pensions Trust's contributing members to gain some feedback from members on a few specific areas. The latest research survey has been completed in conjunction with the Research Team at Queen Mary & Westfield College, University of London (QMUL) and the results from this survey are currently being to be evaluated and analysed. It is anticipated that a report detailing the findings of this research exercise will be published later this year.

The Research Project Team is currently investigating the main approaches available to socially responsible investors and a special emphasis has been put on those investment opportunities where 'screening' of companies are either avoided or included in investment portfolios on ethical, social or environmental grounds.



For example, screening can take place whereby certain companies may be excluded because of their involvement in certain activities such as nuclear power, tobacco, gambling, weapons/armaments, animal welfare, child labour, human rights issues, etc. At the same time information and views have also been obtained to assess those organisations who make a positive contribution to society and the environment e.g. energy efficient technology, recycling companies and organic farming, etc.

Members views have also been gathered to assess the importance of integration, voting and engagement where the Investment Fund Managers play a significant role in encouraging companies to adopt social and environmental best practices in promoting change for a greater ethical world.

The Board is currently working with QMUL with the intention that their input with the Trust's Investment Adviser will assist and shape the launch of a new socially responsible investment fund later in 2010.

More information will be available later this year.