

Due to the current heightened security level at all our premises, Members are reminded to wear their identity badges whilst attending meetings. Any visitors must produce photographic identification at Reception.

FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY SUMMONS

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

You are required to attend a meeting of the Local Pension Board Committee to be held on:

Monday, 22 January 2024 at 1030 hours

**In person at South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters,
Forest View Business Park, Llantrisant, CF72 8LX**

or

Remotely via MS Teams – <https://bit.ly/LocalPensionCommittee22-01-24>

Please ensure you join the meeting 15 minutes prior to meeting time

**Any issues please contact
01443 232000 and ask for Member Services**

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest

Members of the Fire & Rescue Authority are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare both orally and in writing any personal and/or prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Fire & Rescue Authority's Standing Orders and the Members Code of Conduct.

3. Chairperson's Announcements
4. To receive the minutes of:

- Local Pension Board Committee held on 3 July 2023 5
- Local Pension Board Committee held on 16 October 2023 11

REPORT FOR DECISION

- 5a. Review of Key Performance Indicators 15
- 5b. Review of Key Performance Indicators 27

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

- 6. Local Pension Board Risk Register 39
- 7. Verbal update report from Scheme Advisory Board 47
- 8. Firefighter Pensions - Update on current National Exercises: McCloud and O'Brien 49
- 9. Publications, Updates, Information (Standard Item) 59
- 10. The Pensions Regulator Returns 131
- 11. Internal Audit Report - Pensions 173
- 12. Forward Work Programme for Local Pension Board Committee 2023/2024 195
- 13. To consider any items of business that the Chairperson deems urgent 201

Signature of Monitoring Officer:



MEMBERSHIP

Councillors:

J	Morgan	Blaenau Gwent
C	Elsbury	Caerphilly
D	Naughton	Cardiff
P	Drake	Vale of Glamorgan
P	Davies	Fire Brigades' Union
G	Tovey	Fire Brigades' Union
D	King	FRSA

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 3 JULY 2023

1. PRESENT

Councillor

P Drake (Chair)	Vale of Glamorgan
D King	Fire & Rescue Service Association
G Tovey	Fire Brigades' Union
P Jones	Fire Brigades' Union
I Traylor	Pensions Service Director, Pensions, Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC

Apologies:

D Naughton	Cardiff
R Prendergast	Association of Principal Fire Officers

Absent:

J Morgan	Blaenau Gwent
C Elsbury	Caerphilly

OFFICERS PRESENT: - ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, ACO Geraint Thomas, Director of Corporate Services & Monitoring Officer, Ms Kim Jeal, Accountant (People Services)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Each Member declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chair's announcements.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Local Pension Board Committee held on 23 January 2023 were read and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

5. REVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Service Director, Pension, RCT advised Members that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between South Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council sets out the manner in which certain duties and responsibilities are expected to be carried out. A key element of the SLA is the reporting on actual performance activity against the agreed key delivery Service Standards. The report presented included an update on key activity undertaken during the reporting period and shares the performance data for the period 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The Service Director, Pension, RCT will make enquiries into the over target of McCloud cases.

In relation to the Scheme Member complaint at Appendix 2, the Director of People Services advised that the Service is currently working through the background to this which dates back to 6 years' and beyond.

RESOLVED THAT

- 5.1 Members noted the performance data contained within Appendix of the report.
- 5.2 Members noted the relevant pension administrative overview and update included at Appendix 2 attached to the report.

6. INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES (IDRP) UPDATE ON CASES OVER LAST 12 MONTHS

The Director of People Services presented the report which shared the procedures for resolving internal disputes in relation to pension matters. They also updated Local Pension Board Members on the cases that were considered under this procedure during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Mr Jones, Fire Brigades' Union queried the outcome of the Stage 1 case that progressed to Stage 2. The Director of People Services confirmed the individual requested an aggregated pension which did not reflect current practice within the Service.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.1 Members noted the procedures for resolving internal disputes.
- 6.2 Members noted the cases considered under the IDRP procedure during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

7. THE PENSIONS REGULATOR RETURNS 2022/2023

The Director of People Services presented the report which shared the completed Public Service Governance and Administration Survey 2022/213, which was submitted to the Pensions Regulator in relation to the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the returns which were shared for information and awareness purposes.

8. NEW MEMBER TRAINING SESSION – MEMBER HANDBOOK, TERMS OF REFERENCE & TOOLKIT

The Accountant (People Services) provided a brief update on the Members' Handbook which provides Members with an insight into the work of the Local Pension Board. The Terms of Reference are also included within the handbook. Also included are relevant links to legislation, the constitution of this Board and information on frequency of meetings. A good source of information can be found at Section 4 of the handbook which relates to information on the Pension Regulator. Information on the Governance Board including conflict of interest and other key pieces of information can be found at Section 6. This section also includes information on the resolution process and guides for all pension schemes.

Section 12 includes the Firefighter Pension Scheme Comparisons with key factors including normal pension age, deferred pension and death factors. This is a quick guide and very useful for key differences. Section 13 contains information on conflict resolution. Section 14 provides information on breaches of the law, as Members have an obligation to report any breaches to DPR through the Whistleblowing Process. Section 15 explains the Training Strategy and Framework, training sessions are normally carried out at each Board meeting which is a good opportunity to keep up to date with information from the LGA and to keep Members fully updated on all pension related subjects.

At Section 16 Members will find the training needs and analysis form which Members are required to complete to confirm their knowledge in the areas listed within the handbook.

The TPR toolkit is also included and is a very good toolkit for Members. There is a requirement for Members to complete the online toolkit, to ensure Member understanding of all key areas. The Accountant (People Services) will provide support, if required.

Paul Davies, Fire Brigades' Union wished it be noted that a pre-meeting would have been beneficial as this was his first meeting.

RESOLVED THAT

- 8.1 Members review the handbook prior to the next meeting.
- 8.2 Members to complete the training needs and analysis form prior to the next meeting.
- 8.3 Members to complete the online TPR toolkit prior to the next meeting.
- 8.4 Absent Members to be contacted and asked to complete the above.
- 8.5 The Accountant (People Services) to meet with Mr Paul Davie, Fire Brigades' Union outside of the meeting.

9. PUBLICATIONS, UPDATES, INFORMATION (STANDARD ITEM)

The Director of People Services shared a number of publications, updates and information relating to pensions matters with the Board.

RESOLVED THAT

Members reviewed and noted the publications which were shared for information and awareness purposes, as attached at Appendix 1-5.

10. FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS – UPDATE ON CURRENT NATIONAL EXERCISES: MCCLOUD AND O'BRIEN

McCloud

In July 2021, the Fire & Rescue Authority, as Scheme Manager, agreed to provide pension benefit options for those individuals who were considered to be in scope for Immediate Detriment (ID), ie those who are currently in service but intending to retire and have provided notice of their intention to do so. This policy decision came into effect from October 2021. It also confirms next steps in relation to remedying all cases of age discrimination cases.

O'Brien

A further exercise will commence in October 2023 to re-visit the first options exercise that was undertaken between 2013 and 2015, which offered all On Call staff, with service prior to July 2000 the ability to buy pension scheme membership, based on new legislation that came into effect, based on determined discriminatory practices. The initial exercise took 18 months to implement, and the same timescales have been placed

on this second exercise commencing October 2023. Preparatory work is currently underway.

The Accountant (People Services) advised those identified as non-eligible have all been contacted, 2 of which have now been categorised as eligible. Members of staff to be aware that if they are currently categorised as non-eligible but feel they are eligible based on the criteria provided to make contact with the Service. From records held, the earliest service dates back to 1968.

The Government Actuaries Department (GAD) are introducing a fixed model for services that do not hold information prior to 2021, South Wales is one of the services. There will be a large gap in data for some services due to a number of reasons including change of payroll providers and systems etc. The LGA are currently working with GAD on this.

Mr Tovey, Fire Brigade's Union queried if representatives could be of any assistance in relation to communication. The Accountant (People Services) and Mr Tovey agreed to meet outside of the meeting to discuss further.

Mr Davies , Fire Brigades' Union queried how many McCloud cases are category 2. The Accountant (People Services) confirmed there are 60 plus which have already been identified and will take priority. She also advised there are 10,000 plus lines of data to review in relation to McCloud. She further advised that there are significant differences between the Welsh and English consultations, for example if members owe contributions in England there is no offer of periodic payments from the service. The Welsh consultation aim is to attempted be fair in relation to contributions. The process followed here is that no refunds are provided as, in essence, members made that decision in 2018.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the content of the report.

11. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR LOCAL PENSION BOARD 2023/2024

The Director of People Services presented the Forward Work Programme for 2022/2023.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the content of the Forward Work Programme for 2023/2024.

12. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRPERSON DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OR 2)

12.1 GAD Modeller

Mr Tovey, Fire Brigades' Union requested an update on the current position. The Accountant (People Services) confirmed it is on hold at present due to ongoing technical issues. She further advised that she has made direct contact with GAD with an ask to either fix the issue or provide another system. It is hoped that the issues will be resolved quickly.

12.2 Pay Award

Mr Tovey, Fire Brigade's Union raised issues with staff not being awarded payments until the end of the year previously. The Accountant (People Services) advised that all relevant information has been passed to RCT who will pick up all pay adjustments. All queries to be raised directly with RCT. The Pensions Service Director agreed to provide a timeline and gave assurances that this piece of work has commenced.

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

IN QUORATE MEETING

MINUTES OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2023

13. PRESENT

Councillor

P Drake (Chair)	Vale of Glamorgan
D Naughton	Cardiff
J Morgan	Blaenau Gwent
Catherine Black	Pension Service Manager, Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC

Apologies:

C Elsbury	Caerphilly
G Tovey	Fire Brigades Union
D King	Fire & Rescue Service Association

Absent:

P Jones	Fire Brigades Union
---------	---------------------

Observers:

Matthew Brushett	Audit Wales
Charles Rigby	Audit Wales

OFFICERS PRESENT: - ACO A Reed – Director of People Services; Mrs S Watkins, Deputy Monitoring Officer, Ms K Jeal, Accountant (People Services); Mrs J Thompson, Pensions

14. QUORUM NOT ESTABLISHED

The Chair noted that quorum was not established. She agreed that the meeting of the Board would continue to allow Members to hear, for information purposes only, the items outlined on the agenda. Members noted that whilst discussion is permissible, official business cannot be transacted and no decisions made.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Each Member declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

16. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chair's announcements.

17. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Due to the absence of a quorum, approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2023 was deferred to the next meeting.

18. REVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Pension Service Manager of RCT CBC advised Members that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between South Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council sets out the manner in which certain duties and responsibilities are expected to be carried out. A key element of the SLA is the reporting on actual performance activity against the agreed key delivery Service Standards. The report presented included an update on key activity undertaken during the reporting period and shares the performance data for the period 01 April 2023 to August 2023.

RESOLVED THAT

- 18.1 Members noted the performance data contained within Appendix 1 of the report.
- 18.2 Members noted the relevant pension administrative overview and update included at Appendix 2 attached to the report.

19. PUBLICATIONS, UPDATES, INFORMATION (STANDARD ITEM)

The Director of People Services shared a number of publications, updates and information relating to pension matters with the Board.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the publications which were shared for information and awareness purposes, as attached at Appendices 1-4.

20. FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS – UPDATE ON CURRENT NATIONAL EXERCISES: MCCLOUD AND O'BRIEN

McCloud

In July 2021, the Fire & Rescue Authority, as Scheme Manager, agreed to provide pension benefit options for those individuals who were considered to be in scope for Immediate Detriment (ID), ie those who are currently in service but

intending to retire and had provided notice of their intention to do so. This policy decision came into effect from October 2021, although those retiring post 1 October 2023 will be processed under an Immediate Choice principle, as per the Firefighters Pension (Remediable Service Wales) Legislation 2023. The ACO People Services provided an update on the number of ID cases that have been processed between 19 October 2021 and 30 September 2023 and confirmed next steps in relation to remedying all cases of age discrimination.

O'Brien

An additional exercise will commence in October 2023 which re-visits the first options exercise (RDS MOD/Matthews) undertaken between 2013 and 2015, which offered all On Call staff, with service prior to July 2000, the ability to buy pension scheme membership, based on new legislation that came into effect, based on determined discriminatory practices. The initial exercise took 18 months to implement, and the same timescales have been placed on the second exercise commencing October 2023. Preparatory work is currently underway.

Members recognised the enormity of both projects and thanked officers and the Pensions Teams for the work undertaken, alongside business as usual.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the content of the report.

21. SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD

The Director of People Services provided Members with an update on the latest meeting of the Scheme Advisory Board, which included both Pension Schemes and discrimination remedies. An evaluation of presumptions was presented by GAD on mortality rates and other family statistics. Potential changes to employer contributions rates effective in 2024 were noted, together with the implications if the uptake of O'Brien is high. A GAD update is awaited and a watching brief will be maintained.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the update.

21. UPDATE ON PENSION CONSULTATIONS

The Director of People Services informed Members that the Service has responded to Welsh Government's consultations on the 2007 Pension Scheme and 2007 Compensation Scheme which closed on 13 October 2023.

In addition, the 'Home Office McCloud/Sergeant Remedy (Retrospective)' Government response was appended to the report consider under agenda item 7 (minute no 20 above).

22. LOCAL PENSION BOARD RISK REGISTER

The Director of People Services presented the report as an opportunity for Members to consider the management of pensions risks, as identified by the Local Pension Board, and the development of a Risk Register for the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority Local Pension Board.

In view of the importance of this matter and the fact that the meeting was not quorate, Members requested that the item be placed high on the agenda of the next meeting.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the contents of the report.

23. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR LOCAL PENSION BOARD 2023/2024

The Director of People Services presented the Forward Work Programme for 2023/2024.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the content of the Forward Work Programme for 2023/2024.

24. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRPERSON DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OR 2)

There were no items of business that the Chair deemed urgent.

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**AGENDA ITEM NO 5a
16 OCTOBER 2023

LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER PEOPLE SERVICES

REVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION**

REPORT PRESENTED BY CATHERINE BLACK, PENSION SERVICE MANAGER, RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC (SCHEME ADMINISTRATOR)

SUMMARY

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) between South Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Rhondda Cynon Taf Country Borough Council sets out the manner in which certain duties and responsibilities are expected to be carried out. A key element of the SLA is the reporting on actual performance activity against the agreed key delivery Service Standards. The following report is intended to provide Members with an update on key activity undertaken during the reporting period and shares the performance data for the periods April 2023 to August 2023

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Members of the Local Pension Board note the performance data included at Appendix 1 attached to the report.
2. That Members note the relevant pension administrative overview and update included at Appendix 2 attached to the report.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The ongoing monitoring of the key performance indicators / service standards and activity, is intended as a measurement to help evaluate the success or otherwise of the service provided to the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority on behalf of its scheme members, by the RCT Pension Service.

2. ISSUES

- 2.1 There are no issues to report.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability/Environment/Carbon Reduction	No
Safeguarding	No
Consultation and Communications	No
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No
Impact Assessment	No

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

Legal	No	Data Protection / Privacy	Yes
Financial	Yes	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Procurement	No	Governance & Audit	Yes
Corporate Risk	No	Service Policy	Yes
Information Management	Yes	National Policy	No

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

Human Resource and People Development	No
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	Yes
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	Yes

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Members are asked to review the outturns in the Appendices attached to the report with a view of discussing them at the meeting.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That Members of the Local Pension Board note the performance data included at Appendix 1 attached to the report.

5.2 That Members note the relevant pension administrative overview and update included at Appendix 2 attached to the report.

Contact Officers:	ACO Alison Reed Director of People Services Ian Traylor Service Director Pensions, Procurement & Transactional Services, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Scheme Administrator)
Background Papers	Appendix 1 – Current and Previous Year Key Performance Appendix 2 – Overview and Update of Administrative Activity

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

MONTHLY SERVICE STANDARDS															Relates to last Month Completed		
Scheme 090 (Protected 92 Scheme and Transitioned members)																	
<u>STANDARD MEASURED</u>		<u>TARGET</u>	<u>INTER' VENTION</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MARCH</u>	Comments	<u>2023/2024</u> Year to Date Actual %
% Refund of contributions processed within 10 days	Payment	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	-								No cases completed.	-
% Divorce Estimates processed within 10 days	Statement	100	95%	-	100%	-	100%	-								No cases completed.	100.00%
% Preserved Benefits processed within 10 days	Statement	100	90%	-	-	100%	-	100%								One case completed. On time.	100.00%
% Employer requests for retirement estimates processed within 5 days	Statement	100	95%	-	-	-	-	-								No cases completed.	-

% Retirements from Active membership processed within 5 days	Payment	100	95%	100%	-	100%	100%	80%									5 cases completed. One case over target. Case completed in 6 days.	90.00%
% Preserved Benefits into payment on retirement processed within 5 days	Payment	100	95%	100%	-	-	-	-									No cases completed.	100.00%
% Transfers In processed within 10 days	Statement	100	90%	-	-	-	-	-									No cases completed.	-
% Transfers Out processed within 10 days (Monthly)	Payment	100	95%	100%	-	-	-	-									No cases completed.	100.00%
% death grant for active members within 5 days (Monthly)	Payment	100	95%	-	-	-	-	-									No cases completed.	-

MONTHLY SERVICE STANDARDS															Relates to last Month Completed		
Scheme FIR (2006 Scheme and Transitioned members)																	
<u>STANDARD MEASURED</u>		<u>TARGET</u>	<u>INTER' VENTION</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	Comments	<u>2023/2024</u> Year to Date Actual %
% Refund of contributions processed within 10 days	Payment	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	-								No cases completed	-
% Divorce Estimates processed within 10 days	Statement	100%	95%	-	100%	100%	-	-								No cases completed	100.00%
% Preserved Benefits processed within 10 days	Statement	100%	90%	100%	88.9%	-	100%	100%								One case completed On time.	92.86%
% Employer requests for retirement estimates processed within 5 days	Statement	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	-								No cases completed	-

% Retirements from Active membership processed within 5 days	Payment	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	100%									One case completed On time.	100.00%
% Preserved Benefits into payment on retirement processed within 5 days	Payment	Payment	100%	50%	-	100%	100%	-									No cases completed	75.00%
% Transfers In processed within 10 days	Statement	Statement	100%	-	-	-	-	-									No cases completed	-
% Transfers Out processed within 10 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-									No cases completed	-
% death grant for active members within 5 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-									No cases completed	-
% death grant for pensioner members within 5 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-									No cases completed	-

Appendix 1

MONTHLY SERVICE STANDARDS															Relates to last Month Completed		
Scheme F15 (2015 Only Members)																	
<u>STANDARD MEASURED</u>		<u>TARGET</u>	<u>INTER' VENTIO N</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	Comments	2023/2024 Year to Date Actual %
% Refund of contributions processed within 10 days	Payment	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	-								No cases completed	-
% Divorce Estimates processed within 10 days	Statement	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	100%								2 cases completed Both on time.	100.00%
% Preserved Benefits processed within 10 days	Statement	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%	-	100%								2 cases completed Both on time.	100.00%
% Employer requests for retirement estimates processed within 5 days	Statement	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	-								No cases completed	-
% Retirements from Active membership processed within 5 days	Payment	100%	95%	-	-	-	100%	-								No cases completed	100.00%

% Preserved Benefits into payment on retirement processed within 5 days	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-								No cases completed	-
% Transfers In processed within 10 days	Statement	Statement	100%	-	-	-	100%	100%								One case completed On time.	100.00%
% Transfers Out processed within 10 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	100%	-	-	-								No cases completed	100.00%
% death grant for active members within 5 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-								No cases completed	-
% death grant for pensioner members within 5 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-								No cases completed	-

The following information is intended to provide Members of Pensions Board with an overview and update on key administrative activity:

Member Self-Serve Statistics

Member Self-Serve (MSS) take-up as 19th September 2023

	Status 1 (Actives)	Status 2 (Pending leavers)	Status 4 (Deferred)	Status 5 (Pensioners)	Status 6 (Dependants)
92 Scheme	86.10%	0%	70.87%	44.10%	46.39%
Total Membership	296	0	127	1186	194
2006 Scheme	69.93%	0%	43.49%	59.86%	0.00%
Total Membership	296	8	722	152	13
2015 Scheme	35.4%	0	25.46%	0.00%	0.00%
Total Membership	661	2	377	1	0

Scheme Member Complaints

- There have been no formal complaints this period.

Key Administration Activities

- The Firefighters' Pensions (Remediable Service) (Wales) Regulations 2023 were laid before Senedd on 6 September 2023 and come into force 01 October 2023.
- Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 and Tax Rectification Regulations also been made
- Working closely with SWFRS Pensions Team on McCloud project.
- Members of RCT Pensions Team are attending the Firefighters Pension AGM on 20th September.
- 2023 Annual Benefit Statements for both deferred and active members were issued to statutory deadline of August 2023
- Pension Savings Statements deadline October 2024
- Dashboard - On-boarding schedule has been suspended and revised Regulations to be laid with new timescales. No further update
- 2023 Proof of Life Exercise commenced
- 2023 Pensions Regulator Scheme Return due – notice will be received in October 2023 with deadline of 6 weeks to complete

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**AGENDA ITEM NO 5b
22 JANUARY 2024

LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER PEOPLE SERVICES

REVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION**

REPORT PRESENTED BY IAN TRAYLOR, HEAD OF SERVICE - PENSIONS, PROCUREMENT AND TRANSACTIONAL SERVICES, RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC (SCHEME ADMINISTRATOR)

SUMMARY

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) between South Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Rhondda Cynon Taf Country Borough Council sets out the manner in which certain duties and responsibilities are expected to be carried out. A key element of the SLA is the reporting on actual performance activity against the agreed key delivery Service Standards. The following report is intended to provide Members with an update on key activity undertaken during the reporting period and shares the performance data for the periods April 2023 to November 2023

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Members of the Local Pension Board note the performance data included at Appendix 1 attached to the report.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The ongoing monitoring of the key performance indicators / service standards and activity, is intended as a measurement to help evaluate the success or otherwise of the service provided to the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority on behalf of its scheme members, by the RCT Pension Service.

2. ISSUES

- 2.1 There are no issues to report.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability/Environment/Carbon Reduction	No
Safeguarding	No
Consultation and Communications	No
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No
Impact Assessment	No

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

Legal	No	Data Protection / Privacy	Yes
Financial	Yes	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Procurement	No	Governance & Audit	Yes
Corporate Risk	No	Service Policy	Yes
Information Management	Yes	National Policy	No

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

Human Resource and People Development	No
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	Yes
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	Yes

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Members are asked to review the outturns in the Appendices attached to the report with a view of discussing them at the meeting.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That Members of the Local Pension Board note the performance data included at Appendix 1 attached to the report.

Contact Officers:	ACO Alison Reed Director of People Services Ian Traylor Service Director Pensions, Procurement & Transactional Services, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Scheme Administrator)
Background Papers	Appendix 1 – Current and Previous Year Key Performance Appendix 2 – Overview and Update of Administrative Activity

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

MONTHLY SERVICE STANDARDS															<u>Relates to last Month Completed</u>		
Scheme 090 (Protected 92 Scheme and Transitioned members)																	
<u>STANDARD MEASURED</u>		<u>TARGET</u>	<u>INTER' VENTION</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MARCH</u>	Comments	<u>2023/2024</u> Year to Date Actual %
% Refund of contributions processed within 10 days	Payment	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No cases completed	-
% Divorce Estimates processed within 10 days	Statement	100	95%	-	100%	-	100%	-	100%	100%	100%	-	-	-	-	One case completed On time.	100.00%
% Preserved Benefits processed within 10 days	Statement	100	90%	-	-	100%	-	100%	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	No cases completed	100.00%
% Employer requests for retirement estimates processed within 5 days	Statement	100	95%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No cases completed	-
% Retirements from Active membership processed within 5 days	Payment	100	95%	100%	-	100%	100%	80%	-	100%	100%	-	-	-	-	3 cases completed All on time.	94.12%

% Preserved Benefits into payment on retirement processed within 5 days	Payment	100	95%	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%					One case completed over target. No of days to complete 6.	50.00%
% Transfers In processed within 10 days	Statement	100	90%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					No cases completed	-
% Transfers Out processed within 10 days (Monthly)	Payment	100	95%	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					No cases completed	100.00%
% death grant for active members within 5 days (Monthly)	Payment	100	95%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					No cases completed	-

MONTHLY SERVICE STANDARDS															Relates to last Month Completed		
Scheme FIR (2006 Scheme and Transitioned members)																	
<u>STANDARD MEASURED</u>		<u>TARGET</u>	<u>INTERVENTION</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	Comments	<u>2023/2024</u> Year to Date Actual %
% Refund of contributions processed within 10 days	Payment	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					No cases completed	-
% Divorce Estimates processed within 10 days	Statement	100%	95%	-	100%	100%	-	-	100%	100%	-					No cases completed	100.00%
% Preserved Benefits processed within 10 days	Statement	100%	90%	100%	97.1 %	-	100%	100%	100%	100%	-					No cases completed	95.45%
% Employer requests for retirement estimates processed within 5 days	Statement	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					No cases completed	-
% Retirements from Active membership processed within 5 days	Payment	100%	95%	100%	-	-	-	100%	-	100%	100%					3 cases completed ,all on time.	100.00%

% Preserved Benefits into payment on retirement processed within 5 days	Payment	Payment	100%	100%	-	100%	100%	-	100%	-	50%					2 cases completed , one case over target. Ave days to complete overdue cases 8	71.43%
% Transfers In processed within 10 days	Statement	Statement	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					No cases completed	-
% Transfers Out processed within 10 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	100%					One case completed On time.	100.00%
% death grant for active members within 5 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					No cases completed	-
% death grant for pensioner members within 5 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					No cases completed	-

Appendix 1

MONTHLY SERVICE STANDARDS															Relates to last Month Completed		
Scheme F15 (2015 Only Members)																	
<u>STANDARD MEASURED</u>		<u>TARGET</u>	<u>INTER' VENTION</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	Comments	2023/2024 Year to Date Actual %
% Refund of contributions processed within 10 days	Payment	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					No cases completed	-
% Divorce Estimates processed within 10 days	Statement	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	100%	-	100%	-					No cases completed	100.00%
% Preserved Benefits processed within 10 days	Statement	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	100%					7 cases completed All on time.	100.00%
% Employer requests for retirement estimates processed within 5 days	Statement	100%	95%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					No cases completed	-
% Retirements from Active membership processed within 5 days	Payment	100%	95%	-	-	-	100%	-	-	100%	-					No cases completed	100.00%

% Preserved Benefits into payment on retirement processed within 5 days	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No cases completed	-
% Transfers In processed within 10 days	Statement	Statement	100%	-	-	-	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%						One case completed On time.	100.00%
% Transfers Out processed within 10 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-						No cases completed	100.00%
% death grant for active members within 5 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						No cases completed	-
% death grant for pensioner members within 5 days (Monthly)	Payment	Payment	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						No cases completed	-

The following information is intended to provide Members of Pensions Board with an overview and update on key administrative activity:

Member Self-Serve Statistics

Member Self-Serve (MSS) take-up as 18th December 2023.

	Status 1 (Actives)	Status 2 (Pending leavers)	Status 4 (Deferred)	Status 5 (Pensioners)	Status 6 (Dependants)
92 Scheme	87.5%	0%	70.77%	45.21%	4.52%
Total Membership	280	0	130	1201	197
2006 Scheme	73.51%	75%	46.98%	60.49%	0%
Total Membership	287	3	728	162	15
2015 Scheme	36.44%	28.57%	29.87%	50.00%	0.00%
Total Membership	697	7	395	2	0

Scheme Member Complaints

- There have been no formal complaints this period.

Key Administration Activities

- Following The Firefighters' Pensions (Remediable Service) (Wales) Regulations 2023 coming into force 01 October 2023 administration processes have been put in place to calculate benefits in accordance with the new regulations.
- Regular meetings with SWFRS Pensions Team continue.
- A template Remedial Service Statement for Immediate Choice Cases has been drafted by the LGA, consideration being made as to whether this needs to be amended to reflect any Welsh specific regulations.
- Plan to be developed to issue Immediate Choice Statements to those members in scope.
- RCT Team attended regular drop-in sessions with Heywood to feedback any issues with pensions administration software to improve ability to administer benefits quickly and accurately.
- RCT Team regularly attend LGA Technical Briefing Sessions
- Data Scores and Membership Numbers provided to SWFRS for annual Pension Regulator Return

	Common Data Score	Scheme Specific Data Scores
1992 Scheme	99.5%	96.34%
2006 Scheme	93.4%	93.96%
2015 Scheme	98.0%	95.76%

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**AGENDA ITEM NO 6
22 JANUARY 2024

LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER PEOPLE SERVICES

REPORT APPROVED BY THE ACO PEOPLE SERVICES

LOCAL PENSION BOARD RISK REGISTER**THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION**REPORT APPROVED BY ACO PEOPLE SERVICES
REPORT PRESENTED BY ACO A REED**SUMMARY**

To consider the development of a Risk Register for the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority Local Pension Board.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members consider the contents of the report and determine if a Risk Register should be developed for the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority Local Pension Board.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 It is good business practice for an organisation or body to consider risk management whilst discharging its duties and take into account the risks making strategic decisions.
- 1.2 Risk is an event that has the potential to help or hinder the achievement of a strategic objective or the delivery of core business. All risks are rates as manageable (low), material (medium) or significant (high).
- 1.3 As a normal business practice within the Service Directors, department heads and team leaders are responsible for identifying risks during the business planning process and taking the appropriate actions to manage or mitigate risk within their areas. Only risks that impact upon the achievement of a strategic objective or delivery of core business are generally monitored via the Services Corporate Risk register.

- 1.4 The Senior Management Team formally reviews the Corporate Risk Register on a regular basis and endorses the inclusion of any new or emerging risks identified.
- 1.5 The Pensions Regulator states that 'Public Service Pension Schemes need to have good internal controls. They are a key characteristic of a well-run scheme and will enable risks to the scheme to be managed effectively. The scheme manager must establish and operate adequate internal controls'.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Local Pension Board establishes a Risk Register to identify and manage risks.
- 2.2 To support the development of the Risk Register it is proposed to hold a separate workshop with Members of the Local Pension Board.
- 2.3 It is also proposed that for the convenience of Officers and Members that the proposed Local pension Board Risk Register follow the format and business processes of the Service's Risk Management Process.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability/Environment/Carbon Reduction	No
Safeguarding	No
Consultation and Communications	No
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No
Impact Assessment	No

There are no additional financial issues arising as a result of this report.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

Legal	No	Data Protection / Privacy	No
Financial	No	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Procurement	No	Governance & Audit	No
Corporate Risk	No	Service Policy	No
Information Management	No	National Policy	No

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

Human Resource and People Development	No
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	No
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	No

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Members consider the contents of the report and determine if a Risk Register should be developed for the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority Local Pension Board.

Contact Officer:	ACO Alison Reed Director of People Services
Background Papers	Appendix 1 – Public Service Example Risk Register

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Public Service toolkit downloadable

Example risk register

Risk area 1 – Operations	Likelihood (1: least likely, 10: most likely)	Impact (1: least likely, 10: most likely)	Score (likelihood x impact)	Control	Owner	Test	Next review	Comment
Operational disaster (fire/flood etc)	1	6	6	Business continuity procedures in place for administrator	Scheme manager	Annual	Q1 Y2	Up-to-date business resiliency programme provided by administrator as at 01/01 Y2, reviewed by scheme manager at meeting in Q1 Y2
				Business continuity plans in place for scheme manager	Scheme manager	Annual	Q2 Y2	Documented programme in place to ensure continuity will be provided by pension finance manager to scheme manager in time for quarterly meeting in Q2 Y2
				Contracts with all advisers and suppliers are recorded on central database	Pension finance manager	Annual	Q1 Y3	Contracts held in hard copy in safe, and electronically in secure area of scheme management intranet. Checked by pension finance manager January Y2
Member data incomplete or inaccurate	5	7	35	Annual report from administrator, used as basis for rectification plan	Scheme manager	Annual	Q3 Y2	Initial rectification plan completed Q3 Y1. New report received from administrator at Q1 Y2 meeting, revised rectification plan agreed with administrator. To review progress at Q3 quarterly meeting
				'Not known at this address' returns from annual statements checked by tracing agency	Pension administrator	Annual	Q2 Y2	Details provided by administrator mid January Y2, passed to tracing agency at end of January. 25% traced by quarterly meeting in Q1, update will be provided to scheme manager for Q2 meeting
Administration process failure/maladministration	4	8	32	Formal agreement in place with administrator, including SLAs	Pension finance manager	Annual	Q1 Y3	Last reviewed Q2 Y1, three year agreement
				Authority levels clearly agreed and kept up-to-date	Scheme manager	Annual	Q2 Y2	Last reviewed Q2 Y1
				Review independent audit reports of administrator's processes	Scheme manager	Annual	Q2 Y2	AAF01/06 held by administrator as at DD/MM/YYYY
				Ongoing dialogue with third party administrator	Pension administration manager	Ongoing	Q2 Y2	Weekly phone calls between pension administrator manager and third party administrator, plus ad hoc calls when necessary
				Written reports and quarterly presentations by administrator to scheme manager	Scheme manager	Quarterly	Q2 Y2	Next report from administrator due two weeks before quarterly meeting

Risk area 2 – Financial	Likelihood (1: least likely, 10: most likely)	Impact (1: least likely, 10: most likely)	Score (likelihood x impact)	Control	Owner	Test	Next review	Comment
Excessive charges by suppliers	3	2	6	Annual review of scheme budget, quarterly review of costs incurred against budget	Scheme manager	Quarterly	Q2 Y2	Annual budget agreed Q1 Y2. Q4 Y1 charges reviewed and agreed Q1 Y2
				Periodic review of suppliers	Scheme manager	Annual	Q1 Y1	Planning underway for review of administrator in Q3 Y2, to include cost and performance benchmarking
Fraud/Fraudulent behaviour	1	10	10	Conduct a monthly fraud monitoring process of incoming contributions payments against the schedule of contributions	Scheme manager	Monthly	Q2 Y2	All contributions have been accounted for and have been paid in accordance with the schedule of contributions
				Check incoming and outgoing scheme funds against schemes forecast – reconciling all funds	Scheme manager	Monthly	Q2 Y2	Accounts forecast against actual checked and balance

Risk area 3 – Funding	Likelihood (1: least likely, 10: most likely)	Impact (1: least likely, 10: most likely)	Score (likelihood x impact)	Control	Owner	Test	Next review	Comment
Employer failure to pay contributions into scheme	1	10	10	Monthly monitoring of contribution payments by pension finance manager and administrators	Scheme manager	Monthly	Q2 Y2	All Q4 Y2 contributions paid in accordance with Schedule of Contributions
				Ongoing dialogue with employer over willingness and ability to pay	Scheme manager	Half yearly	Q3 Y2	Presentation to scheme manager by pension finance manager scheduled for Q2 Y2
				Annual audit	Pension finance manager	Annual	Q3 Y2	Accounts for year ended 31 March Y1 signed off by auditors without qualification. Planning for next audit will start during Q3 Y2
Failure of non-public sector employers	2	10	20	Scheme manager monitoring of employer covenant and business strength	Scheme manager	Half yearly	Q1 Y1	Financial strength of major employers. Presentation to scheme manager by pension finance manager scheduled for Q2 Y2. Confidentiality agreement signed by all relevant persons
				Use of bonds and guarantees	Scheme manager	Ongoing	Q2 Y2	Pension finance manager confirms that all guarantees are still in force and effective

Risk area 4 – Regulatory and compliance	Likelihood (1: least likely, 10: most likely)	Impact (1: least likely, 10: most likely)	Score (likelihood x impact)	Control	Owner	Test	Next review	Comment
Failure to interpret rules or legislation correctly	2	7	14	Up-to-date and documented training log, showing completion of scheme-specific and The Pensions Regulator’s educational material	Scheme manager	Annual	Q1 Y3	All relevant persons have completed educational material
				Technical advice and updates	Scheme manager	Annual	Q4 Y2	Updates received from responsible authority, scheme advisory board and professional advisers; acted on.
Conflicts of interest	2	5	10	Pension board awareness of legal responsibilities	Pension board chair	As required	Q2 Y2	All pension board members have completed educational material
				All pension board members to declare any conflicts and potential conflicts	Scheme manager	Ongoing	Q2 Y2	Conflicts document signed by all pension board members, recorded in conflicts register. Reminder, and any changes or additional conflicts, will be minuted at each pension board meeting.

Note: Public service pension schemes and legislation about the new governance and administration requirements are expected to come into effect in April 2015.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

AGENDA ITEM NO 7

Verbal Update Report from Scheme Advisory Board

-

Verbal Update to be presented on the day.

Presenting Officer: ACO People Services – Alison Reed

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

**AGENDA ITEM NO 8
22 JANUARY 2024**

LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE ACO PEOPLE SERVICES

FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS – UPDATE ON CURRENT NATIONAL EXERCISES: MCCLOUD AND O'BRIEN

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION

REPORT PRESENTED BY THE ACO PEOPLE SERVICES

SUMMARY

MCCLOUD

In July 2021, the Fire & Rescue Authority, as Scheme Manager, agreed to provide pension benefit options for those individuals who were considered to be in scope for Immediate Detriment (ID), ie those who are currently in service but intending to retire and have provided notice of their intention to do so. This policy decision came into effect from October 2021. This report confirms the number of ID cases that were processed between October 2021 and the end of March 2023. It also confirms next steps in relation to remedying all cases of age discrimination cases.

O'BRIEN

A further exercise has commenced to revisit the first options exercise that was undertaken between 2013 and 2015, which offered all On Call staff, with Service prior to July 2000, the ability to buy pension scheme membership, based on new legislation that came into effect, based on determined discriminatory practices. The initial exercise took 18 months to implement, and the same timescales have been placed on this second exercise, however, the legislation is unlikely to come into force until early 2024. Preparatory work is currently underway.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the content of the report.

1. BACKGROUND - MCCLOUD

- 1.1 Following Lord Hutton's 2011 review of public sector pensions, the Public Service Pensions Act (2013) provided the legal framework to reform public sector pension schemes. Reforms included restricting existing

final salary schemes, extending retirement ages, and introducing career average schemes. In 2015 all main public service pension schemes were reformed to provide defined benefits on a career average basis and extend the normal retirement age of members. The pension scheme regulations were amended to introduce these changes. The amended regulations also provided protection for members of existing final salary schemes. This protection was age related and members reaching the normal pension age of 55 by 31 March 2012, were afforded full protection with other members receiving protection on a tapered basis depending on their age. This protection was known as transitional protection and members who did not qualify for protection were moved out of their legacy schemes directly onto the new 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme on the 1st April 2015.

- 1.2 In 2018 the Court of Appeal ruled that the transitional protection element of the 2015 public service pension reforms constituted unlawful age discrimination in the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. This is referred to as the McCloud/Sargeant case. On the back of this decision the Government confirmed that it would remove the difference in treatment across all main public service pension schemes. Since then, there have been further challenges in the courts in relation to the powers of Fire & Rescue Authorities and their ability to implement the outcome of the McCloud/Sargeant judgement.
- 1.3 In October 2020 the UK Government undertook to consult the public on the way forward in relation to public service pension schemes and in particular how it should respond to the detail outlined in the judgement. The outcomes of the consultation were published on 4 February 2021, with an option called 'the Deferred Choice Underpin' being adopted. This means that members will make their decision between scheme benefit options shortly before their benefits are paid from the scheme, at the point of retirement. In the meantime, members will be deemed to have accrued benefits in their legacy schemes rather than reformed schemes, for the remedy period until they make that choice. The remedy period has been determined as 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022. The UK Government response to the consultation can be accessed via this link- <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/public-service-pension-schemes-consultation-changes-to-the-transitional-arrangements-to-the-2015-schemes>
- 1.4 On 12 February 2021, an Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) gave its judgement on an appeal by the Fire & Rescue Authorities based on Schedule 22 of the Equality Act. The appeal was based on the argument that the Fire & Rescue Authorities did not make the legislation which was found by the Court of Appeal to be discriminatory on the grounds of age but were bound to follow it because it was the law. Schedule 22 can give

a defence where an employer is required by legislation to act towards its employees in a way which is discriminatory. The Employment Appeal Tribunal's judgement was that Fire & Rescue Authorities cannot rely on the Schedule 22 defence. Effectively the Employee Appeal Tribunal held that the Fire & Rescue Authorities in their capacity as the scheme manager could have decided not to follow discriminatory legislation and, in fact, should have done so by refusing to treat firefighters as having transferred into the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015. This is because it held that Section 61 of the Equality Act 2010 prohibits Fire & Rescue Authorities from acting in a manner which discriminates on the grounds of age, and it prioritises that obligation over the other provisions in the pension scheme which would oblige the Fire & Rescue Authorities to act in that way. In addition, it held that under Section 62 of the Equality Act 2010, as scheme managers the Fire & Rescue Authorities have vested in them the power to pass a resolution making alterations to the scheme, which would have the effect of removing such discrimination.

- 1.5 On 10 June 2021, the Home Office and Local Government Association issued informal guidance on processing Immediate Detriment cases. Whilst this guidance applied to Fire & Rescue Services in England, communication from Welsh Government did confirm that although they do not have the power to issue statutory guidance or directions to scheme managers on such matters, the English and Welsh schemes are substantively identical, as are the issues surrounding the processing of immediate detriment claims, and it was accepted that the Home Office/LGA guidance contains useful information for scheme managers in handling such claims.
- 1.6 Immediate Detriment is the term used to refer to firefighters who will retire from the scheme before the secondary regulations are amended to bring in the age discrimination remedies. There are two main categories of immediate detriment-
 1. Those who have retired since April 2015 – Category 2 cases
 2. Those who will retire before the legislation is amended to bring in the Deferred Choice Underpin (DCU) remedy. So those that retire before October 2023 – Category 1 cases
- 1.7 The guidance from Government at this point, was the members who have already retired should not be processed under immediate detriment guidance due to complex issues that have not yet been resolved. Therefore, it was cases described in point 2 above that were the focus of our initial work. The Home Office/LGA guidance was described as providing informal guidance to support Fire & Rescue Authorities to process immediate detriment cases. The wider piece of work, needed to

be completed by FRAs, to implement full remedy will need to be concluded by October 2023. Once completed this information is passed to pension scheme administrators who then have 18 months to send out Remediable Service Statements to all affected members. Ahead of that date both primary and secondary legislation is required, as well as administration work to implement the changes. Under the remedy proposals the Deferred Choice Underpin will need to be implemented by October 2023.

- 1.8 On 8 October 2021, the Local Government Association and Fire Brigades Union, published a joint statement, including a Memorandum of Understanding, the principles of which were intended to be consistent with those set out in the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Officers Bill. Fire & Rescue Authorities were encouraged to consider adoption of the MOU Framework, with a view to ensuring a consistent approach to Immediate Detriment cases across Fire & Rescue Services going forward.
- 1.9 The Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 was given Royal Assent on 10 March 2022 and provides an overarching framework to allow public service pension schemes to remedy the impact of unlawful age discrimination.
- 1.10 On 29 November 2021 HM Treasury issued a statement in relation to the complexities of processing ID cases without formal legislation in place. The issues centred around the complexities of tax and tax relief, in particular. It was HMT's view at this point, based on the analysis that cases could not be smoothly and predictably processed until new legislation is in place and that there are risks and uncertainties for schemes and for individuals if cases are processed ahead of that. The note stated that for cases that have already been dealt with, or are in the process of being dealt with, the new legislation will give powers intended to allow schemes to put these individuals into the correct position, drawing on the provisions of the McCloud Bill. It pointed out that this could entail significant second or third corrections and so HMT would not advise that schemes continue to process cases on the assumption these provisions will mean a smooth and predictable experience for themselves and for members. The note confirms that the Home Office guidance that was issued in June 2021 has been withdrawn. It also confirms that it is up to schemes to choose to process cases, or not, based on their own assessment of the competing legal risks, but at that stage it was not possible to give any guarantees that the remedy and its tax consequences would work as intended for everyone before the legislation was in place.

- 1.11 In April 2022, the Local Government Association wrote to HM Treasury with the aim of obtaining an understanding of the issues raised by HMT. There is currently no further update to report.
- 1.12 The FBU issued a statement confirming that the latest information does not alter the FBU position in relation to immediate detriment cases. It is their firm view that cases must be resolved as previously directed by the courts and if necessary, the union will take legal action if FRAs do not proceed.
- 1.13 Both the Home Office and Welsh Government issued consultations on changes to the pensions regulations, which enabled the new legislation to come into force on 1st October 2023.

2. BACKGROUND – O'BRIEN

- 2.1 From 6 April 2006, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 (FPS 1992) was closed to new members, although it remained in force for those regular firefighters who were already in the scheme. The exclusion of On-Call firefighters from the FPS 1992 was challenged under the Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 and this resulted in a settlement which allowed certain On-Call firefighters with service between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006 to become members of a pension scheme. Eligible firefighters were asked whether they wanted to join this scheme in a previous options exercise, this was the "first options exercise" often referred to as Matthews.

More recently, this judgment was challenged at the European Court of Justice in relation to fee-paid judges. The Court ruled in that case that service going back to the start of employment could be considered. The government accepted that the same principles apply to certain On-Call firefighters, whether they have made a legal claim or not.

A second options exercise will therefore now take place to allow eligible On-Call firefighters to buy pension service as a special member of the FPS 2006, backdated to the start date of their employment.

The following individuals are eligible for the second options exercise:

1. On-Call firefighters employed on any date between 7 April 2000 and 30 June 2000 (inclusive)
2. On-call firefighters employed on any date between 7 April 2000 and 30 June 2000 (inclusive) as well as on any date between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006 (inclusive)
3. On-call firefighters employed on any date between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006 (inclusive), but not on any date between 7 April and 1

July 2000, who were eligible to take part in the first options exercise but were not given opportunity to do so.

On-Call firefighters employed on any date between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006 (inclusive), but not on any date between 7 April and 1 July 2000, who were given opportunity to take part in the first options exercise but did not choose to do so within the legal time limits are not eligible for the second options exercise.

On 31st March 2023 the Home Office launched a formal consultation on the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) 2006 for Retained Firefighters' Pension. The deadline for formal responses was the 9th June 2023, with the legislation changes, enacted, in England, on the 1st October 2023. FRAs, in England have 18 months to undertake the exercise. SWFRS submitted its response on this consultation and the subsequent Welsh Government consultation, with the changes to the legislation, in Wales, yet to be formalised. It is anticipated that this will come into force in the early part of 2024.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability/Environment/Carbon Reduction	No
Safeguarding	No
Consultation and Communications	No
Consultation with Representative Bodies	Yes
Impact Assessment	Yes

3.2 Regular dialogue with the Representative Bodies has commenced and will continue on a regular basis going forward.

3.3 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

Legal	Yes	Data Protection / Privacy	No
Financial	Yes	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Procurement	No	Governance & Audit	Yes
Corporate Risk	Yes	Service Policy	No
Information Management	No	National Policy	Yes

3.4 Proceeding to implement Immediate Detriment cases (McCloud) without the relevant legislative processes in place presents an element of risk. However, this is partly mitigated by utilising the technical expertise of Service personnel as well as RCT Pensions and the Local Government Association.

3.5 Resources, Assets and Delivery

Human Resource and People Development	Yes
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	No
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	Yes

3.6 Given the scale of the above national exercises and in order to implement both the McCloud and O'Brien changes, within the given timescales, we are currently assessing our internal resources.

3.7 Following audit of the 2021/22 accounts by the Wales Audit Office, no concerns were expressed regarding the legality or accounting methodology adopted by the Service in respect of the Category 1 ID cases (McCloud) processed to date and accordingly, the Service intends to continue processing cases in the same manner. The Service and Authority has acknowledged the risks involved in processing ID cases prior to the full legislation being put in place however, there are also significant financial risks involved in not progressing the outcome of the various High Court judgements . Officers are maintaining close dialogue with all stakeholders involved in the resolution of this matter. The long-term financial liabilities of implementing the remedies have been estimated by the Government Actuary Department (GAD) and included in the Authority's Balance Sheet. It is impossible to accurately assess the final impact until the remedy is agreed and all employees have individually made their choice as to which scheme they wish to be part of for the remedy period. As a result, the future revenue implications for the Service cannot yet be determined.

3.8 There is also the possibility of us incurring administrative and software costs that our Administrator may pass on to us in order to progress cases under both McCloud and O'Brien.

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

McCloud

4.1 Whilst the document from HM Treasury (November 2021) placed uncertainty on existing powers to correct the tax positions for individuals, the question in relation to powers has been tested previously at ET. The

Authority therefore has the powers to process cases under Section 61 of the Equality Act, albeit these powers do not stretch to decisions needed around taxation implications.

- 4.2 At its February 2022 meeting, the Fire Authority confirmed its approach to processing cases, this was to continue to process category 1 cases and in parallel to continue the work already underway to understand the implications of processing category 2 cases. Only if there are further concerns identified in relation to legal, taxation or funding issues, will a further report be generated to the Fire & Rescue Authority.
- 4.3 That work continues to progress category 1 cases as described in this report.
- 4.4 It is important to note that all cases processed as ID will need to be revisited once the full details of the Government's approach is finalised and legislation is in place. The legislation came into force on 1st October 2023.

O'Brien

- 4.5 Activity in relation to O'Brien has so far focussed on publishing initial communications to all those that are not in scope for this exercise, based on the published criteria, with 363 individuals identified. Those with queries with regards their entitlement to be part of this project have started to contact the Service directly with their details. Work regarding those that are in scope for remedy cannot commence until the regulations are amended and published. 460 individuals have been identified as in scope at this point and have been formally written to informing them of this. They are anticipated to be in force early in 2024.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Members note the content of the report.

Contact Officer:	ACO Alison Reed
Background Papers	Appendix 1 – number of ID (McCloud) cases processed.

Appendix 1

McCLOUD REMEDY
FINAL NUMBER OF CATEGORY 1 CASES
PROCESSED AS IMMEDIATE DETRIMENT CASES

Between October 2021 to March 2022	8
April 2022 to March 2023	32
April 2023 – September 2023	10

From 1 October 2023, cases processed for retirement will follow the Immediate Choice principle.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**AGENDA ITEM NO 9
22 JANUARY 2024

LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER PEOPLE SERVICES

REPORT APPROVED BY THE ACO PEOPLE SERVICES

PUBLICATIONS, UPDATES, INFORMATION (STANDARD ITEM)**THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION**

REPORT PRESENTED BY ACO A REED

SUMMARY

This report shares relevant publications, updates and information relating to pension matters, with Members of the Local Pension Board

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members review and note the attached publications which are shared for information and awareness purposes. (Attached to the report as Appendix 1-3).

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 To support Local Pension Board Members discharge their duties, this report shares recent relevant publications in relation to pension matters. These are not limited to fire pensions.

2. ISSUES

- 2.1 There are no issues to report.

3. IMPLICATIONS**3.1 Community and Environment**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability/Environment/Carbon Reduction	No
Safeguarding	No

Consultation and Communications	No
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No
Impact Assessment	No

3.1.1 There are no additional financial issues arising as a result of this report.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

Legal	No	Data Protection / Privacy	No
Financial	No	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Procurement	No	Governance & Audit	No
Corporate Risk	No	Service Policy	No
Information Management	No	National Policy	No

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

Human Resource and People Development	No
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	No
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	No

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 An Equality Risk Assessment has been undertaken to assess the potential impact of this report. The assessment concluded that there were no immediate or long term adverse impacts on any individual or group of personnel arising from this particular report.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That Members review and note the attached publications which are shared for information and awareness purposes. (Attached to the report as Appendix 1-3).

Contact Officer:	Alison Reed Director of People Services
Background Papers	Appendix 1- 3 (FPS Bulletins 73, 74 & 75)

FPS Bulletin 73 – September 2023

Welcome to issue 73 of the Firefighters’ Pensions Schemes bulletin.

If you are looking for information on a certain topic, issue and content indexes are held on the [main bulletin page](#) of the website and are updated following each new issue.

If you have any comments on this bulletin, suggested items for future issues, or a job you would like to advertise, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

Contents

Calendar of events	2
Actions arising	3
FPS	4
Firefighters’ Pension Schemes (England) (Amendment) Order 2023	4
Matthews - Supporting documentation	4
Disclosure Requirements.....	5
Age Discrimination Remedy – terminology	5
Age Discrimination Remedy – GAD Tax and Contribution Calculator.....	6
Age Discrimination Remedy – Funding update.....	8
Age Discrimination Remedy – Member videos	8
Fire England updated Government Actuary’s Department (GAD) factors.....	9
Concurrent Service – Interbrigade transfers	10
Annual Allowance factsheet.....	10
Annual Allowance 2022/2023 note	11
Firefighters’ Pensions (Remediable Service) (Wales) Regulations 2023.....	11
Firefighters’ Pensions (Remediable Service) (Scotland) Regulations 2023	11
Firefighters’ Medical Appeals Board – Tender Outcome	11
Technical query log.....	12
FPS England SAB updates	12
SAB Meeting 14 September 2023	12
Other News and Updates	13
Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2023	13

Publishing Annual Benefit Statements 2023 to 2025	13
PASA’s dashboard data accuracy guidance	14
TPR’s Pension Scams Reporting campaign	14
Pensions Dashboard Programme – Introduction to dashboards webinar	14
HMRC	15
Public Service Pensions Remedy – Member calculator.....	15
Abolition of the LTA – Our Consultation Response.....	15
HMRC – Managing Pension Schemes Service Newsletter - September 2023 ..	16
Events	17
FPS coffee mornings	17
Firefighters’ Pensions Annual Conference.....	17
Legislation	28
Statutory Instruments.....	28
Directions Orders.....	28
Useful links	28
Contact details	29
Copyright	29
Disclaimer	29

Calendar of events

Please see below a calendar of upcoming events relevant to the Firefighters’ Pension Schemes. Only those events which are hyperlinked are currently available to book. If you have any events you would like to be included in a future bulletin, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

Table 1: Calendar of events

Event	Date
FPS coffee afternoon	4 October 2023
FPS Technical Working Group	12 December 2023
SAB	14 December 2023
FPS Communications Working Group	19 December 2023

Event	Date
FPS coffee morning	31 October 2023

Actions arising

[Firefighters' Pensions Schemes \(England\) \(Amendment\) Order 2023](#): FRAs and administrators to familiarise themselves of the consultation response ahead of the Matthews second options exercise.

[Disclosure requirements](#): FRAs to ensure they comply with disclosure requirements by ensuring they send the appropriate letter to Sargeant and Matthews eligible members no later than 31 December 2023.

[Age Discrimination Remedy – terminology](#): FRAs and administrators to note that whilst there is different terminology it all relates to the same exercise.

The Matthews second exercise can also be referred to as 'remedy' but relates to a different exercise.

[Age Discrimination Remedy – GAD Tax and Contribution Calculator](#): FRAs and administrators to familiarise themselves with the calculator and carry out testing against their data and feedback any issues to GAD and LGA.

[Age Discrimination Remedy – Funding update](#): FRAs to note this and ensure that they provide the relevant data when required.

[Age Discrimination Remedy – Member video](#):

FRAs and administrators to publicise the QR code and signpost individuals to the fps member website for information relating to remedy, in particular the member videos as part of your communications.

[Concurrent Service – Interbrigade transfers](#): FRAs to make employees aware of the pension implications, should an overlap of service occur when leaving and joining another FRA, even if only by a day.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

[Public Service Pensions \(Valuations and Employer Cost Cap\) Directions 2023](#): FRAs and administrators should familiarise themselves with the Directions order to ensure that they are aware of the changes.

[Public Service Pensions Remedy – Member calculator](#): FRAs to provide a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to the Public Service Pensions Remedy mailbox.

FRAs and administrators to familiarise themselves with the inputs that the member will need information for.

FPS

Firefighters' Pension Schemes (England) (Amendment) Order 2023

In [FPS Bulletin 68 – April 2023](#), we informed you that the consultation on the retained Firefighters' Pensions: proposed changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) 2006 had been launched. On 8 September 2023, Government [published their response](#) to the draft Firefighters' Pension Schemes (England) (Amendment) Order 2023 to provide further access to the modified pension scheme for retained firefighters and the policy intent to implement this.

[The Firefighters' Pension Schemes \(England\) \(Amendment\) Order 2023](#) were also laid. The regulations come into force from 1 October 2023.

ACTION: FRAs and administrators to familiarise themselves with the consultation response ahead of the Matthews Second Options exercise.

Matthews - Supporting documentation

To assist FRAs with the Matthews second options exercise the Firefighters Communications Working Group have undertaken a thorough review of the communication material which was available for the first options exercise. Where appropriate, the material has been updated to reflect the position of the second options exercise. The template letters and guidance FRAs require have now been published and can be found on the [Special Members of FPS 2006](#) page of the regulations and guidance website.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

To ensure consistency across the sector, FRAs are encouraged to use the material provided.

A data sharing agreement and template wording to be added to an FRAs privacy notice, has been commissioned through Eversheds, for those cases where an FRA needs to obtain pay and service details from another FRA to allow them to give the individual their options.

Disclosure Requirements

In advance of the regulations for the Sargeant and Matthews remedies coming into force on 1 October 2023 we would like to remind scheme managers of their requirements under the [Regulation 8](#) of the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2015. Which is to notify individuals of material alterations to basic scheme information within 3 months of the changes take place.

In terms of the Sargeant remedy, this requirement will be achieved when all eligible members have been sent a warm up letter, details of which can be found in [FPS Bulletin 71 – July 2023](#) and [FPS Bulletin 72 – August 2023](#).

In terms of the Matthews remedy, this requirement is achieved when FRAs send out the initial 'expression of interest' letter to those individuals who have been identified as being eligible under the second options exercise.

For further information regarding disclosure requirements please see our [factsheet](#) which is available on the regulations and guidance website.

ACTION: FRAs to ensure they comply with disclosure requirements by ensuring they send the appropriate letter to Sargeant and Matthews eligible members no later than 31 December 2023.

Age Discrimination Remedy – terminology

We thought it might be useful to clarify the different terminology people use when referring to the Age Discrimination Remedy.

'McCloud' is the judgement that relates to the Judges discrimination case and is

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

widely used by other public sector schemes, HM Treasury and HMRC.

'Sargeant' is the judgement that relates to the firefighters' age discrimination case.

'Remedy' is the terminology used for the remedy exercise to 'put right' the age discrimination found in the judgements. This is also referred to as 'age discrimination remedy'.

Not to be confused with the Matthews second options exercise which can also be referred to as 'remedy' but relates to a different exercise.

ACTION: FRAs and administrators to note that whilst there is different terminology it all relates to the same exercise.

Age Discrimination Remedy – GAD Tax and Contribution Calculator

On 12 September 2023, the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) released the Age Discrimination Remedy - Tax and Contribution Adjustment Calculator, user guide, data template and supporting administration process note.

The material will be stored centrally on the member area of the FPS Regs and Guidance website. A new page titled '[Age Discrimination Remedy – GAD Tax and Contribution Calculator](#)' has been created specifically for this material. Our intention is to keep the material on this page up to date, we therefore recommend that you refer to this section to access the most current version as emails will not be sent each time, we update the page is updated. We therefore recommend that you do not save the calculator locally, instead please use the website to access the current version.

Since launch we can confirm that the calculator has been updated to allow for those who use Excel 2019.

GAD have confirmed that should stakeholder IT departments wish to audit the VBA (Visual Basic for Applications) macros, a password can be provided. Please contact GAD directly using the firepolicemcccloudtaxinterest@gad.gov.uk email for access.

It is recommended that stakeholders carry out testing of the calculator and report any

issues directly back to GAD firepolicemccloudtaxinterest@gad.gov.uk. It would also be helpful if you could copy the LGA into such emails using our central email address (bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk), this will allow us to monitor where any issues arise.

Over the course of the model's development, GAD have tested a diverse range of example members. However, they have not received any live member data for testing. As such there remains two risks

- 1) That the calculator struggles to process very large datasets
 - a. They do not expect this to be a likely issue, but if users encounter it, they can resolve the issue by splitting data into separate groups.
- 2) That there are some complex cases which do not work as expected within the model
 - a. As above, GAD strongly recommend users to check the results of the calculator for accuracy and appropriateness.

Please note that the NS&I interest rates go past those set out in the HMT PSP Directions 2022. GADs understanding is that HMT will amend their Directions to line up to these rates. However, GAD are seeking confirmation, through the Home Office, of this. **Therefore, please do not issue any payments until this confirmation has been received.**

Webinar

On Monday 25 September GAD held a webinar, to run through how the calculator is to be used, and to answer any questions or issues raised. The slides are available to view for anyone who was unable to attend. You can find these under the Webinar and Slides tab on the [Age Discrimination Remedy – GAD Tax and Contribution Calculator](#) page.

GAD have made the recording of the webinar available online, and an access email should have been sent to all webinar invitees. The access email will be from an

egress email address and may have been picked up by junk/spam filters. If you wish to watch the recording but have not received the access email, please contact GAD at firepolicemcccloudtaxinterest@gad.gov.uk.

ACTION: FRAs and administrators to familiarise themselves with the calculator and carry out testing against their data and feedback any issues to GAD and LGA.

Age Discrimination Remedy – Funding update

As covered in our email on 7 August 2023, Home Office have confirmed that the Sargeant expenditure, including compensation payments, will be paid out of the AME top up grant. Further instructions will be provided accordingly.

Age Discrimination Remedy – Member videos

We are delighted to announce the publication of the member remedy videos, that we have been working in partnership with Aon. There is one video for retired members and one for active and deferred members.

For those of you who attended the remedy communications workshop at the AGM last week, you will have had a ‘premiere’ viewing of the videos. We are pleased to confirm that the final version has now been added to the [fps member website](#).

We would like to thank Aon for their hard work in the design and development of the videos and we hope that stakeholders like them as much as we do, and that they are a useful alternative communication method to compliment the letters that are being sent out.

A QR Code has been created to help direct individuals to the webpage and videos for FRAs and administrators to use.

Remedy Page:



Active and Deferred member remedy video:



Pensioner member remedy video:



ACTION: FRAs and administrators to publicise the QR code and signpost individuals to the fps member website for information relating to remedy, in particular the member videos as part of your communications.

[Fire England updated Government Actuary's Department \(GAD\) factors](#)

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

In [FPS Bulletin 68 – April 2023](#), [FPS Bulletin 69 – May 2023](#) and [FPS Bulletin 71 – July 2023](#) we published that Home Office had confirmed that the first, second and third batch of updated factors had provided by GAD.

On 28 September 2023, Home Office confirmed that the fourth and final batch of updated factors have been provided by GAD. This updated the following factors tables:

- x-701 to x-702 (Added Pension)

and the following factor tables have been withdrawn:

- x-703 to x-704 (2006 scheme purchase of increased benefits), x-801 (CPD)

All other factors remain unchanged from the previous version of this workbook.

The factors are effective from 28 September 2023.

The revised factor table has been uploaded to the [Additional Pension Benefits \(APBs\)](#) page under GAD guidance on the firefighters' regulations and guidance website.

Concurrent Service – Interbrigade transfers

We would like to remind FRAs that scheme regulations do not support aggregation of concurrent service. We therefore strongly recommend that, when a firefighter is subject to an interbrigade transfer, the FRA that they are transferring to and the FRA they are transferring from agree a mutually acceptable transfer date which results in no break or overlap in service. Failure to do so could prevent members from combining their pension entitlement.

ACTION: FRAs to make employees aware of the pension implications, should an overlap of service occur when leaving and joining another FRA, even if only by a day.

Annual Allowance factsheet

The [annual allowance factsheet](#) has been updated to reflect the spring budget announcements, as covered in [FPS Bulletin 67 - March 2023](#). The factsheet can be

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

found in the [guides and sample documents page](#) of the regulations and guidance website.

Annual Allowance 2022/2023 note

In conjunction with the firefighters' communication working group, a suggested [annual allowance 2022/2023 note](#) has been created should FRAs and/or administrators wish to use it to inform individuals of the impact of the age discrimination remedy provisions on pension saving statements in the next 12 months.

Firefighters' Pensions (Remediable Service) (Wales) Regulations 2023

On 6 September 2023, the Welsh Government published their [response to the consultation on the Firefighters' Pensions \(Remediable Service\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2023](#).

[The Firefighters' Pensions \(Remediable Service\) \(Wales\) Regulations](#) have also been laid and will come into force on 1 October 2023.

These Regulations implement the remedy to the reforms to the Welsh Firefighters' Pension Schemes under the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 in respect of pensions for firefighters in Wales.

Firefighters' Pensions (Remediable Service) (Scotland) Regulations 2023

[The Firefighters' Pensions \(Remediable Service\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2023](#) have been laid and will come into force on 1 October 2023.

These Regulations implement the remedy to the reforms to the Scottish Firefighters' Pension Schemes under the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 in respect of pensions for firefighters in Scotland.

Firefighters' Medical Appeals Board – Tender Outcome

On 18 September 2023, the Home Office announced that the tender for the Firefighters' Medical Appeals Board has now concluded. The contract has been retained by Duradiamond Healthcare Limited, trading as Health Partners.

The framework documentation is currently being finalised and will be shared once all

parties have signed up. It is expected that fire services will be able to call off the framework from the 1 of October 2023. The duration of the framework will be for an initial period of 3 years (up to 30 September 2026), with an option to extend for an additional 12 months.

Where relevant the [ill health and injury](#) member restricted pages on the Regulations and Guidance website will be updated.

Technical query log

The [current log of queries and responses](#) can be accessed by practitioners in the member-restricted area of the FPS Regulations and Guidance website. The queries have been anonymised and divided into topics. The log is updated monthly in line with the bulletin release dates.

Queries have been answered this month in the following categories:

- Concurrent Service – Interbrigade Transfers.

FPS England SAB updates

SAB Meeting 14 September 2023

The Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) last met on 14 September 2023 and the meeting covered the following areas:

- GAD Matthews Calculator update
- Retained Firefighters' Pensions: Proposed changes of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) order 2006 – Government response and Data Sharing Agreement.
- Home Office response to McCloud consultation.
- Local Pension Board Effectiveness – consistency and knowledge sharing.

You can use the links below to find out about the latest updates on the work of the SAB and its committees:

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

- [SAB membership](#)
- [SAB meeting and agenda papers](#)
- [Committee meetings and agenda papers](#)

Other News and Updates

Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2023

The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 provides the legal framework for regular actuarial valuations of the public service pension schemes to measure the costs of the benefits being provided. These valuations will inform the future contribution rates to be paid into the schemes by employers. The 2013 Act, when taken together with regulations made under it and the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022, also provides for the introduction of a reformed cost control mechanism to ensure that the benefits of the pension schemes remain fair to members and taxpayers. The Directions, made under the 2013 Act, implement this policy.

HM Treasury is publishing Directions which revoke and replace the previous Directions due to the extensive changes necessitated by the reforms to the cost control mechanism, and to ensure that the 2020 valuations of the public service pension schemes can be completed using updated assumptions. The Treasury has a statutory duty to consult the Government Actuary before making the Directions. The Treasury completed this statutory consultation during August 2023.

The links to the relevant documents, including the 2023 Directions have been published on the FPS Regs website on the [restricted Scheme Valuations](#) page.

ACTION: FRAs and administrators should familiarise themselves with the Directions order to ensure that they are aware of the changes.

Publishing Annual Benefit Statements 2023 to 2025

The Pensions Regulator has published [guidance on publishing annual benefit statements during 2023 to 2025](#).

TPR are mindful of the challenges that FRAs and administrators may face whilst producing annual benefit statements and remediable service statements during 2023 to 2025 and have confirmed that they will take a risk-based, practical approach when reviewing, assessing, and responding to annual benefit statement breaches during this period.

PASA's dashboard data accuracy guidance

The Pensions Administration Standards Association (PASA) has recently updated their [Dashboards Data Accuracy Guidance](#). This is a tool to help schemes with their data preparation duties.

The guidance highlights key data points that should not only be present but also accurate. It explains how data should be checked and provides a list of shared, public, and private data sources that can be used to validate member information.

TPR's Pension Scams Reporting campaign

The Pensions Regulator (TPR) has launched a new industry-facing [pension scams awareness campaign](#) focusing on Trustees and Administrators, who are best placed to help protect savers from pension scams. By reporting their suspicions, they can defend their members' retirement from scammers – and stop their actions having such a devastating effect on victims' lives.

Pensions Dashboard Programme – Introduction to dashboards webinar

On 4 October 2023 the Pensions Dashboard Programme (PDP) will be hosting a [webinar to re-introduce dashboards](#).

Chris Curry, PDPs Principal, who recently attended our Fire AGM, will present alongside others from the programme to explain dashboard goals, the role of the regulators and provide information on what the pensions industry can do to prepare.

HMRC

Public Service Pensions Remedy – Member calculator

Tax Adjustment inputs

HMRC have produced a [document](#) that sets out the inputs a member will need to put into the member calculator.

This is the information a user could be asked in order to calculate compensation and/or tax adjustments (biographical info entered by the user is not included). The calculator is designed to only ask users for the information specific to their circumstances, so questions around the tax (AA or LTA) and the years will be displayed as appropriate, based on the options they select at the beginning of the journey. The wording of the questions in this document does not reflect the wording in the calculator itself- that wording has been user tested and approved by content designers.

As previously communicated, the information which users will need to have from their pension scheme to complete the calculator is;

- original pension input amount (for each tax year from 2012/13 to 2022/23) – 2012/13 to 2014/15 is only required if the member did not have an AA tax charge in 2014/15, so the correct carry forward amount is used from 2015/16
- revised pension input amount (for each tax year from 2015/16 to 2022/23)

ACTION: FRAs and administrators to familiarise themselves with the inputs that the member will need information for.

Abolition of the LTA – Our Consultation Response

Further to [FPS Bulletin 71 – July 2023](#), where we made you aware of the HMRC consultation to abolish the pensions lifetime allowance (LTA), which was part of a wider consultation on proposed clauses for the next Finance Bill.

Whilst we were not able to provide our response to stakeholders ahead of the deadline, we wanted to share with you our response as follows:

“Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on abolishing the pension lifetime allowance. We welcome this development to remove the LTA as it currently affects recruitment and retention of our senior leaders in fire.

Our comments focus on the position of the tax-free lump sum. As it is not clear whether the drafters have given thought to how this will affect paying lump sums above the PCLS. Paying unauthorised tax on lump sum payments has been a common occurrence for Fire schemes since 2010 when the commutation factors rose, which we believe is unique to police and fire.

To confirm in 2010 when the commutation factor rose above 20, there was no change to the scheme rules of the 1992 Firefighters Pension Scheme to limit the lump sum to the PCLS, therefore officers could choose to take the higher lump sum and pay an unauthorised tax charge of 40%, while the scheme manager must pay the scheme sanction charge.

For high earners, whose lump sum would be more than £268,275, it is not clear how this should be treated, and whether the unauthorised amount charge of 40% applies or the marginal rate instead. For administrative purposes identifying and applying the marginal rate is onerous and a fixed rate would be a simpler solution.

It would also be useful to allay fears of the LTA being introduced, for the consultation response to be clear about any process in the future where the LTA was introduced which would need to happen through legislation and could not happen overnight.”

HMRC – Managing Pension Schemes Service Newsletter - September 2023

HMRC has published their [September 2023 Managing Pension Schemes Service newsletter](#). The newsletter covers the following topics:

- Event reporting
- Accounting for Tax (AFT) returns

- Pension scheme return
- Migrating your scheme

Events

FPS coffee mornings

Our MS Teams coffee mornings have been a little bit 'parched' just recently.

Following Claire Johnson's return from maternity we have held a couple of 'drop in' sessions with stakeholders to discuss the needs of the group, and how best to take forward the coffee mornings in the future.

We will be kicking these off again in the afternoon of 4 October 2023. The topic on the agenda this time will be Matthews, so make sure your cup is full, and that you are sitting comfortably to join us.



We will then be launching the first version of the Matthews GAD calculator on a coffee morning on 31 October 2023, where they will run through some examples in the calculator, this will be at the usual morning time, so get this in your diary.

If you do not already receive the meeting invitations and would like to join us, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk. Please note that attendance at the coffee mornings is generally restricted to FPS practitioners and managers.

Firefighters' Pensions Annual Conference

Our two-day event opened with a meeting of the regional chairs of each regional fire pensions officers' group, followed by our quarterly technical working group meeting. As I sure you can imagine there was a lot to discuss.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

Updates from these meetings will be provided at your next regional group.

We would like to encourage that each Fire and Rescue Service and local pension boards are represented at these meetings, as well as the pension administrators. The discussions that are had are invaluable and it is a great opportunity to network, and informally discuss items that are 'hot topics' (no pun intended) in Firefighters' Pensions and share regional experiences and training in a 'safe space'.

Day one

We were pleased to welcome 44 delegates to the first day, which was aimed at Scheme Managers and Local Pension Board members, along with other parties interested in all things Governance.



Following a warm welcome from Joanne Livingstone, the Chair of the Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board, who was accompanied by Claire Johnson, Senior Pensions Advisor, the audience heard from Chris Curry, Principal of the Pensions Dashboard Programme. Chris gave the audience an update with regards to the change in the dashboard connection deadline, what PDP is working on, and advised what FRAs should be doing in preparation.



[Click here to return to Contents](#)

Nick Gannon, TPR Policy Lead gave the audience a ‘sneaky peek’ of the Governance & Administration Survey results and how Fire and Rescue Services compared against other Public Sector Schemes. Nick highlighted the importance of providing accurate responses, so that they can be used to inform assistance that tPR can provide to the industry. Particularly when Schemes may need assistance in getting accurate data from employers.

Nick then gave an update on the General Code of Practice, and how this is in the process of being laid before parliament. Nick was able to demonstrate its functionality and how each section interacts with one another, where relevant.



Joanne Livingstone ended the session with an engaging discussion on the importance of Local Pension Board Effectiveness and how this integrated with the work of the Scheme Advisory Board. Joanne covered some interesting points and gave ‘food for thought’ for pension board members to take away.



The day finished with a drinks reception, which is always a great networking opportunity to catch up with new and old colleagues of the Fire Pensions Community.

You can review [day one's slide](#) on the events page of the Firefighters' Regulations and Guidance website.

Day two of the event was fully booked and saw 96 delegates across all areas of Firefighters' Pensions attend Bevin Hall at 18 Smith Square.



Joanne Livingstone, Chair of the Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board opened the event with a very warm welcome to all delegates and introduced and thanked our speakers for the day.



We then welcomed Alexander Waters, Senior Lawyer from the Pensions

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

Ombudsman to the stage, where he gave a background to who the Pensions Ombudsman are and what they aim to achieve. He then provided an update on what they are currently seeing in relation to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes and any relevant case studies.

Alexander also referred to some very useful resources that are available on their website, which are linked within their slides.



After a short refreshment break, the audience broke off into two workshops:

Matthews Second Options Exercise, which was led by Brian Allan, Actuary and Martin Agass, from the Government Actuary Department (GAD), and Claire Johnson from LGA. Brian gave an update on where they are on the development of the Matthews calculator. He also confirmed that there would be 2 implementation dates for the calculator, and that some cases won't be able to be processed until the 2nd version is published.

More details of those cases are within GAD workshop slides.

Remedy: Communications which was led by colleagues from Aon, Virginia Burke and Ben Smithson, and Tara Atkins from LGA. The room was full, we even had to get more chairs!!!! It was a great workshop, and there was so much conversation about engaging and worthwhile communications.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

Tara started off by giving an overview of what the workshop was all about and provided an update on what communication work the LGA had been working on and had in the pipeline for remedy.

Delegates then split into 3 groups and took 2 questions each about communications, before feeding back to the group. The feedback is available for all FRAs and administrators to view on the events page of the FPS Regulations and Guidance website.

We then broke for a well-earned lunch, where the audience networked, and had opportunity to talk and take with exhibitors and take some promotional 'goodies' from First Actuarial, ITM, XPS Pension Group and Isio.

First Actuarial - provide [financial wellbeing services](#), which they offer to a range of organisations across the private and public sector. First Actuarial are also the actuarial advisors to the Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board.



ITM - are [pension data experts](#), providing specialist data management, systems and pension technology solutions within UK financial services.



XPS Pension Group: A [leading consulting and administration business](#) fully focused on UK pension schemes. XPS currently administer pensions for three fire clients.



Isio - is a [leading independent UK provider](#) of actuarial consulting, pensions administration, investment advisory, employee benefits and wealth management services.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

Isio were promoting their new [independent training sessions](#) in relation to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. The sessions cover the McCloud/Sargeant age discrimination remedy, the Matthews exercise from 1 October 2023 and pensions tax for higher earners.



Isio and the Firefighters' Pension Scheme

We know that Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) have some challenges in terms of pensions at the moment:

- helping employees understand their pensions benefits
- impact of the Pensions Remedy including pensions tax implications
- collecting data and dealing with the Matthews second options exercise

At Isio we are passionate about improving members understanding of their pension benefits, increasing their financial confidence thereby benefiting staff motivation and engagement.

From November we will be providing the following training sessions aimed at Fire and Rescue Authorities, to improve their understanding of the pension schemes:

- Session 1** – aims to build an understanding of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes, Matthews and the impact of the Pensions Remedy.
- Session 2** – focuses on the scheme manager and the local pensions board and their role in implementing the Pensions Remedy, Matthews and next steps.
- Session 3** – introduces the UK pensions tax regime, focusing on the annual allowance (AA), and the options available to pay for any charges.
- Session 4** – if you are interested in booking on any of the above sessions, please see the reverse for contact details.

If you are interested in booking on any of the above sessions, please see below for contact details.

Our experienced Public Services Pensions Team has already helped many schemes, employers, and members across the public service pension schemes on the Pensions Remedy and the AA and LTA implications.

Colin Dobbie
colin.dobbie@isio.com

Colin is an actuary with 15 years' experience of working on the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. Colin has also delivered seminars to Police Forces on pensions benefits and the Pensions Remedy (including pensions tax implications) as part of CIPFA's award winning Achieving Finance Excellence in Policing training programme.

Paul Moffatt
paul.moffatt@isio.com

Paul is a Director at Isio with 22 years industry experience. He leads our member engagement work across the public service schemes. Please contact either Colin or Paul if you would like to know more.

isio.

isio.com

Firefighters' Pension Scheme.indd 1 25/09/2023 14:46

Before the Chair welcomed us back from lunch, Joanne had a very important job to do and chose a winner for First Actuarial's champagne prize draw.



Once the Chair had welcomed us back, we heard from Brian Allan from GAD who gave an update on the 2020 valuation, including how the Scape Rate Discount will impact and expected timeline. Brian then covered the Cost Control Mechanism and observations from the HM Treasury 2020 valuation Directions.



Our very own Claire Johnson then took to the stage, with a very warm welcome having just returned from maternity leave, nothing like throwing her into the deep end!



Claire was tasked with giving a technical/legislative update on both Matthews and Remedy. Claire gave a summary of each remedy exercise, and then concentrated on the impact on a member if they are affected by both remedies.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

This was followed by an update from Helen Fisher, Head of Police and Fire Pensions at the Home Office. Helen refrained from giving a further update on Matthews and Remedy, as she quite rightly said Claire had done an excellent job in her session.



Helen did however cover the Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) issue where it was identified that the Orders for 2021 and 2022 used provisional AWE growth estimates rather than revised AWE figures. The impact of this is that administrators will need to reassess the CARE benefits for these two years as the revaluation applied is incorrect. This in turn will impact the figures to be provided in the Remediable Service Statements.

Helen then covered the Carer's Leave Act 2023, which will require an amendment to the Firefighters Pension Scheme regulations, in a similar way as was needed when parental bereavement leave came in.

For our final session of the day, we welcomed Aon to the stage, where Virginia Burke, Senior Public Sector Pensions Consultant and Ben Smithson, Senior Communications Consultant, held a great session and covered how you can make your communications work harder. Sadly Lauren Harper, who was also due to join them was unwell but had done a lot of work in the background towards their presentation.



It was an insightful session, which included rockets, pink elephants and neurotech. Take from that what you will, but the pictures taken below, show just how enthusiastic Ben is when talking about what is possible when looking to create a 'great' communication strategy.



Joanne Livingstone, then closed the meeting with her appreciation to all delegates who had engaged and made the two days a worthwhile and meaningful conference and wished everyone a safe trip home.

The slides for [day two](#) are available on the events page of the Firefighters' Regulations and Guidance website.

We would like to thank all for their participation and support, particularly our events

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

team, speakers and exhibitors for contributing to the success of the event, and to all delegates who took time out of their busy schedules to attend.

Legislation

Statutory Instruments

[Firefighters' Pension Schemes \(England\) \(Amendment\) Order 2023](#) [SI2023/986]

[The Firefighters' Pensions \(Remediable Service\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2023](#) [SI 2023/961]

[The Firefighters' Pensions \(Remediable Service\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2023](#) [SI 2023/242]

[The Local Government Pension Scheme \(Amendment\) \(No3\) Regulations 2023](#) [SI 2023/972]

Directions Orders

[Public Service Pensions \(Valuations and Employer Cost Cap\) Directions 2023](#)

Useful links

- [The Firefighters' Pensions \(England\) Scheme Advisory Board](#)
- [FPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [FPS Member](#)
- [Khub Firefighters Pensions Discussion Forum](#)
- [FPS1992 guidance and commentary](#)
- [The Pensions Regulator Public Service Schemes](#)
- [The Pensions Ombudsman](#)
- [HMRC Pensions Tax Manual](#)
- [LGA pensions website](#)
- [LGPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [LGPC Bulletins](#)
- [LGPS member site](#)

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

- [Scottish Public Pensions Agency - Firefighters](#)
- [Welsh Government Fire circulars](#)

Contact details

Claire Johnson (Senior Firefighters' Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 07920 861 552

Email: claire.johnson@local.gov.uk

Tara Atkins (Firefighters' Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 07825 731 924

Email: Tara.atkins@local.gov.uk

Copyright

Copyright remains with Local Government Association (LGA). This bulletin may be reproduced without the prior permission of LGA provided it is not used for commercial gain, the source is acknowledged and, if regulations are reproduced, the Crown Copyright Policy Guidance issued by HMSO is adhered to.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin has been prepared by the Bluelight Pensions team, part of the Local Government Association (LGA). It represents the views of the team and should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. Readers may wish, or will need, to take their own legal advice on the interpretation of legislation. No responsibility whatsoever will be assumed by the LGA for any direct or consequential loss, financial or otherwise, damage or inconvenience, or any other obligation or liability incurred by readers relying on information contained in this bulletin.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

While every attempt is made to ensure the accuracy of the bulletin, it would be helpful if readers could bring any perceived errors or omissions to the attention of the Bluelight team by emailing bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

FPS Bulletin 74 – October 2023

Welcome to issue 74 of the Firefighters’ Pensions Schemes bulletin.

If you are looking for information on a certain topic, issue and content indexes are held on the [main bulletin page](#) of the website and are updated following each new issue.

If you have any comments on this bulletin, suggested items for future issues, or a job you would like to advertise, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk

Contents

Calendar of events	3
Actions arising	3
FPS	4
Matthews – Supporting documents.....	4
Matthews – Data Sharing Agreement.....	4
Matthews – GAD Calculator: Input and Output Specification.....	5
Matthews – Corrective action	7
Matthews – Pay assumption.....	10
Matthews – Reference pay	12
Matthews – Individuals who defaulted on payments in the first options exercise	13
Age Discrimination Remedy – GAD tax and interest calculator	13
Age Discrimination Remedy - Contingent Decisions guidance	13
Age Discrimination Remedy – Accounting information	14
Firefighters' Pension Scheme Adjustment in Respect of 2021 and 2022 Revaluation.....	15
Technical query log.....	16
FPS England SAB updates	16
SAB LPB effectiveness committee vacancy	16
SAB website	16
Other News and Updates	17

LGA vacancy - Firefighters' Pensions Adviser	17
LGA vacancy – Programme Support Officer.....	17
Isio pension training programme for FRAs	18
The Pensions and Lifetime Savings Association (PLSA) – updated guidance ..	18
The Pensions Regulator blog	18
Automatic enrolment bill gets Royal Assent.....	19
The Pensions Dashboards Programme – FAQs newsletter	19
HMRC	19
Age Discrimination Remedy – HMRC member tax adjustment calculator	19
Age Discrimination Remedy – Pension Saving Statements and Pension Input Amounts	21
Events	23
FPS coffee mornings	23
Legislation	23
Statutory Instruments.....	23
Useful links	24
Contact details	24
Copyright	25
Disclaimer	26

Calendar of events

Please see below a calendar of upcoming events relevant to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. Only those events which are hyperlinked are currently available to book. If you have any events you would like to be included in a future bulletin, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

Table 1: Calendar of events

Event	Date
FPS coffee morning	7 November 2023
FPS LGA drop-in sessions for FRAs	23 November 2023
FPS Technical Working Group	12 December 2023
SAB	14 December 2023
FPS Communications Working Group	19 December 2023

Actions arising

[Age discrimination remedy – Contingent Decisions guidance](#): Scheme managers to read the guidance and mutually agree any setting of target dates with their administrator before sharing the claim process with members.

[Firefighters' Pension Scheme Adjustment in Respect of 2021 and 2022 Revaluation](#): Scheme Managers will be required to correct this error retrospectively.

FPS

Matthews – Supporting documents

In [FPS Bulletin 73 – September 2023](#) we informed readers that supporting documentation for the RDS second options exercise, including template letters and guidance was available on the [Special Members of FPS 2006](#) page on the FPS regulations and guidance website. Following feedback, we can confirm that we have updated the RDS Employee Informal Guidance document to include further information on tax.

To ensure that FRAs are using the most up to date version, it is recommended that you refer to the guidance published on the website, rather than saving documents locally.

Matthews – Data Sharing Agreement

At the most recent Scheme Advisory Board meeting approval was given to commission the services of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP in respect of producing a data sharing agreement and additional privacy notice wording. These are required for cases where the current FRA needs to obtain pay and service information from a previous FRA so they can provide an individual with their options.

The [Data Sharing Agreement](#) (DSA) has been uploaded to the [Special Members of the FPS 2006](#) page on the FPS regulations and guidance website. The leading FRA will need to complete the DSA as per the 'note to FRAs' that are within the document and this should then be sent to the FRA holding the relevant pay and service information before any data is shared. The DSA should only be used for cases, affected by the Matthews exercise.

It is also recommended that an FRA should update their existing privacy notice to include additional wording as follows:

*As set out on the [Firefighters' members website](#) , from October 2023, a second options exercise will take place to allow eligible retained firefighters to buy pension service as a special member of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006 (**FPS 2006**).*

A retained firefighter transferring from one Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) to another without a break in service will be treated as having continuous service with the second FRA.

If you are a retained firefighter that has expressed an interest in the second option exercise, and you have provided service for more than one FRA, we (i.e. the first FRA) will need to share information about you with that other FRA so they can identify you, including your name, national insurance number and date of birth. This is your personal data under data protection laws. The second FRA would then return that same data back to us along with your relevant service term(s) and pay information. We both need to exchange this information in order to determine your entitlement to the FPS 2006 and this means that sharing this data is justified under data protection laws because [it's necessary for compliance with legal obligations].

If you have any queries about the information that is shared about you as part of your expression of interest in the second option exercise, please contact us.¹

For information about your data protection law rights and how to exercise them in relation to this data sharing by us, as well as other legal text needed – please see the main section of our privacy notice. This section above is strictly only about the data shared and what lawful reasons justify that.

Matthews – GAD Calculator: Input and Output Specification

Further to the [Matthews implementation and GAD calculator update](#) coffee afternoon which was held on Wednesday 4 October, we have created a new [Special members of FPS 2006 Scheme - GAD Calculator](#) page which can be accessed via the restricted area of the FPS regulations and guidance website.

¹ Drafting notes for FRAs using this: Assumption is that your own privacy notices do already comply with Articles 13 and 14 UK GDPR/DPA 2018 i.e. cover all relevant requirements. This wording is strictly only intended to explain what data is shared by you with the second FRA and what lawful reason(s) justify that under UK GDPR/DPA 2018. Assumption is that your sharing of data with the second FRA will not involve any restricted transfer i.e. data sharing outside the UK.

Within the page tabs have been created as follows:

- First Options Exercise – GAD calculator
- Second Options Exercise – GAD calculator
- Second Options Exercise – Case types

To allow for FRAs to familiarise themselves with the relevant inputs for the calculator, GAD has provided an [Input and output specification document](#) and a copy of the .CSV [Data input template](#) for bulk input to the calculator, which is the data input process recommended by GAD for FRAs with bulk cases. These documents are saved under the ‘Second Options Exercise – Resources’ tab. It is our intention to upload the first version of the calculator here once it has been released for general use (expected w/c 06/11).

In addition to storing the calculator, we intend to use this page to host any additional guidance provided by GAD. To ensure that FRAs are using the most up to date version, it is recommended that you use the guidance published here, rather than saving the documents locally.

A tab has also been added called ‘Second Options Exercise – Case types’, this is to assist FRAs in understanding which cases will be covered by which version of the calculator. FRAs should use this information to acknowledge and manage expectations on receipt of expression of interest forms.

For individuals that fall into the case-by-case scenarios, further guidance will be provided in the new year. It is recommended that all FRAs stockpile these cases for now until instructions are provided which confirm how these cases are to be shared with GAD. In line with guidance provided in [FPS Bulletin 73 – September 2023](#) these cases should still be acknowledged.

Matthews – Corrective action

Regulations stipulate a requirement for equity between the first and second options exercise. This means that pay/service information used for periods covered in the first options exercise (1 July 2000 onwards) should carry through for individuals who remain eligible under the second options exercise. The only time that this should not apply is if the FRA identify an error in the data used for the first exercise, in which case incorrect data must be substituted with correct data.

It was highlighted in a recent coffee morning that, whilst undertaking data collection work for the second options exercise, some FRAs have noticed that incorrect pay figures were used during the first options exercise.

The Home Office have confirmed that it is not the purpose of the second options exercise to correct purchases made under the first options exercise. However, it is acknowledged that corrective action is needed and that existing members should be made aware of any errors which have been identified.

The remedial steps FRAs should take depends on whether the individual made an election under the first options exercise. This article set outs what process should be followed in all circumstances.

Scenario one - Individual did not elect under the first options exercise and is now eligible under the second options exercise

These individuals are not currently FPS 2006 special members and therefore no corrective action is needed for existing contracts.

As they are eligible under the second options exercise FRAs will be contacting these individuals again and the individual may question why the data used from 1 July 2000 onwards (commencement date for first options exercise) does not agree with the data used for the first options exercise.

It is therefore recommended that FRAs proactively bring this error to the individuals attention and provide a clear explanation as to why alternative data has been used for the second options exercise.

Scenario two - Individual elected under the first options exercise and is now eligible under the second options exercise

These individuals are currently FPS 2006 special members and corrective action is needed for existing contracts.

Step one – FRA to identify what pay figure is incorrect – Is it the actual pay, or reference pay?

- a. If the actual pay is incorrect, it would mean that the member is paying/paid too much or too little.
- b. If the reference pay is incorrect, it would mean that the benefit entitlement (service awarded) is too much or too little.

Step two – FRA to use the calculator for the [first options exercise](#) using the correctly identified data.

Step three – FRA to compare the output from the original calculation with comparison calculation.

Step four – Action for this step is dependent on what anomaly was identified in step one and the outcome of step three:

- a. **Actual pay identified as incorrect and the comparison between the two calculations shows that the members has underpaid for their contract meaning that they should be awarded more service.**

Rectification action is needed by way of alerting the member to the error and providing them with full details of the contribution discrepancy.

The member should be given an option to pay the contribution difference using their original payment method i.e. *periodic contributions or lump sum.

Alternatively, the member could elect to keep their current entitlement under the terms of their existing contract.

Administrators should be informed of the members decision and update the members record where appropriate.

b. Actual pay identified as incorrect and the comparison between the two calculations shows that the members has overpaid for their contract meaning that they should be awarded less service.

Rectification action is needed by way of alerting the member to the error and providing them with full details of the contribution discrepancy.

The member should be informed that they are eligible for a refund of any overpayment made – further guidance would be need should the member elect for this option.

Alternatively, the member could elect to keep their current entitlement under the terms of their existing contract.

Administrators should be informed of the members decision and update the members record where appropriate.

c. Reference pay identified as incorrect and the comparison between the two calculations shows that the member has been allocated too much service.

This scenario should not affect the member contributions (as these are based on actual pay), however, it will affect the service they have been awarded by the administrator.

The FRA should alert the member to this error setting out the correct position.

Additionally, the FRA should inform the administrator and the members record should be updated appropriately.

d. Reference pay identified as incorrect and the comparison between the two calculations shows that the member has been allocated too little service.

This scenario should not affect the member contributions (as these are based on actual pay), however, it will affect the service they have been awarded by the administrator.

The FRA should alert the member to this error setting out the correct position.

Additionally, the FRA should inform the administrator and the members record should be updated appropriately.

* Periodic contributions would need to be reviewed and possibly altered to take account of any gaps in the repayment schedule. We believe that the correct regulatory option available is to recalculate the instalments so that the remaining balance is repaid at the original 10 year point – in line with [Rule 6A\(8\)](#). The calculator has been specifically designed to ensure that the correct proportion of interest is applied for the 10-year period.

It is recommended that the remedial work set out in steps one to four is carried out before the member is offered further options under the second options exercise. This is to ensure that there is no crossover or unnecessary confusion for the member.

The LGA strongly encourage that, to ensure full transparency and robust governance practices, any cases which are highlighted in scenarios one or two are flagged to the Local Pension Board.

Matthews – Pay assumption

In [FPS Bulletin 73 – September 2023](#), we informed you of government's response to the draft Firefighters' Pension Schemes (England) (Amendment) Order 2023 to provide further access to the modified pension scheme for retained firefighters and the policy intent to implement this.

Readers will be aware that the second options exercise provides eligible individuals the opportunity to purchase historic service prior to 1 July 2000. This raises further complications with regards to the availability of employee records. To resolve this, government has provided regulations which allow for a central set of assumptions to be used for service, pay and rank prior to 1 July 2000 where there is no robust data to rely upon.

By way of reminder, in the absence of evidence or data, FRAs are to assume that the individual was a firefighter. Additionally, in the absence of pay data for pre-July 2000 membership FRAs can determine the average pay rates from their own local experience or records, where this provides an assumption that the average retained pay is greater than 25% of a whole-time regular firefighter. Where this is not possible, the FRA should apply the default assumption that retained firefighters earn on average 25% of a whole-time regular firefighters' pay. Just to confirm that if your local assumptions produce lower than 25% of a whole-time regular firefighter you should apply the default assumption.

Although inclusion of assumptions is helpful, Stakeholders have raised a valid question with regards to what should be assumed as there are multiple scale points for the firefighter rank. Most recently the firefighter rank and subsequent pay is based on three components these are trainee, development and competent. Historically the pay scales were based on age, length of service and whether the firefighter was deemed qualified.

With regards to the historic pay scales, FRAs should be able to determine the appropriate scale using the individuals start date and date of birth as this will confirm both length of service and age. The only complication would be for individuals who are over age 19 and have more than 5 years' service, as pay scales for this cohort are based on whether they are qualified. After careful deliberation, the LGA have concluded that, in the absence of data, it seems appropriate to apply an average between the pay for a qualified and unqualified firefighter in this circumstance.

Matthews – Reference pay

With special thanks to Helen Scargill, Jill Swift, and Irina Volkova-Heath for their valuable contribution, the LGA have put together a table which sets out the reference pay for relevant periods going back to 1960.

The reference pay spreadsheet can be accessed on the [Firefighters Pay Scales page](#) on the FPS guidance and regulations website.

In advance of using the reference pay spreadsheet, it is worth noting that:

- The 1962 circular indicates that there might not have been a pay award between 01/04/1960 and 01/01/1962.
- The lowest banding based on age changed from under 21 to under 19 in 1964/65. The circular outlines some assimilation arrangements so FRAs might want to refer to this circular if there are any cases going back this far.
- In 1970 the circular listed a rate for 46-hour pensionable element so that rate has been used.
- In some years there are rates listed for a 48 and 56-hour working week, 48-hour rates have been used in the spreadsheet.
- In 1972 there were no annual under 18 rates listed so these have been calculated these manually based on the hourly rate/weekly rate outlined in the circular and the formulas used to determine the rates.
- In 1973, again no annual rates were listed in the circular, so the annual rate has been calculated based on the weekly rates x 52.1666 which was the formula used for calculating pay in 1973. Additionally, there were a couple of rates missing in this year for under 18s and for unqualified FF after 15 years' service an assumed pay figure based on the previous year has been used.
- There are no rates available for 1975 or 1976. The 1976 rates have been calculated using the 1977 circular minus the 10% increase, these 1976 rates have been used to calculate 1975 rates minus a 5% increase.

- In some early years there is mention of different rates for female Firefighters, but as the data is missing in most cases.
- 2003/04 comprised of rank to role changes.

Matthews – Individuals who defaulted on payments in the first options exercise

We have been made aware that during the first options exercise there were some individuals who opted to join the FPS 2006 as a Special Member but defaulted on their periodic contributions. As they had not paid their contract in full, they were awarded a proportion of benefits.

Stakeholders have asked whether, for individuals who are eligible for the second options exercise, would any service which has been defaulted on becomes in scope. After discussion with the Home Office, we can confirm that under the terms of the second options exercise individuals who fall into Cohort 2 (being eligible to purchase pre-July 2000 service and having service from July 2000 to April 2006) will be able to purchase any service that they didn't in the first options exercise, this extends to any period which was previously defaulted on.

Age Discrimination Remedy – GAD tax and interest calculator

In [FPS Bulletin 73 – September 2023](#) we informed you that the GAD tax and interest calculator, including supporting guidance documents, had been published on the [FPS regulations and guidance website](#).

In addition to the documents already there, GAD has provided a new [output and interest guidance document](#) which has been uploaded to the website. The guide covers the simplified output sheets from the calculator and a beginners guide to calculating interest.

Age Discrimination Remedy - Contingent Decisions guidance

In order to support a consistent national approach, we are pleased to let you know that we have now published our [Contingent Decision guidance](#) in the '[Age discrimination remedy – Retrospective remedy](#)' section on the FPS regulations and guidance website.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

The guidance sets out the approach a scheme manager should take when considering a Contingent Decision claim and confirms that scheme managers should mutually agree any setting of target dates with their administrator before sharing the claim process with members.

By way of reminder, a Contingent Decision is a decision taken by a member, relating to their membership of the firefighters' pension scheme, that would have been different had it not been for the discrimination identified by the courts.

There are three categories of Contingent Decisions in the fire pension scheme for which specific provisions has been made:

- I. Opt-out: A member would not have opted-out if they had been allowed to remain in the legacy scheme beyond their transition date or if protected members had been allowed to join the reformed scheme from 1 April 2015.
- II. Transfers: Members chose to transfer (in or out) and now wish to revisit the decision, or they chose not to transfer and now wish to do so.
- III. Additional Service: Members argue they would have purchased (more) additional service if they were in the alternative (legacy) scheme.

Currently, the guide only covers two of the three areas, these are opt-outs and added pensions, details on transfers will follow in due course. To accompany the guidance, we have also provided a [claim form](#) that members should use when submitting their claim. Additionally, we are working on a member guide which will be shared with the sector in a future bulletin.

ACTION: Scheme managers to read the guidance and mutually agree any setting of target dates with their administrator before sharing the claim process with members.

[Age Discrimination Remedy – Accounting information](#)

On 20 October 2023, HMT [wrote](#) to scheme managers outlining the respective responsibilities of the scheme and HMT moving forward and the future funding arrangements for remedy.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

The letter confirms that corrections to pension benefits, compensation for overpaid tax and compensation for financial losses will all be accounted for under AME.

With regards to the compensation for financial losses, these are paid by scheme managers under the powers of the [PSPJO Act 2022](#) and the letter reminds scheme managers of their duties to comply with the [Directions](#) which sets out requirements under which scheme managers must comply.

Firefighters' Pension Scheme Adjustment in Respect of 2021 and 2022 Revaluation

In [FPS Bulletin 71 – July 2023](#), we made you aware of an issue in respect of Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) growth figures for 2021 and 2022. In summary, the 2021 and 2022 Treasury Revaluation Order had used a provisional increase figure in November of that year rather than a revised figure in December which was used in the previous Orders from 2015 to 2020.

Whilst the legislation setting out how the revaluation is applied does not specifically state how a figure of AWE growth is obtained for the purposes of revaluation, the Government intends to correct the position to align the Treasury Revaluation Orders for 2021 and 2022 with those of the previous years. This will result in an increase of 0.2% for 2021 and 0.4% for 2022.

It is not anticipated that there will be any changes to the increase to member benefits of 0.2% for 2021 and 0.4% for 2022, as set out in HM Treasury Written Ministerial Statement. That said, the Home Office intends to consult on amendments to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014, to ensure regulation changes achieve the desired outcome. In the meantime, the Home Office asks all fire and rescue authorities in England to apply the necessary administration changes needed to correct the error that occurred in the 2021 and 2022 revaluation orders for affected members' benefits in advance of the regulatory changes being made with immediate effect.

The Home Office have provided a [note confirming this position](#).

ACTION: Scheme Managers are to ensure that this error is corrected retrospectively.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

Technical query log

The [current log of queries and responses](#) can be accessed by practitioners in the member-restricted area of the FPS Regulations and Guidance website. The queries have been anonymised and divided into topics. The log is updated monthly in line with the bulletin release dates.

Queries have been answered this month in the following categories:

- Special 2006 Members
- Non-Club Transfer

FPS England SAB updates

SAB LPB effectiveness committee vacancy

We have a vacancy on the Local Pension Board (LPB) effectiveness committee for a practitioner representative.

The LPB effectiveness committee considers how local pension boards and scheme managers can be supported centrally and has been particularly active in designing board surveys and developing draft guidance for joint LPB applications.

The required commitment is usually three to four meetings per year, and these are currently being held virtually. If you are interested in sitting on the committee or would like more information, please email bluelight.pensions@local.gov.uk

SAB website

You can use the links below to find out about the latest updates on the work of the SAB and its committees on the SAB website:

- [SAB membership](#)
- [SAB meeting and agenda papers](#)
- [Committee meetings and agenda papers](#)

Other News and Updates

LGA vacancy - Firefighters' Pensions Adviser

We are looking for someone to join us at the LGA to provide high-quality support to FRAs, FPS practitioners and the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) as a [Firefighters' Pensions Adviser](#) on a home or office-based contract.

The ideal candidate will have knowledge and experience of the FPS and excellent communication skills to support scheme stakeholders through several upcoming legislative developments that will require clear and comprehensive information and will bring with them significant administrative and communication challenges.

The closing date for applications is 17 November 2023 and interviews are scheduled to take place in the week commencing 27 November 2023.

Please contact claire.johnson@local.gov.uk with any questions about the role.

LGA vacancy – Programme Support Officer

Our colleagues in the LGPS Pensions Team are looking for someone to join them at the LGA in an administrative support role as a [Programme Support Officer](#) on a home or office-based contract.

The ideal candidate will be able to work independently across multiple projects at any one time, update and analyse spreadsheets, produce reports, chase external stakeholders for information, plan and prepare meetings and events, take minutes, raise orders and invoices, monitor budgets, routinely keep project information, and records up to date, understand and follow corporate policies and procedures. They will also need to identify appropriate venues for conferences and training events and negotiate contracts that offer the best value for money.

The closing date for applications is 8 November 2023 and interviews are scheduled to take place in the week commencing 13 November 2023.

Please contact lorraine.bennett@local.gov.uk with any questions about the role.

Isio pension training programme for FRAs

You may recall that at the [Firefighters Pension AGM](#), pensions specialists, Isio, attended to promote their training sessions in relation to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. The sessions start at the beginning of January with at least one session a week for 6 weeks thereafter. They cover the McCloud/Sargeant age discrimination remedy, the Matthews exercise from 1 October 2023 and pensions tax for higher earners.

The sessions are aimed at upskilling those involved in running the Firefighters' Pension Scheme including finance, HR, payroll and scheme management, including those who support and govern them. They can be accessed together or separately and count as valuable CPD.

Having delivered similar sessions for Police forces, these were very well received with more sessions planned later this year. Some Fire colleagues had enquired about joining the Police sessions, but Isio are now putting on similar Firefighters' Pension Scheme specific sessions.

For more information on the Firefighters' Pension Scheme sessions and how to book please visit [Firefighters' Pension Scheme training programme \(isio.com\)](#).

The Pensions and Lifetime Savings Association (PLSA) – updated guidance

PLSA has published [revised guidance on helping members with pension sharing orders \(PSOs\) on divorce](#). This sets out the suggested ranges are indicative only, and schemes may find it appropriate to charge higher or lower amounts, contingent on the circumstances of each member's request. It also includes a flowchart for establishing when schemes can apply these charges.

The updated guidance will apply from 2 January 2024.

The Pensions Regulator blog

The Pensions Regulator (tPR) has published a blog titled '[Why we are building relationships with pension administrators](#)' highlighting how they are using their supervision approach to build new relationships with pension administrators.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

tPR write that “policy initiatives such as pensions dashboards and value for money, and unforeseen challenges like Covid and cyber leaks, have put the importance of good administration back in the spotlight.”

They also write “that administrators have a crucial role to play, which is why in our role to protect savers and enhance the system, we are changing our regulatory approach to work more closely with administrators.”

TPR have also published a blog titled '[Tick of tasks one by one with our pensions dashboards checklist](#).' Which highlights the tPR's dashboard preparation checklist, which explains which actions schemes should already be working on and maps out the 'nuts and bolts' of dashboard preparation.

[Automatic enrolment bill gets Royal Assent](#)

A [Private Members Bill](#) has been granted Royal Assent to introduce powers to remove the lower earnings limit and to reduce the age for Auto Enrolment.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will launch a consultation on implementing the new measures in due course.

[The Pensions Dashboards Programme – FAQs newsletter](#)

The Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) has published a series of [FAQ newsletters](#), which covers some of the frequently asked questions that the PDP have received about returning value data from multiple sources and illustration dates and different types of testing required.

HMRC

[Age Discrimination Remedy – HMRC member tax adjustment calculator](#)

In [FPS Bulletins 71- July 2023](#), [72 – August 2023](#) and [73 – September 2023](#) we covered various elements of the HMRC member tax calculator.

The calculator is designed for members to correct their tax position if they have been affected by the age discrimination remedy.

The service will:

- work out any repayments that are due for a lifetime allowance or annual allowance charge an individual has previously paid.
- work out new, reduced or extra lifetime allowance or annual allowance charges that an individual may have to pay.
- submit information for HMRC to review.

Once an individual has submitted this information, HRMC will then contact an FRA through their single point of contact (SPOC) who has registered for the Secure Exchange Data Service (SDES) through the SDES.

An FRA will then need to:

- repay any overpaid tax charges the individual paid from 6 April 2015 to 5 April 2019.
- increase the individuals pension benefits to cover the amount of repayment due for overpaid tax charges they paid on your behalf.

If an individual has extra tax charges to pay, a notice will be sent to the individual by post. If they are due a refund for tax charges, HMRC will pay this to the individual using the bank details they provide. If the FRA paid the tax charges through scheme pays, the refund will be made to the FRA.

HMRC's McCloud guidance and digital service are now live. Please see links to the different products below:

- [Calculator / Digital Service \('Calculate your Public Service Pension Adjustment'\)](#)
- [The Interactive Guidance tool \('Check if you are affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy'\)](#)
- [The McCloud GOV.UK guidance collections page](#)

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

- [The McCloud pensions newsletter](#)

We have set up a page titled '[Age Discrimination Remedy – HMRC Member Tax Calculator](#)' on the FPS regulations and guidance website to house this information, so that we can update any links should they change. We have also added this to the [FPS member website](#).

We have updated the [remediable service statement – covering letter](#) to include the link to calculator. If you are using your own version, please ensure that you add the associated link.

Please note that we have not had sight of the associated communications before now, so this is also the first time for us to view these. We will look at these, and where needed report any feedback to HMRC, if you have any immediate feedback from members, please send this to the bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk

[Age Discrimination Remedy – Pension Saving Statements and Pension Input Amounts](#)

HMRC have provided clarity regarding the specific years for which Pension Saving Statements (PSS's) and revised PSS's will be needed for an individual to accurately calculate compensation due, and tax charges due/owed to them. An individual would require both original and revised PSS's for tax years 2012-13 to 2021-22, alongside a PSS for 2022-23 to ensure an accurate revision of their tax position and compensation due in all cases.

Further information regarding specific cases has been provided below:

- In some cases, not having both original and revised PIA's from all remedy years, plus 2012-15 (where the member has not paid an AA charge in 2015-16), will result in an inaccurate revision of the member's tax and/or compensation position.

- It is not possible to ascertain, without seeing all an individual's tax and pensions information in one place, whether providing incomplete information will lead to an inaccuracy in their calculation. The only place where all that information will be brought together is the calculator, and so it is only at the point the individual enters all of the relevant information into the calculator that anyone can know for certain whether original and revised Pension Input Amount's (PIAs) from all remedy years are needed or not.
- Therefore, the service requires original and revised PIAs for all remedy years (apart from 2012-15 where member has paid an AA charge 2015/16) to guarantee an accurate calculation for the member.
- HMRC cannot tell individuals to omit information when we know that this could lead to an inaccuracy in their tax or compensation position. Consequently, HMRC guidance will tell an individual that they need original and revised PIA's for all tax years from 2012-2023 (or 2015-2023 where appropriate) and the individual will need this information to use the digital service.
- Where an inaccurate revision is calculated, due to incomplete information being provided, this will often be to the detriment of an individual.
- Therefore, while schemes are not mandated to automatically issue statements except in circumstances where they are required to by statute, an individual who has breached their AA threshold in any remedy year is likely to request PSS's for all remedy years, and (in many cases) 2012-15 too, where they haven't automatically been provided – and an individual has a legal right to do this.

It is not for HMRC to decide on pension schemes' approach to issuing PSS's for remedy years, but we trust that the above clarification will help schemes to decide.

HMRC has provided [examples](#) showing some scenarios in which incomplete information can lead to inaccurate outcomes in both years prior to and after the year of a charge.

Events

FPS coffee mornings

Our MS Teams coffee mornings are continuing in November. The informal sessions lasting up to an hour allow practitioners to catch up with colleagues and hear a brief update on FPS issues from the LGA Bluelight team.

In November, due to leave and other meeting commitments, we plan to hold one coffee morning which will be on Tuesday 7 November. The topic we are planning to explore is interest in respect of the Sargeant remedy.

We are pleased to include the presentations from recent sessions below:

[4 October 2023 - Matthews implementation and GAD calculator update](#)

[17 October 2023 - Remedy Contingent Decisions](#)

[31 October 2023 - Matthews GAD Calculator launch and demo](#)

If you do not already receive the meeting invitations and would like to join us, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk. Please note that attendance at the coffee mornings is generally restricted to FPS practitioners and managers.

Legislation

Statutory Instruments

[The Firefighters' Pension Schemes \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2023 \[SR2023/178\]](#)

[The Firefighters' Pensions \(Remediable Service\) \(Northern Ireland\) Regulations \[SR2023/133\]](#)

Useful links

- [The Firefighters' Pensions \(England\) Scheme Advisory Board](#)
- [FPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [FPS Member](#)
- [Khub Firefighters Pensions Discussion Forum](#)
- [FPS1992 guidance and commentary](#)
- [The Pensions Regulator Public Service Schemes](#)
- [The Pensions Ombudsman](#)
- [HMRC Pensions Tax Manual](#)
- [LGA pensions website](#)
- [LGPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [LGPC Bulletins](#)
- [LGPS member site](#)
- [Scottish Public Pensions Agency - Firefighters](#)
- [Welsh Government Fire circulars](#)

Contact details

Claire Johnson (Senior Firefighters' Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 07920 861 552

Email: claire.johnson@local.gov.uk

Tara Atkins (Firefighters' Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 07825 731 924

Email: Tara.atkins@local.gov.uk

Copyright

Copyright remains with Local Government Association (LGA). This bulletin may be reproduced without the prior permission of LGA provided it is not used for commercial gain, the source is acknowledged and, if regulations are reproduced, the Crown Copyright Policy Guidance issued by HMSO is adhered to.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin has been prepared by the Bluelight Pensions team, part of the Local Government Association (LGA). It represents the views of the team and should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. Readers may wish, or will need, to take their own legal advice on the interpretation of legislation. No responsibility whatsoever will be assumed by the LGA for any direct or consequential loss, financial or otherwise, damage or inconvenience, or any other obligation or liability incurred by readers relying on information contained in this bulletin.

While every attempt is made to ensure the accuracy of the bulletin, it would be helpful if readers could bring any perceived errors or omissions to the attention of the Bluelight team by emailing bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

FPS Bulletin 75 – November 2023

Welcome to issue 75 of the Firefighters’ Pensions Schemes bulletin.

If you are looking for information on a certain topic, issue and content indexes are held on the [main bulletin page](#) of the website and are updated following each new issue.

If you have any comments on this bulletin, suggested items for future issues, or a job you would like to advertise, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

Contents

Calendar of events	2
Actions arising	3
FPS	3
Matthews – GAD calculator	3
Matthews – Deceased members	4
Matthews – Monitoring and reporting.....	5
Matthews – Supporting documents.....	6
Matthews – Consequential loss claims	7
Age Discrimination Remedy – Member Contingent Decisions guidance	7
Firefighters Pension Scheme Valuation.....	7
Short Guide to the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015.....	7
Retirement FPS 2015 factsheet.....	7
Eligibility to join FPS 2015	8
Firefighters Pensions - Payroll working group.....	8
Technical query log.....	8
FPS England SAB updates	9
SAB LPB effectiveness committee vacancy	9
SAB website	9
Other News and Updates	9
Cumbria FRS Job Vacancy	9
New pensions minister.....	9

The Pension Regulator – 2022/23 Governance and Administration survey results	9
Pension Dashboard Programme (PDP) latest news	10
Pension Dashboard Programme (PDP) publishes research into the public value of dashboards	11
HMRC	11
2022/23 Event Reporting - Annual Allowance Statements & Lifetime allowance	11
Events	12
FPS coffee mornings	12
Useful links	12
Contact details	13
Copyright	13
Disclaimer	13

Calendar of events

Please see below a calendar of upcoming events relevant to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. Only those events which are hyperlinked are currently available to book. If you have any events you would like to be included in a future bulletin, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

Table 1: Calendar of events

Event	Date
FPS Coffee Morning	12 December 2023
FPS Technical Working Group	12 December 2023
SAB	14 December 2023
FPS Coffee Morning	19 December 2023
FPS Communications Working Group	19 December 2023

Actions arising

[Matthews - GAD calculator](#) – FRAs:

1. should read the user guide.
2. should ensure that they have the most up to date version of the calculator when they update the spreadsheet at the beginning of the month to allow for the latest interest rates.
3. should share this information with anyone who is carrying out the Matthews second options exercise.

[Matthews - Consequential loss claims](#): FRAs should provide the information requested accordingly.

[Matthews – Monitoring and Reporting](#): FRAs to maintain robust record keeping ensuring that the data required by the Home Office and GAD is easily accessible.

[Matthews - Deceased members](#): FRAs to stockpile any cases which are currently not covered by the regulations until an amendment is in place.

[HMRC 2022/2023 event reporting procedure for Annual Allowance and lifetime allowance \(LTA\)](#): Scheme Managers should provide data by **31 January 2024**.

FPS

Matthews – GAD calculator

On 13 November 2023 we emailed you to announce that following the [Matthews GAD calculator launch and demo](#) coffee morning on 31 October 2023, the Matthews second options exercise – GAD calculator and user guide has been released.

These documents have been added to our existing [Special members of FPS 2006 - GAD Calculator](#) webpage within the member area of the FPS regulations and guidance website.

The calculator (first live version) can be used to assist contribution calculations relating to the second options exercise. Please note:

- This calculator can be used for calculations with effective dates in November 2023
- The calculator will need to be updated each month to allow for the latest applicable interest rates. GAD will make a monthly interest file available through their Egress portal which you will need to register for on an individual basis by emailing Firematthewscalculator@gad.gov.uk

- The types of cases covered by this calculator are set out in the user guide. A second version of the calculator, covering a wider group of categories, is being tested and is expected to be released by the end of the year.

The user guide provides detailed instructions on how to use the calculator. The guide details the cases which are covered by the calculator, data inputs required (both bulk and individual), and the output produced by the calculator. The guide also includes some worked examples and troubleshooting comments.

If you have any initial questions using the calculator, it is recommended that you contact the super users in the first instance. Their details are in the [‘Super Users’](#) tab on the webpage.

We are aware that FRAs will have to save a version of the calculator locally when they upload the interest file each month. We do however recommend that you check the website first to ensure that you are uploading interest to the most recent version of the calculator in case there have been any amendments.

Please ensure that you share this information with anyone who is carrying out the Matthews second options exercise on behalf of your Fire and Rescue Service.

Should you require access to the member area of the FPS regulations and guidance website, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

ACTIONS: FRAs;

1. Should read the user guide.
2. Should ensure that they have the most up to date version of the calculator when they update the spreadsheet at the beginning of the month to allow for the latest interest rates.
3. Should share this information with anyone who is carrying out the Matthews second options exercise.

Matthews – Deceased members

Readers may be aware that there are specific provisions in the [Firefighters’ Pension Schemes \(England\) \(Amendment\) Order 2023](#) which provide remedy for deceased cases:

[Special death grant](#) – Individuals who have died in the period 7 April 2000 to 5 April 2006.

[Additional death grant](#) - Individuals **must** have joined the modified scheme as part of the first options exercise, purchased their past service to 1 July 2000 and would also have been entitled to purchase pre-July 2000 service as part of the 2023 Options exercise but for the fact that they have died prior to having the opportunity to make a positive election.

The LGA have alerted the Home Office to the following scenario:

An individual who was **not** identified under the first options exercise, so therefore were never given the opportunity to join the modified scheme but have since died and are therefore unable to make an election under the second options exercise - Presently the regulations do not provide any remedy for such cases.

The Home Office is currently considering this issue and will provide an update in due course.

It is recommended that until further clarity has been provided FRAs stockpile any cases which they identify meeting this specific set of criteria.

ACTION – FRAs to stockpile any cases which are currently not covered by the regulations until an amendment is in place.

Matthews – Monitoring and reporting

As we are now in the implementation phase of the Matthews remedy both the Home Office and GAD have confirmed that there are some key areas that they will require FRAs to report on.

The first area is in respect of overall project implementation. It has been agreed that FRAs will be asked by the LGA to provide the following data on a quarterly basis:

1. Total number of cases
 - a. Identified and individual located i.e. have an address on file
 - b. Identified but not located i.e. no address on record
2. Total number of cases which have been sent the initial expression of interest letter.
3. Total number of individuals who have replied and expressed an interest.
4. Total number of cases which cannot be run through version one or two of the calculator and will need to be sent to GAD.
5. Total number of statements issued.

6. Total number of individuals who have elected to join, to be broken down as follows:
 - a. Special members
 - i. Periodical
 - ii. Lump sum
 - b. Special deferred
 - i. Periodical
 - ii. Lump sum
 - c. Special pensioner

7. Total number of cases passed to the administrator for implementation.

The second area is in respect of positive elections **only**. The Home Office and GAD would like FRAs to collate and share the GAD calculator inputs and outputs for **all** individuals who elect to join the second options exercise.

- FRAs using the bulk processing interface can simply retain and concatenate input and output files for relevant cases.
- FRAs using the individual interface can use the “**Append to bulk interface**” button when processing elections to build up a file of results (see user guide page 11).

It is expected that this data will be requested on a quarterly basis, details on how this information will be shared will be provided in due course.

ACTION: FRAs to maintain robust record keeping ensuring that the data required by the Home Office and GAD is easily accessible.

Matthews – Supporting documents

In both [FPS Bulletin 73 – September 2023](#) and [FPS Bulletin 74 – October 2023](#) we made FRAs aware of the supporting documentation that has been published to support FRAs with the second options exercise.

In conjunction with the Matthews technical working group, we are pleased to publish [member FAQs](#) on the FPS member website.

FRAs are encouraged to signpost their members to these resources as part of the second options exercise.

With thanks to David Lofthouse at Humberside Fire and Rescue, we have published [a spreadsheet](#) on the [Firefighter pay scales section](#) of the FPS regulations and guidance website that sets out historical pay rate information for retained firefighters from 1977 to 2023.

FRAs are encouraged to use this alongside the pay scale documents, for any assumptions needed in the second options exercise.

Matthews – Consequential loss claims

On the 13 November we emailed FRAs alerting them to the possibility of receiving data requests from members in respect of the first options exercise.

Members are asking FRAs to provide details of the payments which they have made (and will continue to make, where applicable) in respect of both backdated contributions and interest. This information should be easily accessible for the FRA as it will have been captured in the [original calculator output document](#).

This information is required to support members with an ongoing consequential loss claim which the FBU have submitted on their behalf.

The request is time sensitive as all claims must be submitted to the Court by 31 January 2024, we therefore ask that you deal with these cases in a timely manner.

ACTION: FRAs are encouraged to respond to requests accordingly.

Age Discrimination Remedy – Member Contingent Decisions guidance

In [FPS Bulletin 74 - October 2023](#) we published our Scheme manager [Contingent Decisions guidance](#) and the member [claim form](#). To accompany this we have now published our [member guidance](#) which can be found under the '[Age Discrimination remedy – Contingent Decisions](#)' section on the [FPS member](#) website.

Firefighters Pension Scheme Valuation

The next valuation date is 31 March 2024 with data due to be submitted to GAD later in 2024. In the past the valuation data has been requested in the autumn, but the actual date is yet to be confirmed. The specification for the valuation is still under discussion and is expected to be finalised and communicated in early 2024.

Short Guide to the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015

In [FPS Bulletin 73 – September 2023](#) we reminded FRAs that the scheme regulations do not support aggregation of concurrent service.

With thanks to Helen Scargill, and the communications working group, a section covering this has been included within the members [short guide to the FPS 2015](#) and an updated version has been added to the [Guides and sample documents](#) section on the FPS regulations and guidance website.

Retirement FPS 2015 factsheet

The retirement FPS 2015 factsheet has been updated to reflect the revised early retirement factors following the GAD revised factors, which were notified to stakeholders in [FPS Bulletin 71 – July 2023](#).

The [Retirement from FPS 2015 factsheet](#) has been uploaded to the [factsheets section](#) of the FPS regulations and guidance website.

Eligibility to join FPS 2015

At their meeting on 14 September 2023 the Scheme Advisory Board discussed the eligibility of Firefighter apprentices, and which Scheme they are eligible to join. It was agreed that the LGA would recirculate information on eligibility.

In [FPS Bulletin 10 – July 2018](#) we published a factsheet – [eligibility to join the Firefighters' Pension Scheme](#), which was updated in October 2019 and is available on the [factsheets section](#) of the FPS regulations and guidance website.

As contracts and roles are determined locally it is the responsibility of each Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) as the employer to determine whether a role meets the definition of 'firefighter' under the interpretation of the regulations.

We would encourage you to consider the information set out within the factsheet when determining a firefighters' eligibility to join the FPS to ensure a consistent approach.

Firefighters Pensions - Payroll working group

At this month's FRA drop-in session, it was suggested that there may be a benefit in facilitating a payroll working group for those involved in the administration of Firefighter pensions.

If you would like to be involved in this, please send us an email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk so that we can gauge interest and set up an invite list.

Technical query log

The [current log of queries and responses](#) can be accessed by practitioners in the member-restricted area of the FPS Regulations and Guidance website. The queries have been anonymised and divided into topics. The log is updated monthly in line with the bulletin release dates.

Queries have been answered this month in the following categories:

- Partial Retirement
- Post retirement marriage spouses benefits
- Aggregation

FPS England SAB updates

SAB LPB effectiveness committee vacancy

We have a vacancy on the Local Pension Board (LPB) effectiveness committee for a practitioner representative.

The LPB effectiveness committee considers how local pension boards and scheme managers can be supported centrally and has been particularly active in designing board surveys and developing draft guidance for joint LPB applications.

The required commitment is usually three to four meetings per year, and these are currently being held virtually. If you are interested in sitting on the committee or would like more information, please email bluelight.pensions@local.gov.uk

SAB website

You can use the links below to find out about the latest updates on the work of the SAB and its committees on the SAB website:

- [SAB membership](#)
- [SAB meeting and agenda papers](#)
- [Committee meetings and agenda papers](#)

Other News and Updates

Cumbria FRS Job Vacancy

Cumbria Fire and Rescue are looking for individuals with extensive generalist pay, reward and pensions knowledge. If this is something that you possess, then they would love for you [to apply](#) for this new role.

New pensions minister

On 16 November 2023, Paul Maynard MP for Blackpool North and Cleveleys was confirmed as the new pensions minister. Paul replaces Laura Trott who is promoted to Chief Secretary of the Treasury.

The Pension Regulator – 2022/23 Governance and Administration survey results

On 27 November 2023 the Pension Regulator (tPR) published the results of its [2023 Governance and Administration survey](#).

The survey was conducted online between January and March 2023 and aims to track governance and administration practices among public service pension schemes.

TPR measures annual progress against the following six key processes:

- have a documented policy to manage board members' conflicts of interest
- have access to the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to properly run the scheme
- have documented procedures for assessing and managing risk
- have processes to monitor records for accuracy and completeness
- have a process for resolving contribution payment issues
- have procedures to identify, assess and report breaches of the law.

67 per cent of Firefighters' schemes who responded to the survey had all six processes in place. This is a decrease from 74 per cent in 2021. The report is being considered by the Local Pension Board (LPB) effectiveness committee ("the Committee") to make recommendations to the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) on any actions needed.

The [TPR six key processes](#) factsheet will be updated in due course to reflect the latest performance and give further guidance to FRAs in order to achieve a higher rate of understanding and compliance ahead of future surveys.

In the short-term, the Committee recommends that LPBs can use the survey results to carry out an annual evaluation.

Pension Dashboard Programme (PDP) latest news

On 1 November 2023, PDP published its [November newsletter](#).

The newsletter contains the 8th progress update report from PDP – looking at PDPs preparations toward industry connection to the dashboards ecosystem. There are also articles on:

- common questions on dashboards
- understanding the architecture and find and view webinar
- the Pensions Regulator's blog on preparing for dashboards.

Pension Dashboard Programme (PDP) publishes research into the public value of dashboards

On 1 November 2023, PDP published its [research into the public value of pensions dashboards](#). Highlights of the research includes:

- the number of individuals saving into a pension has increased from 22.1 million to 28 million
- the greatest increase in saving for pensions is among individuals aged between 16 and 34 with incomes between £10,000 and £30,000 per annum
- pensions not in payment for adults aged 16 and over has increased from 33.7 million to 44.7 million
- 18 million individuals have defined contribution pensions, while 14.4 million have defined benefit pensions
- 79 per cent of individuals with a pension are actively contributing to at least one pension.

HMRC

2022/23 Event Reporting - Annual Allowance Statements & Lifetime allowance

On 8 November 2023, we emailed all Scheme Managers and administrators alerting them to the HMRC 2022/2023 event reporting procedure for pension saving statements (PSS) and lifetime allowance (LTA) protections.

We confirmed that HMRC will accept scheme data for the 2022/23 PSS on an excel spreadsheet encrypted via Winzip rather than through the scheme's event report. All other 2022/23 scheme events, apart from the lifetime allowance protection regimes, must be submitted via Pensions Schemes Online.

The data must be submitted by **31 January 2024**.

The event report has not been updated to include the lifetime allowance protection regimes – see [pension schemes newsletter 85](#) for more information.

Any administrator who needs to submit these details to HMRC, can submit them on a password protected spreadsheet and send the password in a separate email. Put 'Lifetime allowance – Event Reporting' in the subject line of the email and send to pensions.businessdelivery@hmrc.gov.uk.

ACTION: Scheme Managers need to submit data by 31 January 2024

Events

FPS coffee mornings

Our MS Teams coffee mornings are continuing in December. The informal sessions lasting up to an hour allow practitioners to catch up with colleagues and hear a brief update on FPS issues from the LGA Bluelight team.

In December, due to timing of the completion of projects, and other meeting commitments, we plan to hold two coffee mornings. The first will be on 12 December, when we aim to launch the Immediate Choice (IC) Remediable Service Statement (RSS). The second will be on 19 December 2023.

We are pleased to include the presentations from recent sessions below:

[7 November 2023 - Remedy Interest](#)

If you do not already receive the meeting invitations and would like to join us, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk. Please note that attendance at the coffee mornings is generally restricted to FPS practitioners and managers.

Useful links

- [The Firefighters' Pensions \(England\) Scheme Advisory Board](#)
- [FPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [FPS Member](#)
- [Khub Firefighters Pensions Discussion Forum](#)
- [FPS1992 guidance and commentary](#)
- [The Pensions Regulator Public Service Schemes](#)
- [The Pensions Ombudsman](#)
- [HMRC Pensions Tax Manual](#)
- [LGA pensions website](#)
- [LGPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [LGPC Bulletins](#)
- [LGPS member site](#)
- [Scottish Public Pensions Agency - Firefighters](#)
- [Welsh Government Fire circulars](#)

Contact details

Claire Johnson (Senior Firefighters' Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 07920 861 552

Email: claire.johnson@local.gov.uk

Tara Atkins (Firefighters' Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 07825 731 924

Email: Tara.atkins@local.gov.uk

Copyright

Copyright remains with Local Government Association (LGA). This bulletin may be reproduced without the prior permission of LGA provided it is not used for commercial gain, the source is acknowledged and, if regulations are reproduced, the Crown Copyright Policy Guidance issued by HMSO is adhered to.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin has been prepared by the Bluelight Pensions team, part of the Local Government Association (LGA). It represents the views of the team and should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. Readers may wish, or will need, to take their own legal advice on the interpretation of legislation. No responsibility whatsoever will be assumed by the LGA for any direct or consequential loss, financial or otherwise, damage or inconvenience, or any other obligation or liability incurred by readers relying on information contained in this bulletin.

While every attempt is made to ensure the accuracy of the bulletin, it would be helpful if readers could bring any perceived errors or omissions to the attention of the Bluelight team by emailing bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**AGENDA ITEM NO 10
22 JANUARY 2024

LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER PEOPLE SERVICES

THE PENSIONS REGULATOR RETURNS**THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION**

REPORT PRESENTED BY ACO A REED

SUMMARY

This report shares the completed public service pension scheme returns that were submitted to The Pensions Regulator in relation to the 1992, 2007 and 2015 Firefighters' Pensions Schemes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the returns which are shared for information and awareness purposes.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Public service pension schemes are legally required to provide 'registrable information' to The Pensions Regulator. This includes completing a scheme return each year. The return requests additional information which serves to provide an accurate picture to The Pensions Regulator of public service schemes.
- 1.2 Failure to complete the scheme return by the required date could lead to the scheme manager being fined or receiving other action from The Pensions Regulator.
- 1.3 Appendix A contains a publication issued by The Pensions Regulator titled "A quick guide to information that must be provided to us".
- 1.4 Appendix B contains the completed returns for the 1992, 2007 and 2015 Firefighters' Pension Schemes. The returns include scheme data, scheme manager information, Local Pension Board membership, employer details and administrator details.
- 1.5 South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, as the Scheme Manager, submitted the returns ahead of the deadline of 18 January 2024.

2. ISSUES

2.1 There are no issues to report.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability/Environment/Carbon Reduction	No
Safeguarding	No
Consultation and Communications	No
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No
Impact Assessment	No

3.1.1 There are no additional financial issues arising as a result of this report.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

Legal	No	Data Protection / Privacy	No
Financial	No	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Procurement	No	Governance & Audit	No
Corporate Risk	No	Service Policy	No
Information Management	No	National Policy	No

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

Human Resource and People Development	No
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	No
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	No

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 An Equality Risk Assessment has been undertaken to assess the potential impact of this report. The assessment concluded that there were no immediate or long term adverse impacts on any individual or group of personnel arising from this particular report.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Members note the returns which are shared for information and awareness purposes.

Contact Officer:	Alison Reed Director of People Services
Background Papers	Appendix A – Quick Guide Appendix B – Scheme returns for 1992, 2007 & 2015 Firefighters' Pension Schemes

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK



Information for public service scheme managers

A quick guide to information that must be provided to us

There is certain information that public service pension schemes are legally required to provide to us. This quick guide outlines the kind of information that must be provided and why, as well as some best practice tips to help you meet the legal requirements.

The legal duties include:

- providing us with 'registrable information' and keeping this information up to date
- ensuring that the scheme return is provided accurately and on time.

What information must be provided?

Registrable information

Managers of public service pension schemes are legally required to provide ‘registrable information’ to us, and to keep this information up to date. This information includes the scheme name, address and scheme type, membership data, and name and addresses of employers. We are required to capture this information in a register and we also use it to inform the Pensions Tracing Service, which helps people find lost pensions.

Other information

In addition to registrable information, we collect additional information each year via the scheme return to build an accurate picture of the landscape, so we can regulate effectively and provide relevant educational materials. We also use this information to make sure we can contact the relevant people running the schemes.

Information we collect in this way includes details for scheme contacts, pension board members and various service providers such as administrators. It is a legal requirement for scheme managers to provide the scheme return.

How do I go about actually completing a scheme return?

You’ll need to do this via Exchange, our online service at: <https://exchange.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/>

If you’ve used Exchange before, log on using your registered email address and password. Choose the scheme from the ‘My schemes’ page and select the ‘Scheme maintenance’ option. If you haven’t used Exchange before, you’ll need to register. This is very straightforward to do.



Best practice tip

In larger schemes, several people may need to have access to the information on Exchange. You can provide access to as many people as required by going to Exchange, logging in, and then selecting ‘Manage who can access this scheme online’ from the Scheme options menu. We recommend you do this in advance of receiving the scheme return notice.

If I manage multiple schemes, do I need to complete a return for each scheme?

If you manage more than one scheme, you’ll need to complete a scheme return for each separate scheme. For example, a fire and rescue authority in England might need to complete a scheme return for the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme 1992, another for the New Firefighters’ Pension Scheme 2006 and a third one for the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme 2015.

Does this mean that some people will be counted more than once?

Yes it will. If a person is a deferred member of one scheme and an active member of another scheme, they should appear in the appropriate data category for both schemes. This gives us an accurate picture of the active, deferred and pensioner members connected to each individual scheme.

What is the deadline for completing the scheme return?

The deadline is stated on the scheme return notice itself and is usually six weeks from the date of the notice.



Best practice tip

The information we are asking for is straightforward, but give yourself time to complete the scheme return in case you need to go and find certain information about your scheme. Our website lists the information you'll need to provide, so it's worth reading this and preparing the information in advance to save time.

What if I can't complete the scheme return within the deadline?

We don't anticipate schemes having problems completing the scheme return on time as the information asked for is not technical or complicated. However, completing the scheme return by the deadline is a legal requirement and failure to do this could lead to a fine or other action being taken. If schemes are having problems, then they should contact us as soon as possible.

Your ongoing duties

It is the scheme manager's legal duty to keep registrable information up to date, notifying us as soon as reasonably practicable if there are any changes. Schemes can update their information at any time, via Exchange – they shouldn't wait for the annual scheme return. Keeping your scheme information up to date will help you to complete your annual scheme return more quickly and efficiently.



Best practice tip

We've had a number of cases where the scheme return contact has retired or changed job but no new details have been provided to us. To help you meet your legal obligations, make sure the scheme return contact is kept up to date.

How to contact us

Napier House
Trafalgar Place
Brighton
BN1 4DW

www.pensionseducationportal.com

Free online learning for those running public service schemes



A quick guide to
information that must be provided to us
Information for public service scheme managers
© The Pensions Regulator August 2020

You can reproduce the text in this publication as long as you quote The Pensions Regulator's name and title of the publication. Please contact us if you have any questions about this publication. This document aims to be fully compliant with WCAG 2.0 accessibility standards and we can produce it in Braille, large print or in audio format. We can also produce it in other languages.

Scheme return
2022 - 2023

The Pensions Regulator

Your scheme details:

South Wales Firemens Pension Scheme 1992

Date produced: **05 December 2023**

PSR number: 10079094

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

1. Introduction

The following are the details that were on the scheme return submitted on 05 December 2023 12:53 PM.

The scheme return details were confirmed by Mrs Kimbely Henderson Jeal.

2. Scheme details (includes membership details)

Basic details	
Scheme name	South Wales Firemens Pension Scheme 1992
PSR number	10079094
Scheme address	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Scheme type	Occupational
Benefit type	Defined benefit
Current status	Closed to new members since 01 April 2007
Scheme year-end (DD/MM)	31/03 since 01 April 1947
HMRC reference number (PSTR)	00616644RY

Number of members as at 31 March 2022 The Pensions Regulator requires to know the number of members present at the scheme year-end between the dates 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.	
Active members	43
Deferred members	65
Pensioner members	1299
Total of members	1407

Number of members as at 31 March 2023 The Pensions Regulator requires to know the number of members present at the scheme year-end between the dates 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.	
Active members	0
Deferred members	71
Pensioner members	1352
Total of members	1423

3. Governance Details

PSR number: 10079094

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

Manager of the scheme	
Role or organisation name	Manager of the Scheme, South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority
Address of manager of the scheme	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232024
Email address	a-reed@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr David King
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	daveking@frsa.org.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Gareth Tovey
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	Gareth.Tovey@fbu.gov.uk

PSR number: 10079094

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mrs Pamela Drake
Pension board member type	Other
Chair of pension board	Yes
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	pdrake@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mrs Jennifer Morgan
Pension board member type	Employer
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	Jen.Morgan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Daniel Naughton
Pension board member type	Employer
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	daniel.naughton@cardiff.gov.uk

PSR number: 10079094

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Colin Elsbury
Pension board member type	Employer
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	colinelsbury@caerphilly.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Paul Davies
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	p.davies@fbu.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Garry Davies
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232004
Email address	g-davies@southwales-fire.gov.uk

PSR number: 10079094

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

PSR number: 10079094

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

3. Record-keeping

Common data	
Have you measured your common data in the last three years?	Yes
When did you last measure your common data?	November 2023
What percentage of this data have you assessed to be present and accurate?	99%

Scheme-specific ('conditional') data	
Have you measured your scheme-specific ('conditional') data in the last three years?	Yes
When did you last measure your scheme-specific ('conditional') data?	November 2023
What percentage of this data have you assessed to be present and accurate?	97%

PSR number: 10079094

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

5. Employer details

Employer	
Employer's name	South Wales Fire Authority
Employer type	Participating Employer
Organisation type	Government / public body
Address of employer	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2 Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Employer status	Active since 01 January 1996
Employer email address	pensions@southwales-fire.gov.uk

PSR number: 10079094

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

6. Service provider details

Insurance company	
There is currently no insurance company listed as involved with this scheme.	

Third party administrator	
Organisation name	Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund
Address of administrator	Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council Council Offices Oldway House PORTH Mid Glamorgan CF39 9ST United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 680646
Email address	catherine.black@rctcbc.gov.uk

In-house administrator	
There is currently no in-house administrator listed as involved with this scheme. Details required are name and address, telephone number and email address.	

Auditor	
Organisation name	Wales Audit Office
Address of auditor	Wales Audit Office 24 Cathedral Road CARDIFF CF11 9LJ United Kingdom
Telephone number	02920320500

PSR number: 10079094

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

PSR number: 10079094

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

7. Contact details

Scheme contact details	
Name of contact	Mrs Julia Thompson
Job title	Pensions Specialist Technical Lead
Address of contact	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232353
Email address	j-thompson@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Pension Tracing Service contact details
There is no pension tracing service contact associated with this scheme.

Consent to electronic service details	
Confirmed by contact name	Mrs Kimbely Henderson Jeal
Confirmed date	01/12/2023
Email address	k-jeal@southwales-fire.gov.uk

PSR number: 10079094

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

Scheme return
2022 - 2023

The Pensions Regulator

Your scheme details:

Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Wales) 2007 - South Wales

Date produced: **05 December 2023**

PSR number: 10276791

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

1. Introduction

The following are the details that were on the scheme return submitted on 05 December 2023 12:55 PM.

The scheme return details were confirmed by Mrs Kimbely Henderson Jeal.

2. Scheme details (includes membership details)

Basic details	
Scheme name	Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Wales) 2007 - South Wales
PSR number	10276791
Scheme address	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters Forest View Business Park Llantrisant RCT CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Scheme type	Occupational
Benefit type	Defined benefit
Current status	Closed to new members since 01 April 2015
Scheme year-end (DD/MM)	31/03 since 06 April 2006
HMRC reference number (PSTR)	00680186RY

Number of members as at 31 March 2022

The Pensions Regulator requires to know the number of members present at the scheme year-end between the dates 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Active members	26
Deferred members	542
Pensioner members	112
Total of members	680

Number of members as at 31 March 2023

The Pensions Regulator requires to know the number of members present at the scheme year-end between the dates 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.

Active members	0
Deferred members	519
Pensioner members	146
Total of members	665

3. Governance Details

PSR number: 10276791

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

Manager of the scheme	
Role or organisation name	South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority Scheme Manager
Address of manager of the scheme	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232159
Email address	a-reed@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr. David King
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443232000
Email address	daveking@frsa.org.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Gareth Tovey
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	Gareth.Tovey@fbu.gov.uk

PSR number: 10276791

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mrs Pamela Drake
Pension board member type	Other
Chair of pension board	Yes
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	pdrake@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mrs Jennifer Morgan
Pension board member type	Employer
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	Jen.Morgan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Daniel Naughton
Pension board member type	Employer
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	daniel.naughton@cardiff.gov.uk

PSR number: 10276791

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Colin Elsbury
Pension board member type	Employer
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	colinelsbury@caerphilly.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Paul Davies
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	p.davies@fbu.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Garry Davies
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232004
Email address	g-davies@southwales-fire.gov.uk

PSR number: 10276791

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

PSR number: 10276791

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

3. Record-keeping

Common data	
Have you measured your common data in the last three years?	Yes
When did you last measure your common data?	November 2023
What percentage of this data have you assessed to be present and accurate?	94%

Scheme-specific ('conditional') data	
Have you measured your scheme-specific ('conditional') data in the last three years?	Yes
When did you last measure your scheme-specific ('conditional') data?	November 2023
What percentage of this data have you assessed to be present and accurate?	94%

PSR number: 10276791

5. Employer details

Employer	
Employer's name	South Wales Fire Authority
Employer type	Participating Employer
Organisation type	Government / public body
Address of employer	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Employer status	Active since 01 January 1991
Employer email address	pensions@southwales-fire.gov.uk

PSR number: 10276791

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

6. Service provider details

Insurance company	
There is currently no insurance company listed as involved with this scheme.	

Third party administrator	
Organisation name	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Council
Address of administrator	Pensions Department Oldway House Porth Rhondda Third-Party CF39 9ST United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 680611
Email address	pensions@rctcbc.gov.uk

In-house administrator	
There is currently no in-house administrator listed as involved with this scheme. Details required are name and address, telephone number and email address.	

Auditor	
Organisation name	Wales Audit Office
Address of auditor	Wales Audit Office 24 Cathedral Road CARDIFF CF11 9LJ United Kingdom
Telephone number	02920320500

PSR number: 10276791

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

PSR number: 10276791

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

7. Contact details

Scheme contact details	
Name of contact	Mrs Julia Thompson
Job title	Pensions Specialist Technical Lead
Address of contact	SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE UNIT 2 FOREST VIEW BUSINESS PARK, LLANTRISANT PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232353
Email address	j-thompson@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Pension Tracing Service contact details
There is no pension tracing service contact associated with this scheme.

Consent to electronic service details	
Confirmed by contact name	Mrs Kimbely Henderson Jeal
Confirmed date	01/12/2023
Email address	k-jeal@southwales-fire.gov.uk

PSR number: 10276791

Scheme return
2022 - 2023

The Pensions Regulator

Your scheme details:

The Firefighters Pension Scheme Wales 2015

Date produced: **05 December 2023**

PSR number: 10276724

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

1. Introduction

The following are the details that were on the scheme return submitted on 05 December 2023 12:55 PM.

The scheme return details were confirmed by Mrs Kimbely Henderson Jeal.

2. Scheme details (includes membership details)

Basic details	
Scheme name	The Firefighters Pension Scheme Wales 2015
PSR number	10276724
Scheme address	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters Forest View Business Park Llantrisant RCT CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Scheme type	Occupational
Benefit type	Defined benefit
Current status	Open to new members since 01 April 2015
Scheme year-end (DD/MM)	31/03 since 01 April 2015
HMRC reference number (PSTR)	00824190RY

Number of members as at 31 March 2022 The Pensions Regulator requires to know the number of members present at the scheme year-end between the dates 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.	
Active members	1217
Deferred members	480
Pensioner members	19
Total of members	1716

Number of members as at 31 March 2023 The Pensions Regulator requires to know the number of members present at the scheme year-end between the dates 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.	
Active members	1174
Deferred members	656
Pensioner members	73
Total of members	1903

3. Governance Details

PSR number: 10276724

Manager of the scheme	
Role or organisation name	South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority, Scheme Manager
Address of manager of the scheme	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232024
Email address	a-reed@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr. David King
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443232000
Email address	daveking@frsa.org.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Gareth Tovey
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	Gareth.Tovey@fbu.gov.uk

PSR number: 10276724

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mrs Pamela Drake
Pension board member type	Other
Chair of pension board	Yes
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	pdrake@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mrs Jennifer Morgan
Pension board member type	Employer
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	Jen.Morgan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Daniel Naughton
Pension board member type	Employer
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	daniel.naughton@cardiff.gov.uk

PSR number: 10276724

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Colin Elsbury
Pension board member type	Employer
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	colinelsbury@caerphilly.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Paul Davies
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	p.davies@fbu.gov.uk

Pension board member	
Name of pension board member	Mr Garry Davies
Pension board member type	Member
Chair of pension board	No
Address of pension board member	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232000
Email address	g-davies@southwales-fire.gov.uk

PSR number: 10276724

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

PSR number: 10276724

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

3. Record-keeping

Common data	
Have you measured your common data in the last three years?	Yes
When did you last measure your common data?	November 2023
What percentage of this data have you assessed to be present and accurate?	98%

Scheme-specific ('conditional') data	
Have you measured your scheme-specific ('conditional') data in the last three years?	Yes
When did you last measure your scheme-specific ('conditional') data?	November 2023
What percentage of this data have you assessed to be present and accurate?	96%

PSR number: 10276724

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

5. Employer details

Employer	
Employer's name	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Employer type	Participating Employer
Organisation type	Government / public body
Address of employer	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Unit 2, Forest View Business Park Llantrisant PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Employer status	Active since 01 April 2015
Employer email address	pensions@southwales-fire.gov.uk

PSR number: 10276724

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

6. Service provider details

Insurance company	
There is currently no insurance company listed as involved with this scheme.	

Third party administrator	
Organisation name	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Council
Address of administrator	Pensions Department Oldway House Porth Rhondda Third-Party CF39 9ST United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 680646
Email address	catherine.black@rctcbc.gov.uk

In-house administrator	
There is currently no in-house administrator listed as involved with this scheme. Details required are name and address, telephone number and email address.	

Auditor	
Organisation name	Wales Audit Office
Address of auditor	Wales Audit Office 24 Cathedral Road CARDIFF CF11 9LJ United Kingdom
Telephone number	02920320500

PSR number: 10276724

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

PSR number: 10276724

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

7. Contact details

Scheme contact details	
Name of contact	Mrs Julia Thompson
Job title	Pensions Specialist Technical Lead
Address of contact	SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE UNIT 2 FOREST VIEW BUSINESS PARK, LLANTRISANT PONTYCLUN Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LX United Kingdom
Telephone number	01443 232353
Email address	j-thompson@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Pension Tracing Service contact details
There is no pension tracing service contact associated with this scheme.

Consent to electronic service details	
Confirmed by contact name	Mrs Kimbely Henderson Jeal
Confirmed date	01/12/2023
Email address	k-jeal@southwales-fire.gov.uk

PSR number: 10276724

Please note that this document cannot be used in place of a scheme return and will not be accepted as such by the Pensions Regulator. If you are required to complete a scheme return and are unable to do so online you should contact us by phone on 0345 600 5666 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5.00pm). Alternatively you can email us at exchange@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**AGENDA ITEM NO 11
22 JANUARY 2024

LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER PEOPLE SERVICES

REPORT APPROVED BY THE ACO PEOPLE SERVICES

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - PENSIONS**THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION**

REPORT PRESENTED BY ACO A REED

SUMMARY

This report shares the internal audit report, completed by TIAA regarding the assurance review of pensions for 2023/24.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members review and note the contents of the review. A copy of which is attached at Appendix 1.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 To support Local Pension Board Members discharge their duties, this report shares, for information, the audit report completed by TIAA regarding the assurance review of pensions.
- 1.2 The role provided by TIAA is key in providing independent assurance that the Service's risk management, governance and internal control processes are operating effectively. It also helps the Service maintain a strong governance and risk management framework and supports the identification and mitigation of key strategic and operational risks.
- 1.3 TIAA have completed an assurance review of pensions for 2023/24. The scope of the review was to consider the arrangements for the management and control of the administration of pensions.
- 1.4 The report is contained at Appendix 1 for information. Members will note that the report provides an overall assessment of "substantial assurance" and the key strategic findings are:

- Appropriate arrangements are in place for the management and control of the administration of pension contributions and submitting information to the pension administrators, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.
- Testing performed for starters, leavers, post changes, and employees who have opted out found that pensions processes are operating effectively and in compliance with procedures.
- Monitoring and reporting processes are operating effectively through the appropriate governance channels.
- No Urgent, Important or Routine recommendations have been made.

1.5 The report also notes that detailed procedures are in place for all steps involved in the management of pension information and processing of pension contributions.

2. ISSUES

2.1 There are no issues to report.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability/Environment/Carbon Reduction	No
Safeguarding	No
Consultation and Communications	No
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No
Impact Assessment	No

3.1.1 There are no additional financial issues arising as a result of this report.

3.1.2 An Equality Risk Assessment has been undertaken to assess the potential impact of this report. The assessment concluded that there were no immediate or long-term adverse impacts on any individual or group of personnel arising from this particular report.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

Legal	No	Data Protection / Privacy	No
Financial	No	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Procurement	No	Governance & Audit	No
Corporate Risk	No	Service Policy	No
Information Management	No	National Policy	No

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

Human Resource and People Development	No
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	No
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	No

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The overall assessment of “substantial assurance” together with the key strategic findings and good practice identified provide strong assurance for Members of the Local Pension Board in terms of the arrangements for the management and control of the administration of pensions.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Members review and note the contents of the review. A copy of which is attached at Appendix 1.

Contact Officer:	Alison Reed Director of People Services
Background Papers	Appendix 1 – Assurance Review of Pensions 2023/24

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK



South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Assurance Review of Pensions

2023/24

November 2023

Executive Summary

OVERALL ASSESSMENT







ASSURANCE OVER KEY STRATEGIC RISK / OBJECTIVE

Strategic Risk 205 - Pensions Change Impact: If the proposed changes to the pension scheme are agreed, the authority may face increased staff turnover/loss of expertise.


SCOPE

The review considered the arrangements for the management and control of the administration of pensions.

KEY STRATEGIC FINDINGS

-  Appropriate arrangements are in place for the management and control of the administration of pension contributions and submitting information to the pension administrators, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.
-  Testing performed for starters, leavers, post changes, and employees who have opted out found that pensions processes are operating effectively and in compliance with procedures.
-  Monitoring and reporting processes are operating effectively through the appropriate governance channels.
-  No Urgent, Important or Routine recommendations have been made.

GOOD PRACTICE IDENTIFIED

-  Detailed procedures are in place for all steps involved in the management of pension information and processing of pension contributions.

ACTION POINTS

Urgent	Important	Routine	Operational
0	0	0	0

Assurance - Key Findings and Management Action Plan (MAP)

Rec.	Risk Area	Finding	Recommendation	Priority	Management Comments	Implementation Timetable (dd/mm/yy)	Responsible Officer (Job Title)
No Urgent, Important or Routine recommendations were made.							

PRIORITY GRADINGS

1 **URGENT** Fundamental control issue on which action should be taken immediately.

2 **IMPORTANT** Control issue on which action should be taken at the earliest opportunity.

3 **ROUTINE** Control issue on which action should be taken.

Operational - Effectiveness Matter (OEM) Action Plan

Ref	Risk Area	Finding	Suggested Action	Management Comments
No Operational Effectiveness Matters were identified.				

ADVISORY NOTE

Operational Effectiveness Matters need to be considered as part of management review of procedures.

Findings



Directed Risk:

Failure to properly direct the service to ensure compliance with the requirements of the organisation.

Ref	Expected Key Risk Mitigation		Effectiveness of arrangements	Cross Reference to MAP	Cross Reference to OEM
GF	Governance Framework	There is a documented process instruction which accords with the relevant regulatory guidance, Financial Instructions and Scheme of Delegation.	In place	-	-
RM	Risk Mitigation	The documented process aligns with the mitigating arrangements set out in the corporate risk register.	In place	-	-
C	Compliance	Compliance with statutory, regulatory and policy requirements is demonstrated, with action taken in cases of identified non-compliance.	In place	-	-


Other Findings




Strategic Risk 205 - Pensions Change Impact on the Strategic Risk Register is the risk that if the proposed changes to the pension scheme are agreed, the authority may face increased staff turnover/loss of expertise. The risk is rated Amber, and the current risk score is 8. Comments against the risk state that there has been a slight technical delay to the introduction of the Government Actuary's Department rate modeller/calculator, but it is anticipated that this will be resolved very shortly.

Other Findings


This risk was included in the assurance review of Risk Management performed by TIAA in December 2022 with an overall Substantial Assurance assessment. Good practice noted during the Risk Management review included undertaking advance work on the Matthews Pension Remedy exercise relating to on call service.

 Review of the Control Tasks and comments recorded on the Business Management Information System assigned to the Assistant Chief Officer, People Services and to the Pensions Manager for Risk 205 show that all tasks are on track and give assurance that the risk is being managed effectively.

Comments recorded on the system detail the progress and next steps to implement the national McCloud Pension Reform Exercise and the Matthews Pension Remedy Exercise. The provision of service information to Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCT) for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) pension members back to 2014 as part of the Pensions Reform LGPS Exercise is marked as complete, with comments confirming that all data has now been submitted and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) are awaiting confirmation from RCT that this exercise is now fully complete. The action to implement the National Pensions Dashboard Project is marked as parked due to the government currently relaunching the national project.

 An assurance review of Pensions was last performed by TIAA in June 2019 with overall Substantial assurance. One Operational Effectiveness Matter recommendation was identified and recommended that reminders to be issued to all new starters to complete and return Death Grant and new starter forms within one year of starting the new employment.


The Pensions Manager confirmed that though there is no automated way of issuing reminders, a follow up email is sent to all starters who have not submitted their form as a reminder to complete. A log of starter forms issued on 19th September 2022 show that they were followed up on 18th November 2022. An example email of the Pensions Liaison Officer reminding a member to submit their starter form was also provided. The Pensions Manager confirmed that due to auto-enrolment these forms do not affect the administration of the pension, but a reminder email is sent as a courtesy to employees.

 The pension fund liability is identified as a risk of material misstatement in Audit Wales detailed audit plan 2023 presented at the Finance, Audit, and Performance Committee (FAPM) on 24th July 2023. The Plan detailed work to be performed to review the valuation.


Other Findings

Review of the auditor's report in the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) audited Financial Statements for 2021/22 confirm that Audit Wales audited the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters' Pension Fund and found that the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the Pension Fund as at 31st March 2022, and are in compliance with relevant legislation.


The Auditor's Report for the Rhondda Cynon Taff Pension Fund in the audited Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 found that the Financial Statements give a true and fair view of the financial transactions of the pension fund during the year ended 31st March 2022, and of the amount and disposition at that date of its assets and liabilities; and are in compliance with relevant legislation.

 South Wales Fire and Rescue Service participates in two pension schemes: The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) for Firefighters and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for other employees which are administered by RCT. The latest iteration of the FPS pension scheme was introduced in April 2015 as part of the government's reform of public service pensions.

The latest signed Exemption Request form for re-procurement of the pensions administration contract dated 9th October 2019 was provided for review. The justification for exemption noted that the LGPS must be administered by a local authority and that it would increase SWFRS administrative costs to have two separate pension scheme administrators – one for LGPS and another for Fire. The only other local authority that can administer the LGPS and also has the experience in administering Firefighter Pensions Schemes is Carmarthenshire County Council. The geographical distances would introduce financial and logistical difficulties in maintaining a workable relationship. The extended contract date was 1st October 2020 for three years. The draft exemption request for the next extension and a copy of the updated SLA were also provided for review.


 The Service's Financial Procedure Rules are included in the Constitution which was presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority (FA) on 19th December 2022, and changes to the Constitution were approved by the FA on 27th March 2023.

The Financial Procedures rules state that the Director of Human Resources is responsible for keeping all necessary records concerning pensions, and that the Principal Officers are responsible for furnishing the Chief Fire Officer with all information required to arrange payment by relevant deadline dates for pensions.


 The Firefighters' Pension Scheme - Scheme Pays Procedures were provided for review. The document information on the procedures states they were last reviewed in October 2022 and are due for next review in the second quarter of 2025.


Other Findings

Scheme Pays is a mechanism that permits an individual to ask the Scheme Manager to pay any tax charge due in relation to an excess of pension savings above the His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) standard allowance limit. The procedures set out the qualifying criteria for Mandatory and Voluntary Scheme Pays.

 The Retirement and Resignation Procedures were provided for review. The document information on the procedures state that they were last reviewed on 27th April 2023 and are due for next review in the second quarter of 2024.

The procedures set out the approach that SWFRS takes to the retirement and resignation of its employees. Section 8 of the procedures addresses Pension Benefits and advises that employees may wish to contact the pensions team to discuss their pension benefit options in advance of completing their P53 Form (Claim a tax refund when you have taken a small pension lump sum form). Links are provided within the procedures for the LGPS scheme and the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. Pension options for each scheme are detailed within the procedures.


 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for setting up new starters' pensions, submitting a Starters and Leavers Report to the Pension administrators RCT, changing post, and opting out of the Pension scheme were provided for review.


 The Standard Operating Procedures for setting up new starters detail the steps to be followed by the Pensions Liaison Officer when new starters join the Service. New starters are input on the Core Personnel system used by the Employee Relations team in the first instance following successful recruitment and acceptance of a role. A personnel number is assigned to the new starter and all documentation is stored on the employee's record on the system. The pensions team is automatically notified via the Action Box on core when the Request for Contract is put into the box. The Pensions Liaison Officer adds a pension to the personnel record by following the SOPs for new starters. Once the correct record is created, a trial payslip is run to check that the contribution and pay matches the correct banding.

Pensions information provided to new starters includes links to the RCT website for LGPS members, and a Members Guide which is provided to new 2015 Scheme members. These were provided for review during the audit and confirmed that new employees are provided with complete and correct pension information.


A sample of ten starters was selected for testing, and testing was completed with no exceptions noted. Seven firefighter starters were agreed to Request for Contract forms and three support staff starters were agreed to Pension Starter Forms. In all cases the correct contribution rate was set by the Pensions Team for the salary provided by the payroll team, and the correct pension contribution was seen on their first payslip.

Other Findings


 Monthly reports are generated by following the Starters and Leavers Report to RCT SOPs. The report is sent to pensions@rctcbc.gov.uk monthly to notify them of all starters and leavers in the month. Reports submitted to RCT of all starters and leavers for the past twelve months were provided for review as evidence of compliance with procedure.

 The Pensions team are notified of leavers via an automated email from Core Personnel that the leavers pension contribution requires cancelling. Leavers are marked as dormant on the system and no further payments are made by payroll against that record. Leavers are reported to RCT on the monthly Starters and Leavers Report, and Termination Forms are also submitted to RCT for leavers. RCT send the pension pack directly to LGPS members and send the pension pack for the 2015 Scheme members to SWFRS who send it to the retiree.

A sample of ten leavers was selected for testing and with no exceptions noted. In all cases the leavers were agreed to Termination Notifications submitted to RCT, and review of the payroll system confirmed that their final payslip was in the month of their leave date. Due to the agreed pay award, some leavers had pensionable arrears payments in April 2023. A Pension Pack prepared by RCT to be sent to a member of the 2015 Scheme for one leaver was provided as an example.

 The Post Change SOPs detail the steps to follow to amend the pension page of an employee whose post has changed. A trial payroll is run to check the correct pension contribution has been applied, and checks are performed to ensure the pay matches the correct contribution banding. Paperwork is ticked as completed and initialled. There is no requirement to inform RCT of post changes, and these are reported when the annual summary schedule is submitted.

A post change report was provided by Payroll for the three months to September 2023 and a sample of ten changes was selected for testing with no exceptions noted. In all cases the change was appropriately processed by the Pensions team, and payslips following the month of change showed the correct contribution for the salary had been deducted.

 The SOPs for employees who have indicated they wish to opt out of the pension scheme details how to record that they have opted out on the Pension screen on the Core system, complete an Opt-Out Form, notify RCT Pensions, and log the employee on the Opt-Out Data log. Employees who opt out within three months are refunded all contributions paid up to the point of them opting out.

A sample of five employees was selected from the Opt-Out Data log and opt out forms were seen in all cases. In two cases the employees had opted out within three months, and refund information was provided to evidence they had been correctly issued with a contributions refund.

Other Findings



The Authority is required to produce annual returns to RCT for the LGPS Scheme and the 2015 Firefighter's Scheme. These report on all contributions on all schemes by employee. The report includes figures on member contributions for the year, pensionable payments for the year, overtime contributions and FTE equivalent data. Any changes to pension contributions due to post changes are reported with the new contribution rate and date of change. Additional information is included on top up pensions, occupational absences, arrears paid for prior year (as a result of strike action), retrospective adjustments for amendments (career breaks) and Employee (EES) and Employer (ERS) over or under payments.

The process for submission of the forms was discussed with the Pensions Liaison Officer. The data is taken from the Core Personnel software and reconciled with Finance data on payments made. The two Pensions Liaison Officers pull reports from the payroll system and these are put into the submission format by the Pensions Managers. Where there are reconcilable differences, these are researched and identified to individual staff members and individual pension scheme bands. This information is collated and analysed for all pension schemes. After submission, a period of consultation takes place between SWFRS and RCT to identify any variances and anomalies. Once RCT are satisfied that the submission is complete, they issue the annual statements to members.



The annual reports submitted to RCT for the 2015 Firefighters' schemes for 2022/23 and LGPS were provided for review during the audit:

- The Schedule Scheme Summary 2015 RDS submitted on 5th May 2023
- The Schedule Scheme Summary 2015 WDS submitted on 5th May 2023
- The Final Schedule Summary Statement Annual Submission LGPS submitted on 5th May 2023.

Review of the statements showed the schedule of contributions, reconciliation to payments made, additional entries, arrears, assumed pensionable pay for members on a period of reduced or nil pay, and any members with a period of authorised unpaid absence or strike. The submission spreadsheet also includes notes on reconciling any differences between the amount of contributions paid and the contributions schedule. There were no reconciliation differences for the 2015 Scheme, and a schedule of differences was listed in the appropriate tab for the LGPS Scheme. These included underpayments due to maternity or sickness, and three instances of employer's contributions underpaid in error totalling £213.82.



Monthly payments to pensioners are administered by RCT. Reports are provided to the Finance Team by RCT monthly, and the Accountancy Assistant maps the Pensions File based on the RCT Reports. The pension run payment is made from the Service bank account by RCT using the Bankers' Automated Clearing System software and cheques are issued by post. The payment runs are posted to the Net Pay control account by the Accountancy Assistant when they leave the bank account as part of the monthly bank reconciliation process. Control account reconciliations are

Other Findings

completed monthly by the Accountancy Assistant and both the Bank Reconciliations and Control Account Reconciliations and reviewed by the Management Accountant.

Reports from RCT for July, August, and September were provided for review, together with the corresponding control account reconciliations and bank statements. The reconciliations were agreed to the bank statements and reports from RCT with no exceptions noted. Reconciliations were performed in a timely manner with appropriate and timely review.



Pensions Contributions payments are made to the 2015 Scheme Fund and to the LGPS Scheme monthly based on reports run from the Payroll System. The Accountancy Assistant creates the journal based on the payroll file extracts, and these are posted by the Accountancy Technician. The LGPS contributions are paid by BACS to RCT monthly in arrears. The Control Account Reconciliation is performed by the Accountancy Assistant by matching the payroll journal entry against the payment made to RCT with any variances sent to Payroll and Pensions to investigate.

Payroll file extracts for July - September 2023 were provided for the 2015 Scheme and LGPS Scheme and agreed to the Control Account Reconciliation. Payments made for July and August were agreed to the bank statement, the September return was due at the time of the audit.



Delivery Risk:

Failure to deliver the service in an effective manner which meets the requirements of the organisation.

Ref	Expected Key Risk Mitigation	Effectiveness of arrangements	Cross Reference to MAP	Cross Reference to OEM
PM	Performance Monitoring There are agreed KPIs for the process which align with the business plan requirements and are independently monitored, with corrective action taken in a timely manner.	In place	-	-
S	Sustainability The impact on the organisation's sustainability agenda has been considered.	In place	-	-
R	Resilience Good practice to respond to business interruption events and to enhance the economic, effective and efficient delivery is adopted.	In place	-	-

Other Findings



The Local Pension Board meets three times a year and is made up of Local Councillors, a representative from the Association of Principal Fire Officers, Fire Brigades' Union, and Fire and Rescue Services Association. Minutes from the meetings held on 17th October 2022, 1st January 2023, and 3rd July 2023 were reviewed and show discussion of:


- A Report reviewing "Scheme Pays" arrangements.
- A review of Key Performance Indicators and scheme data for the Firefighters pension scheme.
- An Update Report on Publication of Annual Benefits Statement.
- The Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures; McCloud Tapering.

Other Findings

- New Member Training Session: members handbook, terms of reference, and toolkit.
- Firefighter Pensions – Remedying Age Discrimination.
- Update Reports from the Scheme Advisory Board; and the Pensions Regulator Returns.


All minutes show Publications, Updates, and Information as a Standard Item, and also include the forward work programme for the local pension board. Papers include full reports mentioned in the minutes which are provided to the Board Members for review prior to the meetings.

The latest report from RCT on the Key Performance Indicators was presented at the meeting held on 3rd July 2023 in compliance with the Service Level Agreement between SWFRS and RCT. The report also includes an update on key administrative activity, and minutes evidence that the report was received and noted by the Local Pensions Board. Key activities to note were working closely with the SWFRS Pensions Team on the McCloud project, 2023 Annual Benefits Statements issued to statutory deadline and the 2023 Pensions Regulator Scheme Return deadline will be notified in October 2023.

 The Local Pension Board is not a decision-making body, and any decisions relating to pensions are submitted to the Human Resources (HR) and Equalities Committee. Review of the HR and Equalities Committee minutes show that a standing item on the agenda is the circulation of the Welsh Government's Firefighters' Pension Scheme Circulars and emails, and the Committee accepts the circulars and notes the actions that have been implemented for each circular.

The papers from the meeting held on 11th September 2023 show the latest log of Welsh Government Circulars regarding the Firefighters' Pension Scheme in Appendix 1. The log includes a summary of the circular and notes the actions taken in response. Circulars are also shared with the Senior Management Team, the Statistics and Performance Team, and RCT where relevant.

 Pension costs are reported to FAPM Committee as part of revenue monitoring, for example the increase in pension contribution costs payable following the agreed pay award was reported at the meeting on 24th July 2023. Risk Management is also reviewed by FAPM Committee which includes monitoring of mitigations against Strategic Risk 205 - Pensions Change Impact.

 Minutes to the Local Pension Board are presented to the FA as evidenced in their minutes and papers. The FA discusses pensions when significant risks arise, for example relating to remedying age discrimination and the McCloud case. An update on this was provided to the FA at the meeting held on 25th September 2023 noting continued support to category 1 cases and processing of cases; and that the regulations regarding remedying age discrimination will be implemented in October 2023.

Other Findings

The Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Update presented to the FA in September 2023 also notes the difficulty in assessing the impact of these cases on the Fire Authority due to the complexity involved and the time taken to frame new legislation. New legislation anticipated in October 2023 is expected to bring clarity to the situation though the matter is compounded by a second buy back exercise for on-call firefighters and an ongoing pension scheme valuation which is attempting to assess the impact of the resolution of these cases. As noted, the Risk Management Audit conducted in December 2022 and review of the control tasks related to this risk on BMIS performed during the current audit confirm that effective risk management processes are in place in relation to the Pensions Change Impact Risk.



Training for Members of the Fire Authority on the Service's Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures (IDRP) for Firefighter Pensions disputes is scheduled to be delivered by the Pensions Managers and was announced at the FA meeting held on 25th September 2023. A date is due to be set once sufficient names had been received, and the training will help members in their role if they are required to sit on an IDRP panel.

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION

Appendix A

Scope and Limitations of the Review

1. The definition of the type of review, the limitations and the responsibilities of management in regard to this review are set out in the Annual Plan. As set out in the Audit Charter, substantive testing is only carried out where this has been agreed with management and unless explicitly shown in the scope no such work has been performed.

Disclaimer

2. The matters raised in this report are only those that came to the attention of the auditor during the course of the review, and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all the improvements that might be made. This report has been prepared solely for management's use and must not be recited or referred to in whole or in part to third parties without our prior written consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any other purpose. TIAA neither owes nor accepts any duty of care to any other party who may receive this report and specifically disclaims any liability for loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature, which is caused by their reliance on our report.

Effectiveness of arrangements

3. The definitions of the effectiveness of arrangements are set out below. These are based solely upon the audit work performed, assume business as usual, and do not necessarily cover management override or exceptional circumstances.

In place	The control arrangements in place mitigate the risk from arising.
Partially in place	The control arrangements in place only partially mitigate the risk from arising.
Not in place	The control arrangements in place do not effectively mitigate the risk from arising.

Assurance Assessment

4. The definitions of the assurance assessments are:

Substantial Assurance	There is a robust system of internal controls operating effectively to ensure that risks are managed and process objectives achieved.
Reasonable Assurance	The system of internal controls is generally adequate and operating effectively but some improvements are required to ensure that risks are managed and process objectives achieved.

Limited Assurance	The system of internal controls is generally inadequate or not operating effectively and significant improvements are required to ensure that risks are managed and process objectives achieved.
No Assurance	There is a fundamental breakdown or absence of core internal controls requiring immediate action.

Acknowledgement

- We would like to thank staff for their co-operation and assistance during the course of our work.

Release of Report

- The table below sets out the history of this report.

Stage	Issued	Response Received
Audit Planning Memorandum:	30 th May 2023	30 th May 2023
Draft Report:	25 th October 2023	30 th October 2023
Final Report:	6 th November 2023	

AUDIT PLANNING MEMORANDUM

Appendix B

Client:	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service		
Review:	Pensions		
Type of Review:	Assurance	Audit Lead:	Principal Auditor

Outline scope (per Annual Plan):	The review will consider the arrangements for the management and control of the administration of pensions.		
Detailed scope will consider:	<p>Directed</p> <p>Governance Framework: There is a documented process instruction which accords with the relevant regulatory guidance, Financial Instructions and Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>Risk Mitigation: The documented process aligns with the mitigating arrangements set out in the corporate risk register.</p> <p>Compliance: Compliance with statutory, regulatory and policy requirements is demonstrated, with action taken in cases of identified non-compliance.</p>	<p>Delivery</p> <p>Performance monitoring: There are agreed KPIs for the process which align with the business plan requirements and are independently monitored, with corrective action taken in a timely manner.</p> <p>Sustainability: The impact on the organisation's sustainability agenda has been considered.</p> <p>Resilience: Good practice to respond to business interruption events and to enhance the economic, effective and efficient delivery is adopted.</p>	
Requested additions to scope:	None		
Exclusions from scope:	As above		

Planned Start Date:	2nd October 2023	Exit Meeting Date:	10/10/2023	Exit Meeting to be held with:	Pensions Manager and Pensions Liaison Officer
----------------------------	------------------	---------------------------	------------	--------------------------------------	---

SELF ASSESSMENT RESPONSE

Matters over the previous 12 months relating to activity to be reviewed	Y/N (if Y then please provide brief details separately)
Has there been any reduction in the effectiveness of the internal controls due to staff absences through sickness and/or vacancies etc?	N
Have there been any breakdowns in the internal controls resulting in disciplinary action or similar?	N
Have there been any significant changes to the process?	N
Are there any particular matters/periods of time you would like the review to consider?	N

**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR
LOCAL PENSION BOARD 2023/24**

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
3 July 2023	TPR Public Service Governance and Administration Survey 2023	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Kim Jeal	Presented
3 July 2023	New Members Training Session – Members Handbook, Terms of Reference & Toolkit	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Kim Jeal	Presented
3 July 2023	To review Key Performance Indicators and Scheme Data for Firefighters Pensions Scheme	To update Members	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Ian Traylor, RCT Pensions Officers	Presented
3 July 2023	Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures – Update on cases over last 12 months	To update Members	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	Presented

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
3 July 2023	Standard Item – Recent publications, updates, information	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	Presented
3 July 2023	Update on current National exercises: McCloud and O'Brien	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	Presented
3 July 2023	Update on Pension Consultations	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	Presented
16 Oct 2023	Update report on Publication of Annual Benefits Statement	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Ian Traylor, RCT Pensions Officer	Presented

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
16 Oct 2023	To review Key Performance Indicators and Scheme Data for Firefighters Pensions Scheme	To update Members	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Ian Traylor, RCT Pensions Officer	Presented
16 Oct 2023	Standard Item – Recent publications, updates, information	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	Presented
16 Oct 2023	Update on current national exercises: McCloud and O'Brien	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	Presented
16 Oct 2023	Verbal update report from Scheme Advisory Board	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	Presented
16 Oct 2023	Update on Pension Consultations	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	Presented

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
16 Oct 2023	Training Session for Members	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Kim Jeal	Presented
22 Jan 2024	Local Pension Board Risk Register	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
22 Jan 2024	To review Key Performance Indicators and Scheme Data for Firefighters Pension Schemes	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Ian Traylor, RCT Pension Officer	
22 Jan 2024	Verbal update report from Scheme Advisory Board	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
22 Jan 2024	Update on current National exercises: McCloud and O'Brien	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
22 Jan 2024	Standard Item – Recent publications, updates, information	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
22 Jan 2024	The Pension Regulator Returns 2021-2022	To update Members and for awareness and discussion	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Kim Jeal	
22 Jan 2024	Training Session for Members	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Kim Jeal	
22 Jan 2024	Local Pension Board Risk Register	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
22 Jan 2024	Update on Internal Audit Report ‘Pensions’	To update Members	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Kim Jeal	

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

AGENDA ITEM NO 13

**To consider any items of business that the Chairperson deems urgent
(Part 1 or 2)**

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	Members of the Fire & Rescue Authority are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare both orally and in writing any personal and/or prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Fire & Rescue Authority's Standing Orders and the Members Code of Conduct.	
3.	Chairperson's Announcements	
4.	To receive the minutes of:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Pension Board Committee held on 3 July 2023 • Local Pension Board Committee held on 16 October 2023 	<p style="text-align: right;">5</p> <p style="text-align: right;">11</p>
	REPORT FOR DECISION	
5a.	Review of Key Performance Indicators	15
5b.	Review of Key Performance Indicators	27
	REPORTS FOR INFORMATION	
6.	Local Pension Board Risk Register	39
7.	Verbal update report from Scheme Advisory Board	47
8.	Firefighter Pensions - Update on current National Exercises: McCloud and O'Brien	49
9.	Publications, Updates, Information (Standard Item)	59
10.	The Pensions Regulator Returns	131

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

11.	Internal Audit Report - Pensions	173
12.	Forward Work Programme for Local Pension Board Committee 2023/2024	195
13.	To consider any items of business that the Chairperson deems urgent	201