

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

LOCAL PENSIONS BOARD

DATE OF MEETING	06 December 2023
SUBJECT OF REPORT	SCHEME MANAGER UPDATE
REPORT AUTHOR	HR Rewards & Benefits Manager
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>This report provides a summary of current pension matters both nationally and locally which have required input from the Service. This report should also be considered in conjunction with the regular monthly Bulletins which are issued by the Firefighters' Pensions Scheme Advisory Board.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This is the update report from the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority (the Authority) delegated Scheme Manager for the Authority's Local Pension Board (the Board). The Scheme Manager is defined as being the Fire and Rescue Authority under The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014. However, the Scheme Manager may delegate any functions under these Regulations. The Authority has set out in the Discretions Policy where decisions will need to be taken by the Authority. The day-to-day managing and administering of the pension schemes and any statutory scheme connected with them, is delegated to the HR Rewards & Benefits Manager.
- 1.2. The Board provides a number of functions as set out in the Terms of Reference, which include:
- assisting the Scheme Manager to ensure compliance with the relevant regulations and the efficient and effective management of the pension administration;
 - advising on member communications; and
 - monitoring complaints.
- 1.3. This report provides a summary of current pension matters both nationally and locally and further updates will be provided at subsequent Board meetings.

2. GOVERNANCE & STRATEGY

- 2.1. Please refer to separate agenda item regarding Board membership including the appointment of a new LPB Chair.

3. PENSION PROJECTS

2015 Age Discrimination Remedy (Sargeant)

- 3.1. Since the last Board meeting, the Secondary legislation has come into force and all retiring members are being provided with 'Legacy' and 'Reformed' scheme options for the remedy period. The Government Actuary's Department have created a calculator for FRAs to use in order that the correct amount of contributions are adjusted, (either as a refund or underpayment) and the amount of PAYE and interest is also calculated and applied to the process based on which option the member chooses. All data for 'Category Two' members has been sent across to WYPF for recalculating prior to October, but we understand that the order for processing these cases has now changed so our communications will need to be amended accordingly.

Second Options Exercise (Matthews)

- 3.2. The letters for all those who are eligible are being produced and sent in batches (Nov/Dec 2023). This communication includes an expressions of interest form which invites recipients to either request figures or opt out of the exercise. There is a six-month timeframe for individuals to return their expression of interest forms and then a 3-month timeframe for the FRA to action these requests. The FPS Members site now has a dedicated page relating to the Second Options exercise, including FAQs and further guidance: [The second options exercise | Firefighters' Pension Scheme \(fpsmember.org\)](https://www.fpsmember.org)
- 3.3. We are continuing to work with our Communications Team to develop a suitable page on the Service's external website, in order that updates can be published and shared with those who are eligible for the Second Options exercise but no longer DSFRS employees.
- 3.4. Additional resource is currently being recruited for on a fixed term basis to support delivery of the above activities.

4. REPORTING BREACHES OF LAW

- 4.1. Within the Board's Reporting Breaches Procedure, Section 70 of the Pensions Act 2004 (the Act) is referenced. This requires that, where a person has reasonable cause to believe that:
- (a) a duty which is relevant to the administration of the scheme in question, and is imposed by virtue of an enactment or rule of law, has not been or is not being complied with; and
 - (b) the failure to comply is likely to be of material significance to the Regulator in the exercise of any of its functions then they must give a written report on the matter to the Regulator as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- 4.2. There have been no breaches reported since the last Local Pension Board meeting.

5. INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- 5.1. Within the Firefighters' Pension Scheme formal complaints are made via the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP). There have been no new complaints under this procedure from FPS members since the last Local Pension Board meeting.

6. PENSION ADMINISTRATOR QUALITY OF SERVICE

6.1. Data submissions are summarised as follows:

(a) Submission of monthly pension reporting to WYPF by the last day of the month:

The WYPF submission deadline for month end data was brought forward in 2023 from the **last day** to the **19th day** of the subsequent month. In some cases, this was not possible, as other pensions data has had to be prioritised with limited resource available. To note that the People Services project is currently underway, and this will change how the reporting is carried out. It is anticipated that there may be some challenges to navigate in the coming weeks, but we are keeping our Relationship Manager at WYPF updated where there is an expected delay to producing these returns.

Nov -22	Dec -22	Jan -23	Feb -23	Mar -23	Apr -23	Ma y- 23	Jun -23	Jul- 23	Au g- 23	Sep -23	Oct -23
20- Dec -22	19- Jan -23	13- Feb -23	08- Mar -23	15- Ma y- 23	19- Ma y- 23	24- Ma y- 23	14- Jul- 23	16- Au g- 23	21- Sep -23	22- Oct -23	23- Nov -23

(b) Notifications of normal retirement and timeframes for submission

Since the last Board meeting, the way that FPS retirements are processed has fundamentally changed. Previously, the Pay and Conditions team would process retirement notifications via the WYPF employer portal as part of the overall leaver process, and the target was to do this within 5 days of the employee submission.

Currently every FPS retirement needs to be submitted with a detailed spreadsheet of pensionable pay data for the full 7-year remedy period and as such, the previous 5-day timeframe is not a realistic target for this process. Suggested SLAs going forward are:

- i. Pensionable pay data is submitted to WYPF at least 6 weeks prior to the retirement date
- ii. Retirement pack with contributions mandate is issued to member within 5 working days of receipt from WYPF.

7. DSFRS RESOURCE UPDATE

- 7.1. To advise that our Pensions Officer, Mareena Anderson-Thorne, has been successfully appointed to the role of Culture and Service Transformation Manager. Her hard work in the Pensions Role is greatly appreciated and we are currently recruiting to replace this position.

ZOE SMYTH
HR Rewards & Benefits Manager