



Minutes

Local Pension Board

Date: 04 August 2023

Time: 12 noon

Venue: FSHQ

Present: Ian Dunkley, (chair), Ryan Binks, (Scheme Member representatives), Cllr Fozia Shaheen and Cllr Mike Pollard (Scheme Manager representatives).

In Attendance: James Clarkson, Technical Advisor

Apologies: Jim Davies and John Roberts

1 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair 2023 – 24

RESOLVED

- a) That Ian Dunkley Scheme Member representative, be appointed Chair of the Local Pension Board for the 2023 – 24 year; and
- b) That John Roberts, Scheme Manager representative, be appointed Vice chair of the Local Pension Board for the 2023 – 24 year.

2 Membership of the Local Pension Board 2023 – 24

Scheme Member representatives

- Ryan Binks
- Ian Dunkley
- James Davies (FBU)

Scheme Manager representatives

- Councillor Mike Pollard
- Councillor Fozia Shaheen
- John Roberts

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

3 Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

4 Admission of the public

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the public and press.

5 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter under consideration at the meeting.

6 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 January 2023

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

7 Terms of Reference – Annual Review

Consideration was given to a report of the Monitoring Officer to review the Terms of Reference for the Local Pension Board which had been adopted by the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

Members were informed that this was a complex issue but there was a wealth of information online to assist them in obtaining thorough understanding.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

8 Local Pension Board Annual Report 2022 – 23

Members considered a report of the Monitoring Officer which gave details of the activity of the previous year.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and submitted to the next meeting of the Fire Authority's Human Resources Committee on 6 October 2023 for ratification.

9 Local Pension Board Activity report

Members considered a report submitted by the Chief Employment Services Officer concerning performance in key areas for the period 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023.

Members sought information regarding if there was a formal process to talk to members regarding them opting out of the scheme, and were informed that employees needed to find the forms themselves and could not be given these by HR.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

10 Scrutiny and Review

The Chief Employment Services Officer submitted information on the following areas for scrutiny and review:

- **Discretions** – one discretion has been exercised by the Scheme Manager during the relevant period.
- **Pensions Breaches register** – For the period from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023 one breach has been identified.
- **Pensions Risk register** – attached at appendix B to the report.
- **Compliance deadlines** – the deadlines were set out for year end, ABS, Pension Saving Statement and TPR Survey. Full details attached at appendix B to the report. 99.5% of annual benefit statements have been issued so far.

Members referred to the governance survey and sought information regarding the “Never” response to the question on frequency of evaluation of knowledge, understand and skills of the board. They were informed that the response was based on a year over which training had not taken place, but steps were being taken to rectify this for this financial year.

Members noted that it was stated there was no formal administration strategy and were informed this was something about which the WYFRS were aware and needed to be formalised. Assurance needed to be given that policies and procedures were in place to cover all eventualities.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted. The Pensions Breach (caused by a payroll error) was approved.

11 Pension Ombudsman – update

Members received a report of the Chief Employment Services Officer which confirmed that there have not been any ombudsman decisions relating to the Firefighters Pension Scheme.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12 Legislative update

The Chief Employment Services Officer submitted a report which provided an update regarding the following legislation:

- Age Discrimination Remedy
- Age Discrimination Remedy – Tax Regulations
- Age Discrimination Remedy – Tax Regulations No. 2
- Retained Firefighter Pensions
- SCAPE Discount Rate
- Pensions Dashboards (useful can see overview of benefits)
- Judgment on Cost Cap Mechanism
- Other updates including changes introduced following the budget.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

13 Minutes of the Scheme Advisory Board meetings held on 8 September 2022, 23 January 2023 and 23 March 2023

Members sought clarification over whether the number of members retiring were restricted rather than unrestricted lump sums and were informed that the number referred to those retiring with 25 years' service rather than 30. Members were informed that there are currently no plans to lift the cap on pension commutation in England and that the SAB is awaiting further data before concluding whether this has influenced retirement numbers in Scotland.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Scheme Advisory Board at meetings held on 8 September 2022, 23 January 2023 and 23 March 2023 be noted.

14 West Yorkshire Pension Fund – key performance indicators

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Employment Services Officer which advised of West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) performance in key areas for the year to date.

RESOLVED

Members were informed that the target date was 10 days to write to next of kin following a death after receiving notification. WYPF informed WYFRS that the breach of KPIs was down to prioritising urgent work on the pensioner services team. It was explained to members that this is the stage where the team are waiting for further information from the deceased's family and there were likely delays in sending follow-up communications where this information had not been received, causing the breach.

That the report be noted

15 Firefighter Pension Scheme bulletins 65 – 70

Consideration was given to the content of bulletins 65 – 70.

[FPS Bulletin 65 – January 2023](#) contained the following actions:

FRAs to identify affected members of the pension scheme who may need to be sent for an ill-health reassessment and arrange for the appropriate member consent letter to be sent to them – in progress.

FRAs to provide a valid purchase order number, stating the number of employees eligible to join one of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes as of 1 April 2022, using the form provided with the SAB 2022-23 levy letter - complete.

[FPS Bulletin 66 – February 2023](#) contained the following actions:

Data collection for the 2015 remedy: FRAs to ensure that the data collection template is completed and sent to administrators so that administrators and FRAs are prepared for the implementation of remedy from 1 October 2023 – complete.

Pension scheme migration: Migrate to the Managing Pension Schemes service as soon as possible - complete.

The Bereavement benefits remedial order 2022: FRAs and administrators to share this information in communications with pensioners - complete.

[FPS Bulletin 67 – March 2023](#) contained the following actions which have all been completed:

Consultation on the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Remediable Service) Regulations 2023: All interested parties are encouraged to respond to the consultation by the deadline of 23 May 2023.

Top up grant 2023 – Collection of pensions accounting data: FRAs to start preparing their pensions income/expenditure data in order to submit their returns by the Home Office deadline.

Spring budget 2023: FRAs and administrators to share this information with the relevant parties within their organisation.

DWP announces delays to dashboard connection deadlines: FRAs and administrators to make sure that relevant parties within their organisation are aware of the announcement and TPR's actions.

[FPS Bulletin 68 – April 2023](#) contained the following actions, which have all been completed:

Consultation on the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Remediable Service) Regulations 2023: All interested parties are encouraged to respond to the consultation by the deadline of 23 May 2023.

Consultation on Retained Firefighters' Pensions: Proposed changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) 2006: All interested parties are encouraged to respond to the consultation by the deadline of 9 June 2023.

SCAPE Discount Rate Methodology Consultation Response: The CETV technical note was suspended on 30 March 2023. All CETV's, Pensioner cash equivalents and non-club transfers-in should be suspended until the revised technical note is published.

Fire England – Commutation on retirement factors and guidance updated: The new factors are effective from 3 April 2023. Please ensure that you are using the revised factors for any retirements after this date.

Secondary Contracts – FRAs may wish to review their contracts to ensure that a secondary contract has been awarded correctly.

A Matthews poster has been published under the Second options exercise –Resources on the Special members of FPS 2006 page: FRA's will need to personalise the poster and publicise the second options exercise at their fire authority and fire stations.

Bluelight Inbox Technical Queries - As covered in Bulletin 58 – June 2022, please can we remind you to complete the query form for all technical queries that are sent to the Bluelight inbox.

Generic text for estimate/retirement letters: FRAs to consider including within their estimates and/or retirement letters to members.

Request for contact details: FRAs and administrators are reminded to include a request to members to keep them updated of any change of contact details in correspondence which is issued to them.

Annual Allowance – Impact of the backdated pay award: FRA's and administrators to consider the factsheet when determining their calculations for Annual Allowance where a backdated pay award has occurred.

[FPS Bulletin 69 – May 2023](#) contained the following actions:

Consultation on the Firefighters' Pension Schemes (Remediable Service) Regulations 2023: FRAs and administrators should familiarise themselves with the response, ahead of the Home Office's response to the consultation - complete.

The Pension Regulator data requirements – 2023 scheme return: FRAs and administrators to review the data scoring guidance for 2023 ahead of the scheme return.

Ill health re-assessment IQMP template referral letters available: FRAs should send these and the relevant accompanying documentation to the IQMP using the relevant IQMP template referral letter.

Government Actuaries Department (GAD) - updated factors: FRAs and Administrators to ensure that they are using the correct factors - complete.

Data Conference Slides: FRAs to view the slides and consider data more strategically now and in the future – complete.

Age Discrimination remedy – data sharing: Administrators to share pensionable data for members who are subject to age discrimination remedy and have had an inter-brigade transfer during the remedy period with the current FRA's administrator on request. To review your privacy notice and add some additional wording, where relevant. Any amendments should be approved as per your internal processes – complete.

Automatic enrolment – Call for evidence: FRAs to be aware of this call for evidence - complete.

The Public Service Pension Schemes (Rectification of Unlawful Discrimination) (Tax) (No. 2) Regulations 2023: Interested parties to review the consultation and establish whether you wish to respond to the consultation by 19 June 2023. Also, consider whether you wish to be part of the round table sessions - complete.

SAB response to the Consultation on the Firefighters' Pension Schemes (Remediable Service) Regulations 2023: FRAs and administrators should familiarise themselves with the response, ahead of the Home Office's response to the consultation - complete.

SAB Guidance Note on Pensionable Pay Remedies: FRAs to refer to the pensionable pay note when dealing with cases where elements of pay need retrospectively adjusting - complete.

HMRC Remedy Newsletter: Administrators and FRAs to consider whether you wish to volunteer to assist HMRC - complete.

[FPS Bulletin 70 – June 2023](#) contained the following actions:

Consultation on the retained Firefighters' Pensions: Proposed changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) 2006: FRAs and administrators to familiarise themselves with the LGA's response, for information ahead of the Home Office's response to the consultation - complete.

Consultation on The Public Service Pension Schemes (Rectification of Unlawful Discrimination) (Tax) (No.2) Regulations 2023: FRAs and administrators to familiarise themselves with the LGA's response, for information ahead of the HMRC's response to the consultation - complete.

Data Collection for 2015 remedy: FRAs to ensure that the data collection template is completed and sent to administrators by their set deadlines, so that they are prepared for the implementation of remedy from 1 October 2023 - complete.

Firefighters Pay Scales: FRAs to make themselves familiar with the pay scales available ahead of the Special members FPS 2006 (Matthews) remedy exercise to commence in October 2023 - complete.

Home Office collection of FPS forecasts for 2023-24 to 2028-29: FRAs should start preparing to collate the necessary information (which is similar to that provided last year) from your records so that FRAs are well prepared, bearing in mind that some staff will be on summer leave - complete.

Consultation on the retained Firefighters' Pensions: Proposed changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) 2006: FRAs and administrators to familiarise themselves with the SAB's response, for information ahead of the Home Office's response to the consultation - complete.

Consultation on The Public Service Pension Schemes (Rectification of Unlawful Discrimination) (Tax) (No.2) Regulations 2023: FRAs and administrators to familiarise themselves with the SAB's response, for information ahead of the HMRC's response to the consultation - complete.

Added Years Factsheet: FRAs and Administrators to ensure they are using the updated version on their websites – complete.

Government Actuary's Department (GAD): Data Projects and Long-Term Strategy: FRAs are advised to read GAD's write up of the event and their broader focus on data - complete.

Remedy readiness self-assessment tool: Scheme managers to complete the self-assessment tool and report back to their senior teams and local pensions boards – in progress.

Data Conference Q and As: Pension Dashboards: FRAs and administrators may wish to review the Q and As for information - complete.

Remedy member examples by GAD: FRAs and administrators should read these with reference to slide 15 from the coffee morning of 26 January 2023 - complete.

RESOLVED

That the content of bulletins 65 - 70 be noted.

Chair