



Minutes – Scottish Firefighters’ Pension Board – 19 February 2019 (meeting No. 16)

Attendees:

William Littleboy (WL)	Chair
Catherine Skinner (CS)	Vice Chair
Alan Duncan (AD)	Board Member
Stephen Wright (SW)	Board Member
Brian Cameron (BC)	Board Member
Carole Johnston (CJ)	SPPA Interim Head of Customer Services
Gerry McGarry (GMcG)	SPPA Assistant Head of Customer Services
Donald Forbes (DF)	SPPA Senior Customer Services Manager
Molly Wyllie (MW)	SPPA Governance - minutes

Apologies:

Denise Christie	Board Member
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1. Welcome and introductions (including declaration of conflict of interest and board changes)

WL welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1a. No declarations of conflict of interest was made.

1b. WL advised that Iain Bushell had recently resigned from the board. AD advised that David McGowan, Chief Fire Officer would be nominated to fill the vacancy. There is also a member representative vacancy to be filled. It was agreed that confirmation of who should be nominated would be provided by SPPA.

AP1	SPPA to confirm nomination required to fill member representative vacancy
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2a. Draft minutes and action points from previous meeting

Draft minutes from the meeting on 4 December 2018 were adopted without change.

2b. Outstanding Actions

The board discussed the outstanding actions and the following updates noted:

- F12.04 - CJ advised that SPPA were recruiting for a Communications Manager who would take this forward. WL raised concern that a communications audit had taken place, but the board had not been advised of the outcome. WL asked if a progress update could be provided to the board as soon as possible.
Action remains open

- F14.03 – **action carried forward**
- F15.01 – GMcG advised that he had discussed this with the Project team and confirmed the fact that it will be possible to add a survey hyperlink to electronic Annual Benefit Statements, however it was agreed that the action should remain open until the next board when progress on the Member Self Service portal would be known. This would inform how the link to the survey would be delivered. **Action remains open**
- F15.03 - MW advised that training and development would be taken forward by the new Head of Governance. Following discussion it was agreed that the following actions be noted:

AP2	SPPA to re-issue Knowledge Matrix to board members
AP3	SPPA to provide refresher of Fire Service Schemes to board members

3. SPPA Update

Customer Contact Team (CCT)

CJ advised that NHS had now moved the CCT and good progress was being made. Firefighters and Police scheme enquiries would move in phase 4. A date for phase 4 had yet to be agreed, but it was hoped that this would take place early in the next financial year.

Single Survey

CJ advised that a Single Event Survey was issued by email on 22 November 2018 to a group of 547 members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. These members had received either an Annual Benefit Statement or a Pension Savings Statement. Feedback received would be reviewed for improvements, which would be implemented across schemes.

Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP)

GMcG advised that HMRC had now confirmed that the cut-off date for responses would be in April 2019. The status of reconciliation at mid-January 2019 was 85% complete. GMcG confirmed that rectification of pensions was now being tested and that ITM's calculation process had so far proved to be accurate. More information would be available at the next board meeting. WL asked what would happen in cases that could not be reconciled and would any shortfall impact on SPPA. GMcG advised that it was foreseen that any overpayments would be written off by SPPA, but that underpayments would be paid to members. CS asked if communications had been considered. GMcG stated that required communications will be determined at the point that the full impact upon members is confirmed. SPPA will consider providing a full impact analysis for the next meeting.

AP4	SPPA to consider providing an assessment when the full impact on members is confirmed
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Stakeholder Engagement

CJ advised that positive feedback had been received from the training session provided by SPPA to new recruits on 29 January 2019. DF advised that it was intended that more events would be delivered and extended to include pre-retirement.

AD confirmed that the event had been welcomed by staff. Following discussion, it was agreed that SFRS would provide predicted leavers profiles, to SPPA, to assist with arrangements for future pre-retirement events.

AP5 SFRS to provide predicted leavers profile for SPPA

BC asked if it was known from the new recruits, how many of them had remained in the scheme. DF advised that this information would not be available until starter details had been received.

Web Refresh

CJ advised that the go live date for the new website would be 10 June 2019. Testing was due to commence 25 February 2019. Material for the website is now being reviewed by copywriters and sense checked by staff, employers and members.

Overpayments

CJ advised that two overpayments noted were due to dependants payments made after education had ended.

4. Firefighters' Dashboard

CJ noted that two areas on the dashboard had not met their target. New payment accuracy had been caused by a number of manual cases being built on the system. This had resulted in two errors. DF advised that Transfer In actual had been the result of awaiting new factors from Government Actuary's Department.

5. SPPA Altair Project Update

CJ advised that a further improvement release had been uploaded to the current system on 15 February 2019. CS asked why SPPA were late in identifying server issues. GMcG advised that initial scoping of risk had not identified an issue, however subsequently an issue had been identified by IT colleagues in Scottish Government. This has now been acted upon.

WL raised concern that claims made within the report had not been realised. CS asked if the Health Check noted in the report would provide a 'stop/go' decision. GMcG stated that recommendations made with Health Check undertaken recently had now been implemented. A Project Board was due to take place on 20 February 2019, which would discuss any outstanding issues. GMcG confirmed that the current system already had the benefit of some of the proposed improvements and that the Payroll, which is already imbedded, would not be impacted.

6. Risk Register

GMcG confirmed that the Scheme Risk Register is regularly reviewed and updated by SPPA's Risk Governance Group. All changes were noted in red for reference. WL noted that there had been no movement in risks recorded. GMcG advised that there was now a column on the register, which highlights any movement.

7. Training Plan

CS commented that the current training plan was more of a historical record and that this should be reviewed. MW advised that a review of training across all pension boards would be undertaken, but at present resources within the support team were limited. This would be picked up when the new Head of Governance was in post. WL also noted that training would be discussed as part of the appraisal process with board members.

AP6 SPPA to review and update the training plan for the pension board
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8. Any Other Competent Business

8.1 BC asked if the impact of the age discrimination case had been considered by SPPA. GMcG advised that the potential impact on both members and SPPA had been discussed, but it was not possible to make a full assessment of likelihoods at this stage.

8.2 AD advised that Terms and Conditions for Retained Firefighters were being harmonised.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

CS asked if an alternative date could be provided for the May meeting.

AP7 SPPA to provided alternative date for May board meeting
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MW advised that a schedule of proposed dates for 2020 was now available and would be circulated to the board.

AP8 SPPA to circulate proposed pension board meeting dates for 2020
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