



Minutes – Scottish Firefighters' Pension Board – 12 February 2020, Hamilton (no 20)

Attendees:

William Littleboy (WL)	Chair
Catherine Skinner (CS)	Vice Chair
Alan Duncan (AD)	Board Member
Stephen Wright (SW)	Board Member
Alexander Miller (AM)	Board Member
Denise Christie (DC)	Board Member
Brian Cameron (BC)	Board Member
Ross Haggart (RH)	Observer
Dev Dey (DD)	SPPA Head of Customer Services
Gerry McGarry (GMcG)	SPPA Senior Customer Service Manager
Stuart MacArthur (SMacA)	SPPA Governance Manager
Donald Forbes (DF)	SPPA Customer Service Team Leader
Molly Wyllie	SPPA Governance - minutes

Apologies:

David McGown	Board Member
--------------	--------------

1. Welcome and introductions (including declaration of conflict of interest)

1.1 WL welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced RH who was attending as an observer but would be nominated to replace David McGown who had resigned.

1.2 No conflicts of interest noted.

2a. Draft minutes from previous meeting

The minutes from the meeting of 19 November 2019 were adopted without amendment.

2b. Actions outstanding

The outstanding actions were reviewed and the following noted:

F15.03 4/12/18 – Governance update paper provided - action closed

F16.06 19/2/19 – Governance update paper provided - action closed

F18.03 20/8/19 – draft letter provided in October 2019 - action closed

F18.06 20/8/19 – will become part of future wider member communications – action closed

F19.01 19/11/19 – action remains open.

Closed action F16.03 of 19/2/19 – presentation slides be circulated to Board members.

AP1	SPPA to circulate the slides used in the Fire Service Schemes refresher training provided on 19 November 2019
-----	---

3. SPPA Update

I-Connect

GMcG explained that I-Connect system testing was underway. Live submissions via the portal were planned for March 2020. Validations within the system would improve data quality. CS asked what contingency measures would be available and if this would lead to a delay in the provision of annual benefit statements. GMcG confirmed that the contingency would be to return to the current system and that this would not impact on the provision of statements.

Member Self Service (MSS)

GMcG advised that the up-take for members signing in to MSS had been small. Discussion followed and it was agreed that information provided for new officers would be updated to include details for MSS.

AP2	SPPA and SFRS to update information for new officers to include details for signing up to MSS
-----	---

Customer Service Model (CSM)

DD advised that the CSM had been implemented at the end of October 2019. This had since been evaluated and further changes would be made in March 2020 to allow increased support during peak times. WL asked how progress would be measured. DD advised that proposed changes would provide improved management information. DC asked if SPPA staff were aware of the bulletins provided from LGA regarding the appeal case. DD confirmed that call volumes had not increased, however, advice at present would remain generic but SPPA would ensure the website was up to date. BC advised that the FBU would be happy to share the information they are providing to members.

AP3	SPPA to liaise with SFRS FBU to provide up to date communication information related to the appeal case, Sargeant/McCloud
-----	---

WL commented that there was a requirement to assess the impact on members of the CSM changes and asked that the Board be kept advised.

AP4	SPPA to provide feedback regarding the CSM progress for the next meeting
-----	--

Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP)

GMcG advised that the final data cut from HMRC would be received in the summer. Letters had been issued to members regarding pension adjustments and that there would be no overpayment recovery. DF advised that approximately 40 calls had been received regarding the letter.

Appeal Case (Sargeant/McCloud)

SMcA advised that HMT were seeking initial views from schemes and stakeholders on two remedy proposals. The main options are – deferred choice or immediate choice. The remedy period would cover the period 1 April 2015 to the date age discrimination is removed (still to be determined). SMcA advised that both options would carry a cost and resource implication and as yet it was not clear what support HMT would provide. DD advised that work was ongoing to understand the scope and impact for SPPA. SW commented that it was important to have effective member and stakeholder communication. Following discussion it was agreed that regular progress updates would be provided for the Board.

AP5	SPPA to provide regular progress updates regarding the appeal case, to the Board
-----	--

Overpayments

GMcG advised the overpayments recorded were 0.06% of all payments made and that no trends had been identified.

4. Firefighters' Dashboard

Customer Contact

GMcG noted that email response had missed the target. DD explained that the system would be updated to disregard weekends and public holidays.

CS noted that the target time for average speed to answer calls had increased from 30 to 60 seconds. DD explained that this had been adopted across all of the schemes. WL noted that this had been discussed extensively at the previous meeting but the Board had not been advised that SPPA had adopted the change. SMcA apologised for the oversight. CS noted that the average time to answer had increased. DD advised when the new CSM was implemented, which would increase staff resource and improve consistency within the Customer Contact team, this figure would improve.

Complaints

GMcG advised that the target had been missed which was due to a case that had not been identified correctly.

5. Risk Register

GMcG advised that changes to the register were highlighted in red. SMcA advised that the Head of Business Management would be taking over risk within SPPA. This would include the development of a Risk Improvement Plan and a refresh of risk registers across SPPA.

6. Altair Project Update

GMcG noted that the impact of the Altair Project was mainly focussed on I-Connect and MSS for Firefighters. WL asked if the Board would be advised when I-Connect was fully implemented.

AP6	SPPA to confirm implementation of I-Connect system to the Board
-----	---

7. Sargeant/McCloud Appeal Case Update

An update was provided and discussed at item 3, SPPA Update.

8. Governance Update

8.1 SMcA advised that the new Governance team would be responsible for governance and administration of: Pension Boards, Scheme Advisory Boards, Management Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee. The team would also manage SPPAs relationship with the Pension Regulator, Pension Ombudsman and Information Commissioners Office. The team would be reviewing both internal and external engagement. This would include reviewing training for Board members, refreshing the induction programme and an Annual Conference. WL asked if training would be tailored to individual member requirements and suggested Board members could assist with this. SMcA also confirmed that the Governance Team would be the main point of contact for all Board members.

8.2 SMcA advised that the Pension Regulator had selected the Police and Firefighter schemes to be part of a Relationship Supervision. A request for information from the Pension Regulator had already been actioned. The Board would be updated on progress.

AP7	SPPA to provide updates on the Pension Regulator Relationship Supervision
-----	---

8.3 SMcA advised that the Terms of Reference would be refreshed and updated. Any questions, comments or suggestions regarding the proposed changes should be forwarded to SMcA.

AP8	Board members to forward questions, comments or suggestions regarding proposed changes to the Terms of Reference to SPPA
-----	--

9. Any Other Competent Business

9.1 SMcA advised that the Chair of the Teachers' Pension Board currently attended the Public Service Pension Scheme Consultative Group but would be stepping down at the end of March 2020. A replacement would be sought.

9.2 SMcA advised that new Chairs had been appointed to the Police Pension Board and the Teachers' Pension Board.

9.3 BC asked what stage the Governance Target Operating Model had reached. SMcA advised that job descriptions and consultations had taken place. An update would be provided at the May meeting.

AP9	SPPA to provide a progress update on the Governance Target Operating Model at the May 2020 meeting
-----	--

9.4 Date of next meeting confirmed at 12 May 2020 at Tweedbank.

No other competent business was raised. WL thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.