



Scottish Public
Pensions Agency
Buidheann Peinneanan
Poblach na h-Alba

Scottish Firefighters Pension Board 2021-22 Annual Report

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This report was approved by the Scottish Firefighters Pension Board at the meeting on 17 May 2022.

1. Introduction

This report covers the main work of the Scottish Firefighters Pension Board (the “Pension Board”) from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

More detailed information about the Pension Board, including its Terms of Reference, membership, agendas and minutes of its meetings are available on SPPA’s website [Pension board | SPPA \(pensions.gov.scot\)](https://pensions.gov.scot/pension-board)

2. Update from the Independent Chair

I wrote last year of the effective response to the pandemic by both SPPA and SFRS. During the course of the year the Board have been pleased to see service return to a more normal model and have in particular welcomed the restoration of a telephony service to members. The Board would like to see the telephony service consistently operating in line with targeted service standards and, over time, for those standards to be reviewed and strengthened. As in previous years, so far as the Board can tell, the right people continue to get the right pensions at the right time to a high level of accuracy and reliability. As we move forward there will be a growing task on the agency to present more accurate, timely and concise information to members concerning their entitlements enabling more frequent decisions to be made.

The Board have discussed with the SPPA the very limited volume and depth of member feedback and insight received and have welcomed plans to address this.

The Board have regularly discussed risk during the year and the risk reporting framework has been developed extensively and has incorporated feedback from the Board. The Board has noted the high level of management change at the SPPA. There is a significant change agenda for the agency over the next few years, including the pensions platform procurement programme and 2015 remedy. The Board have expressed a concern over the risk that such management turnover could present and received assurance that this is not expected to continue.

The Board benefitted this year from a review by The Pensions Regulator (TPR) and, in response, have committed to documenting a succession plan for anticipated vacancies. Through this plan the Board will seek to increase the diversity within its members, to the extent feasible based on the demographic profile of the scheme employer and members. TPR also highlighted that it was good practice for Board members to be appraised

by the Chair or Vice-Chair. This was suspended during the pandemic but was planned to recommence next year and has now commenced.

In another challenging year I have again valued the continued support the Board receives from Board Members and the SPPA leadership.

William Littleboy
Independent Chair

2. Board Membership

The Pension Board met on four occasions during 2021-22, all meetings were held virtually and attendance is outlined below:

| Scottish Firefighters Pension Board | Attendance | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 06/05/2021 | 17/08/2021 | 09/11/2021 | 15/02/2022 |
| William Littleboy - Chair | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Andy Marchant - Vice Chair | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Alan Duncan | N | Y | N | Y |
| Alexander Miller (resigned 10/02/2022) | Y | N | N | N |
| Denise Christie (resigned 10/02/2022) | N | Y | Y | N |
| John MacKenzie | Y | Y | N | N |
| Ross Haggart | N | N | Y | Y |
| Stephen Wright | N | Y | N | Y |

2.1 Board costs

The Pension Board has incurred £1,856.00 fees over the course of the year.

3. Looking forward

We are noticing an increase in the number of members electing to take early retirement and suspect this is due to the changes to more generous rules concerning the commutation of pension entitlement to lump sums and changes to people's attitude to persevering with full time work brought about by the pandemic. It is difficult to assess the longer-term impact on SFRS should this continue but it does imply a sustaining demand for timely, accurate information and service provision from SPPA.

This comes at a time when people are still getting used to the growth of hybrid working and significant new staff acquisition in SPPA. There is also a significant change programme underway and the impact of the 2015 remedy judgement to consider. The Board is concerned that pressure on SPPA is likely to increase as a consequence and will remain vigilant to ensure high service standards are maintained.

William Littleboy
Independent Chair