

STPS Scheme Advisory Board

Date	23 February 2023
Location	Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams
Chair	Des Morris (EIS)
Members	<p>Andy Witty (Colleges Scotland) Councillor Alastair Forsyth (COSLA) Councillor David Richardson Councillor Frances Murray Dave Wilkinson (NASUWT) John Edward (SCIS) Mark Cook – Pension Board Chair (Observer) Mary Senior (UCU) Mike Dolan (EIS) Neil Shaw (SLS) Seamus Searson (SSTA Substitute) Simon Cameron (COSLA) Stephanie Walsh (SG) Stephen Stewart (EIS)</p>
SPPA/ SG	<p>Carole Bertram (SPPA) Finn MacKenzie (SPPA) Greg Walker (SPPA) Iain Coltman (SPPA)</p>
GAD	<p>Anne-Marie Pettie (GAD) Greg Donaldson (GAD)</p>
Secretariat	Joanne Dawson (SPPA)
Apologies	<p>Archie MacIver (UWS) Councillor David Parker (COSLA) Euan Duncan (SSTA) Fiona Dalziel (SSTA) Greg Dempster (AHDS) Louise Wilson (EIS) Phil Daggart (COSLA) Stuart MacArthur (SPPA) Stuart Robb (SG)</p>

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed attendees welcomed new members Cllr Murray Cllr Richardson and noted the apologies.
- 1.2. The Chair advised that if the meeting continued beyond 3.30pm, Mike Dolan would take over as Chair at that point.

2. Conflicts of Interest

- 2.1. No conflicts of interest were declared

3. Minutes of previous meeting, action points and matters arising

- 3.1. The minutes of the meeting held 27 September 2023 were discussed. Regarding accuracy in the last minutes, it was requested to delete the words 'other' and 'not' from section 4.4. It was agreed to amend these minutes accordingly.

Action Point 137: Minutes of previous meeting to be updated accordingly

- 3.2. The following updates were provided on outstanding actions points:

- **Action Point 86** – Impact regarding SNCT Pay and Leave Specification on pension information submitted to SPPA. At last meeting GAD provided 2 proposals for consideration. SAB are keen to understand the impact of the planned review of the SNCT pay and leave specification on the provision of pension information. SPPA have been invited to be part of the review group. Agreed to merge with Action Point 131.
- **Action Point 112** – Reduction in pension entitlement period linked to projections of life expectancy. An update from GAD will be provided in point 5 of the agenda.
- **Action Point 120** – Long Covid ill health retirements – SPPA provided data of cases where long covid has been cited as a symptom on ill health retirements. Since December 2021, 5 cases have been recorded. Of those 5, 2 were accepted for Total Incapacity, 1 was rejected and 2 are awaiting further medical evidence. This is to be left as a recurring action to be reviewed annually.
- **Action Point 121** - Participation Rates (opt out data) - To be shared 6 monthly. Data was shared at the last meeting in September 2022 and SPPA propose to share the next 6 monthly states at the next meeting in June 2023.

- **Action Point 123** - McCloud Remedy, Early Retirement Reduction Buy Out (ERRBO) election – This will be covered in Paper 4 regarding upcoming changes to SI to remove the 6 month time limit. Agreed to close this action
- **Action Point 127 & 128: Merged** - SPPA to consult with Colleges Scotland regarding making a case to HMT around extending the scheme eligibility criteria to cover senior managers in further education colleges. This will be covered in paper 4 regarding changes to scheme eligibility. Carried forward
- **Action Point 129:** SPPA to share copies of the final Definition Provision Document to the SAB. Sub Group translates the full PDD's into a shorted summary. UCU and EIS stated it would be helpful to have access to full documents for reference.
- **Action Point 130:** SPPA provided update at previous meeting in September. Item closed.
- **Action Point 131:** COSLA provided update on SNCT pay and leave specification. Review group will be set up to review issues such as maternity pay and leave and resulting consequences. SPPA involvement will be required. Terms of reference and further updates will be provided to SAB. Merge with Action Point 86
- **Action Point 132:** SPPA confirmed that the SNCT pay and leave specification mitigation options were shared with TWG. Next TWG meeting is 2 March – feedback will be shared when available.
- **Action Point 133:** SPPA will liaise directly with EIS to provide point of contact in Teachers Award Customer Service Team.
- **Action Point 134:** SPPA to consider documenting guidelines and expectations on the role of the STPS SAB chair. Agreed to carry forward.
- **Action Point 135** – SPPA will discuss and consider further re-introduction of tripartite chair arrangements. Agreed to carry forward to future meeting.
- **Action Point 136** – SPPA to provide paper looking at membership and vacancies on SAB. Propose to carry forward to next meeting.

3.3. NASUWT referred back to point 4.4 on previous minutes on independent schools phased withdrawal and asked to create action for SAB regarding a commitment from Ministers that the flexibility is not going to be extended to any other type of school. EIS re-iterated that SAB were not in favour of phased withdrawal of independent schools and raised concerns that precedent could be set. A firm commitment is required by ministers not to allow similar moves in other parts of the system.

3.4. Chair noted that now that the decision has been made by ministers, a letter should be drafted from employee side to ministers to seek re-assurance that the changes will not be extended to any state funded school.

Action Point 138: Employee side to provide first draft of letter for Scottish Ministers.

3.5. NASUWT requested action to monitor opt outs within any schools that apply for phased withdrawal. SPPA responded that opt outs can be monitored and the figures can be presented along with the general opt out data in action 121.

3.6. EIS raised the question of what do SPPA do when they hear an employer is looking to withdraw from the scheme? SPPA confirmed that when schools opt to leave on a permanent basis there is very little SPPA can do once the decision has been made by the school.

3.7. NASUWT asked how easy is it for independent schools to re-join the pension scheme following full withdrawal. SPPA confirmed that the schools would be welcome to re-join the pension scheme. There are no barriers. Administratively the school would need set up on SPPA's system and treated as a new school and would be subject to existing procedures in place by SPPA's Finance Team.

4. 2015 Remedy Update – Papers 3a and 3b

4.1. SPPA provided an update on Paper 3a giving an update on the 2015 Remedy Sub Group Meetings.

4.2. SPPA confirmed that remedy subgroup discussions had taken place since September regarding voluntary additional contributions; contingent decisions; ill-health retirement; early/late retirement; winding down; partial/phased retirement; divorce; abatement; transfers; death benefits. It was noted that discussions regarding compensation/interest and tax are to take place at a future date.

4.3. EIS commented on the timescales and stated there would need to be a degree of flexibility. EIS asked if there would be a ready reckoner to

assist members who had paid additional pension contributions between 2015 and 2022 to illustrate the benefit of making the additional contributions versus how much they had paid in, and to see how long they would need to receive their benefits in order to receive a benefit for making the additional contributions.

4.4. SPPA advised that timescales were set in alignment with existing processes but will be considered in more detail during the formal consultation process and there will be an opportunity to feedback during that process.

4.5. SPPA confirmed that members will be encouraged to seek independent financial advice if unsure of the impact of any decisions. There may be an opportunity for members to seek rebate for the cost of IFA fees – this will also be included in the consultation process.

4.6. EIS re-iterated the requirement for a detailed factual statement to compare the value of the additional contributions. SPPA confirmed that the information required to enable members to make their choice would be included in the remedial service statement.

4.7. EIS stated they should have a record of members who had contacted EIS regarding possible ill health retirement enquiries if this is required.

4.8. SPPA gave an update on paper 3b regarding 2015 remedy STPA excess service for members moving from the 2015 scheme back to the legacy scheme and detailed the next steps. Affected members will be identified and contacted and communications will be sent to all employers.

5. 2020 Valuation Update

5.1. GAD gave a comprehensive update and presentation on the 2020 valuations to show the progress made and the plans for the coming months. A timeline was given detailing each stage of the valuation process. GAD will liaise with SPPA to set assumptions and will discuss with SAB prior to seeking agreement from Scottish Ministers. New employers contributions are expected to take affect from April 2024 so require directions and assumptions from HM Treasury by summer.

5.2. GAD will provide training session to give a more detailed overview of the valuation process in advance of the next SAB meeting.

Action Point 139: Training session to be scheduled

5.3. GAD propose to carry forward Action 112 to the next session.

5.4. NASUWT thanked GAD for the presentation and confirmed that SAB would wish to express an opinion on scheme specific assumptions to Scottish Ministers but also on the other assumptions specifically the discount rate and also suggestions about longevity improvements and raise the importance of additional funding from UK Government.

5.5. NASUWT suggested there may be a requirement for an additional meeting once the SCAPE rate announcement is made at the UK Spring Budget. The group asked if the Valuation update slides could be shared.

Action Point 140: Copy of presentation slides to be issued

6. Summary of consultation on proposed scheme amendments 2023 – Paper 4

6.1. SPPA referred SAB to paper 4 detailing the draft instrument to amend STPS regarding phased withdrawal of independent schools and scheme eligibility. The paper also covers some retrospective changes to regulations relating to earlier legal rulings as well as the removal of the 6 month time limit for standard buyout.

6.2. UCU asked for clarification that HE would be included in the scheme eligibility as well as FE. SPPA confirmed HE was included also.

7. Date of next meeting – Poll has been carried out and next meeting arranged for 16 May 2023.

7.1. The Chair thanked everyone for attendance and closed the meeting.

STPS Scheme Advisory Board

Action Ref.	Action	Action Owner	Latest position	Action status
140	Copy of slides from 2020 Valuation Update to be issued to SAB	GAD	Update – slides issued to SAB members 23/05/2023	New Action
139	Training session to be arranged to provide detailed overview of valuation process	SPPA/GAD	Update – training session held 16/05/2023	New Action
138	Employee side to draft letter to seek re-assurance that the changes re phased withdrawal will not be extended to any state funded school	Employee side		New Action
137	SPPA to amend minutes of previous meeting to remove “other” and “not” from 4.4	SPPA	Minutes have been updated	Closed
136	SPPA to produce a paper on ‘SAB membership and vacancies’ to be considered at a future SAB meeting	SPPA	2 vacancies have been filled. Carried forward 23/03/2023	Open

135	SPPA will discuss and consider further the re-introduction of tripartite chair arrangements	SPPA	C/F 23/03/2023	Open
134	SPPA to consider documenting guidelines and expectations on the role of the STPS SAB Chair	SPPA	C/F 23/03/2023	Open
133	SPPA to provide the EIS with a contact in the Teacher's Awards Customer Service Team in order to take forward queries about the impact of SNCT on individual pension calculations	SPPA	SPPA to share point of contact directly with EIS.	Open
132	SPPA to share SNCT pay & leave specification mitigation options with TWG and seek feedback on the practicality of their application	SPPA	Pay and leave specification mitigation options were shared with TWG. Next TWG meeting is 2 March – feedback will be shared when available.	Open
131	COSLA to provide an update on the work of the SNCT Pay and Leave Specification Review Group, including the purpose and scope of the review	COSLA	COSLA provided update. Review group to be set up and terms of reference and updated to be given to SAB.	Open

129	SPPA to share copies of final PDDs with the SAB.	SPPA	Carried forward 27/9/2022 – awaiting final Tax PDD. Update PDD's shared with SAB 23/05/2023	Open
128	SPPA to consult with Colleges Scotland about making a case to HMT around extending scheme eligibility criteria to cover senior managers in further education colleges and to check with HMT that the definitions relating to eligibility in post-1992 institutions were part of eligibility criteria agreed by HMT	SPPA	Covered in Paper 4. SPPA to consult with Colleges Scotland regarding extending scheme eligibility to cover senior managers in FE/HE colleges. This will be covered in paper 4. Carried forward	Open
121	Participation Rates: SPPA to provide Q4 2021/22 and Q1 2022/23 data to the Board when available. Consideration of moving to annual / biannual reporting to be considered after requested data is provided	SPPA	Participation Rates considered at meeting of 27/09/2022. To be considered again in six months. To be presented again at SAB meeting in Q2 of 2023. Action updated to include data of opt out from schools who have elected for phased withdrawal.	Open

120	SPPA to provide the SAB with an annual review of ill health retirement / long covid data. To be provided at the first SAB meeting of the year	SPPA	Long Covid ill health retirals – Update provided – 5 ill health cases relating to long covid since Dec 2021 – 2 TIB, 1 rejected and 2 awaiting further info.	Open
112	Reduction in pension entitlement period: GAD to liaise with SPPA to provide summary report of current life expectancy data, including teacher-specific life expectancy data, late 2022.	GAD	C/F 23/03/2023	Open
8	Secretariat to ensure approved agendas, minutes, and work plan are shared with the Pension Board and published on the SPPA website as appropriate	SPPA 18/06/2015 Secretariat	C/F to action when minutes approved	Remains open, no action necessary