



Meeting	Scottish Firefighters' Pension Board
Meeting date	29 May 2024
Meeting time	14:00 - 17:00
Meeting location	Virtual

Board members	William Littleboy (WL)	Board Chair
	Andy Marchant (AM)	Board Vice Chair
	Gus Sproul (GS)	Board Member
	Stephen Wright (SW)	Board Member
SPPA attendees	David Robb (DR)	SPPA Chief Executive
	Frances Graham (FG)	SPPA Chief Operating Officer
	David Gunner (DG)	SPPA Programme Director
	Debbie Trafford (DT)	SPPA Head of People
	Christopher Nairns (CN)	SPPA Head of Organisational Service Delivery
	Lorraine Spalding (LS)	SPPA Communications and engagement Manager
	Jonathan Sharp (JS)	SPPA Data Protection and Information Governance Manager
	Clare Moffat (CM)	SPPA Corporate Governance Manager
Apologies	Liz Barnes (LB)	Board Member
	Nicola Hector (NH)	Board Member
	Simon Leroux (SL)	Board Member
Observers	Stephen Pathirana	Incoming SPPA Chief Executive
	Kenneth Barbour	Incoming Board Member
Minute taker	Lisa Cossar	SPPA Governance Delivery Lead

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

1.1 The Vice Chair welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies from LB, NH and SL.

No declarations of interest were noted.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed electronically and are now available on the website.

3. Performance, Risk and Projects

3.1 Chief Executive Overview

The new incoming CEO, Stephen Pathirana, was introduced to the Board. He will officially start the role on 03 June 2024.

The current CEO updated the Board on the Remedy project and noted that it remains a key priority, especially with surges in retirement, particularly for the NHS. A good meeting was held with the new Minister for Public Finance, Ivan McKee, who will have responsibility for

SPPA, and it was noted that the current political changes should have minimal impact on the SPPA.

3.2 Operations

The SPPA provided an overview of Operations, noting:

- 100% awards processed for the quarter.
- Impact of recent system downtime resulted in 2,000hrs lost. Some slow response time for Firefighters but the biggest impact was for NHS and Teachers schemes.
- Trend graphs now included in performance packs, to allow the Board to see how SPPA are managing KPIs on accuracy and payment of pensions on time.
- There was discussion on the policy around those wishing to retire – once request is made, this cannot be changed, unless under exceptional circumstances. The Board flagged issues around members not being able to get an accurate estimate from standalone calculator, for example for those wishing to retire early.
- Employer Relationship Manager (Job-Share) has now been recruited. They will act as direct contact for Board members, allowing them to bring any issues to SPPA.

F0529.01	Board members to highlight to the SPPA any known cases where members have asked for projections 6 months before retirement and not getting them.
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F0529.02	SPPA's Employer Relationship Manager (job-share) to attend next Firefighters' Pension Board meeting.
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3.3 Strategy and Communications

3.4 External Engagement

- Significant improvements are being made on navigation of the website, however the Board felt that better signposting was required to the Matthew's pages and an update was made to action F0323.07 – SPPA to add clearer signposting to the Matthews Case page on the website and rename it Second Option.
- Communications plan for Firefighters' pension scheme, which was signed off by the Board, now sits within the SPPA's wider external engagement plan and will link communications engagement with employer engagement.

3.5 Risk

A new risk has been identified for the agency around the implementation of the new 35 hour working week (pay award agreed that all SPPA colleagues would work a proportion less a week, resulting in around 19FTE reduction in resource across the workforce). Service levels should not be impacted by this reduction but currently reviewing how the reduction will be managed.

Discussion on current score vs target score and how achievable this is. It was noted that the target score focussed on the end of the Remedy project and the decision is made on the ultimate level of target as opposed to a rolling target, however this can be reviewed if necessary.

3.6 Data Protection

It was noted that there have been a low number of data breaches across schemes. Cyber security engagement is taking place across the Scottish Government and a compliance checklist for all contractors with supply chains is now in place.

3.7 Corporate Governance

The SPPA updated the Board, noting:

- Analysis of annual exercises feedback has been taking place. A key area of focus across all Boards is the need for more diversity in membership and the Governance team are taking steps to update the nomination process to help assist with this.
- The slide deck and Q&A for the recent TPR webinar are now available.
- Working with Board Chairs to see how we can encourage better engagement of the Board between meetings.
- Seeking feedback from new Board members around induction materials and what can be done to improve the induction process.

The Board felt that greater engagement between Board meetings wasn't necessary and that the performance packs for Board meetings and updates on action points were significant enough. Hybrid meetings work well but there was a feeling that an in-person meeting once a year might be preferable.

The Chair and Vice Chair passed thanks to Steven Wright for his contribution to the Board and wished him well as he steps down. They welcomed Kenneth Barbour as the new employee representative to the Board.

3.8 Programme and projects

Remedy

- Deferred choice, for those due to retire, has experienced issues however the contingency plan in place has ensured there has been no impact on delivering RSS since October, with around 152 RSS being issued since then.
- Immediate choice, for those already retired, working with the Scottish Government automation team as a one-off solution to enable quick turnaround.
- Immediate detriment, retiring due to ill health, currently around 90 members effected, with 51 already issued with consent forms. Awaiting final confirmation on how to treat interest in arrears from HMRC and HMT.
- Members are being supported with their RSS. Campaign with multimedia resources and factsheets on Remedy Hub. Review of Remedy Hub underway, ensuring streamlined content available for each scheme. The Board were shown a short introduction video to RSS, there will also be videos to take members through the various choices. The purpose of these videos is to demystify RSS and support members. A link to these videos will be included in RSS letters, to explain what everything means.

F0529.03	SPPA to send draft videos, relating to campaign to support members in terms of RSS, to Gus and Kenny who will seek feedback from members.
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Pension Platform Programme (PPP)

- Building full programme of where we are on member service records and iConnect enhancements, how they tie into Engage portal, member website, linked into Altair system.
- Government Dashboard – new legislation from October 2025. This will enable people to view previous pensions all in one place. Work needed on data improvement, member service records updated etc to ensure correct data for Dashboard.

4 Other Board Business

4.1 Horizon Scanning

Information re. Matthews to be issued to around 100 members to test proof of concept. Starting to send letters in June, Gadd calculators to be available end of August at latest. Letters will highlight they are a test pool of members.

5 Review of Outstanding Actions

5.1 Review of action points

The action points were reviewed, and the following were approved to close during the meeting:

F1223.01 F0229.01

The remaining actions were updated as follows:

- **F0323.07** – SPPA to add clearer signposting to the Matthews Case page on the website and remain it Second Option
- **F1223.02** – further exploration with Scottish Fire Rescue Service to see how to improve the number of personal email addresses held for each member.

6. Future Board Meetings

6.1 Discussion on holding in-person meeting once a year

A proposal to hold one Board meeting a year in-person was raised. The Chair/Vice Chair to discuss seek preferences from members at their upcoming annual 121 discussions.

F0529.04	Chair/Vice Chair to explore Board members preferences to holding one meeting a year in-person.
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Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 03 September 2024, 10.30-13.30hrs.

Summary of new Actions

F0529.01	Board members to highlight to the SPPA any known cases where members have asked for projections 6 months before retirement and not getting them.
F0529.02	SPPA's Employer Relationship Manager (job-share) to attend next Firefighters' Pension Board meeting.
F0529.03	SPPA to send draft videos, relating to campaign to support members in terms of RSS, to Gus and Kenny who will seek feedback from members.
F0529.04	Chair/Vice Chair to explore Board members preferences to holding one meeting a year in-person.

Version Control		
		Version number
Date first draft minutes sent to chair	01/07/24	V1
Date final draft approved by chair	01/07/24	V1.1
Date approved by Board	10/07/24	V2
Date of publication	15/07/24	V2