



<b>Meeting</b>	Scottish Firefighters' Pension Board
<b>Meeting date</b>	26 February 2025
<b>Meeting time</b>	14:00-16:00
<b>Meeting location</b>	Virtual

<b>Board members</b>	Andy Marchant (AM)	Board Chair (acting)
	Nicola Hector (NH)	Board Member
	Gus Sproul (GS)	Board Member
	Liz Barnes (LB)	Board Member
	Simon Leroux (SL)	Board Member
<b>SPPA attendees</b>	Chief Executive	
	Chief Transformation Officer	
	Chief Operating Officer	
	Chief Financial Officer	
	Finance Business Partner	
	Programme Director	
	Strategic Communications Lead	
	Governance and Assurance Manager	
	Head of Strategic Governance	
	Head of Policy	
<b>Apologies</b>	Kenneth Barbour (KB)	Board Member
	Scott McCabe (SM)	Board Member
<b>Minute</b>	Governance Delivery Lead	

## 1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

1.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies from Kenneth Barbour and Scott McCabe. There were no declarations of interest noted.

The Board were informed that Liz Barnes would be stepping down at the end of March, when she is due to retire from SFRS. The Chair thanked Liz for her support and contribution to the Board.

## 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

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

### **3. Performance, Risk and Projects**

#### **3.1 Chief Executive Overview**

The CEO reflected on the past six months and the challenges faced when he joined the Agency; and provided key updates:

- Budget has been secured from the Scottish Government for this financial year, which has allowed an increase in key resources needed to deliver Remedy and begin improving the quality-of-service Members receive.
- Splitting the Chief Operating Officer (COO) role into two, with the COO focusing on the day to day running of the business, and a Chief Transformation Officer dealing with Remedy, as well as future planning.
- Strong work programme in place for Remedy with revised time frames in place for delivery.

#### **3.2 BAU Scheme Data**

The SPPA provided an overview of BAU Scheme data, noting:

- Review of operational structure has identified three additional key functions that will be recruited or augmented over the next few months. Recruitment has taken place for stakeholder engagement post, which will be leading the fire technical working group.
- Introduction of new performance targets for life cycle management of cases. Aim to ensure all members receive a consistent journey in terms of customer experience, whilst also ensuring the team can manage workloads steadily also.
- There has been a difficult transition to member webforms, launched in December 2024, which has caused an initial dip in customer satisfaction levels, but this is expected to improve as more benefits to members are brought online.

The Board noted that data on reposition at first point of contact given in previous packs was helpful and asked if this could be included again in future. SPPA noted that this data was not scheme-specific level and there was a lengthy process to producing that MI, however consideration is to be given to contacts MI and how to include it within future packs.

### 3.3 Annual Events

The SPPA updated on the Annual Event Programme, which includes Annual Allowance, Annual Benefit Statement/ABS-RSS, Annual Pension Increase and Valuations. Key points to note were:

- Updated guidance is now included on the website for members submitting a tax return without a PSS. The website signposts to information provided by HMRC.
- Whilst several errors were identified processing valuations, the Board were assured these were minor errors and normal expected level. These will be worked through by the administration team and the bulk easily corrected. There will be no impact on timescales for the Firefighters scheme.
- Successfully produced and distributed ABS statements for non-Remedy impacted members, which covers 100% of eligible non-Remedy Active members.

### 3.4 Legislative Projects

A meeting was held on 19 February 2025 to update all Pension Board and Scheme Advisory Board members on the position of Remedy. Remedy Dashboards will also be sent weekly to Board members, when it is possible to give an up-to-date review of how Remedy is progressing.

In terms of Booth and Matthews, all expressions of interest have been issued. The Board are seeking a greater understanding of timelines and issues and have requested more information to be provided in the next Board meeting.

### 3.5 Business Transformation Update

An overview of the process for successfully delivering Remedy was presented to the Board. This included what was done in 2023-24 - indexing, stand-alone calculators and increasing productivity. This has built into what is currently being done in 2025-26 – automation, further simplification of processes and capacity. Reviewing iConnect issues and how to make a new member portal. This in turn will lead to building capacity by digitising full member enhanced journeys in the future.

The SPPA are focused on improving project and IT governance and driving a culture of continuous improvement.

### **3.6 Risk**

The SPPA provided an overview of the key risks across the Agency impacting the Firefighters pension scheme. It was noted that the Board papers were produced before communications around Remedy timelines were issued, therefore this risk has now been slightly reduced.

### **3.7 Member Engagement**

The SPPA are working to strengthen and improve overall communications, ensuring that they are as effective as possible and give Members reassurance and a single source of truth. This will be in the form of up-to-date information on the website, as well as direct to Member communications via active and retired newsletters. New and wider stakeholders to also receive briefing materials.

### **3.8 Governance**

It was noted that there have been no material breaches or cyber incidents since the Board last met in September 2024. The Pensions Regulator (TPR) code changed last year, and a review has been carried out to align with this new code. The Firefighters Scheme is compliant with 83% of the "musts" and work is being done to address where we are partially compliant.

## **4 Other Board Business**

### **4.1 Horizon Scanning**

There were no further items for noting.

## **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:

**F0529.02**

**F0529.03**

**F0924.01**

The remaining actions were updated as follows:

**F1223.02** – Continue to pick up on communications to ensure we get the correct email addresses.

**F0924.02** – Review of Booth information on the SPPA website has started but impact of Remedy has delayed progress to finalise and ensure content is signed off to go live.

## **6 Any other business**

### **6.1 Any other business**

Paper provided on the Fire Pension Accounts. Financial responsibility lies with SFRS, and accounts are provided for noting only.

It was stated that the programme for the upcoming Networking Event is currently being developed. This event is an opportunity for networking across all Pension Boards, the Management Advisory Board and Audit and Risk Committee, and Board members were encouraged to attend in person.

### **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be a networking event on 15 May 2025.

The next Pension Board meeting will be 18 September 2025.

### **Summary of new Actions**

There were no new actions at the meeting.

Version Control		
		Version number
Date first draft minutes sent to chair	17 March 2025	V.1
Date final draft approved by chair	17 March 2025	V.2
Date approved by Board	31 March 2025	V.2
Date of publication	01 April 2025	FINAL