

Meeting	Scottish NHS Pension Board
Meeting date	25 September 2025
Meeting time	10:30-12:30
Meeting location	Virtual

Board Members	David Vallery	Board Chair (acting)
	Ailsa Paterson	Board Member
	Craig Black	Board Member
	David McColl	Board Member
	Graeme Eunson	Board Member
	Graeme Ferguson	Board Member
	Raymond Marshall	Board Member
SPPA attendees	Chief Operating Officer	
	Senior Financial Accountant	
	Corporate Governance Manager	
	Chief Transformation Officer	
	Governance, Risk and Control Manager	
	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	
	Strategic Communications Lead	
	Programme Delivery Manager	
	Chief Executive Officer	
	Head of Strategic Governance	
Apologies	Tom Wilson	Board Member
Minute taker	Governance Delivery Lead	
Observers	Audit Scotland	
	Virginia Burke	Teachers' Pension Board

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and noted apologies from Tom Wilson. Yvonne Stewart was also noted as absent, due to illness.

1.2 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) updated the Board on the recent Chair vacancy recruitment exercise and was pleased to announce that Virginia Burke, current Vice

Chair of Teachers' Pension Board, had been successful. Virginia will take on the role of NHS Pension Board Chair, as of 1 October 2025. Virginia introduced herself to the Board and remained in the meeting as an observer.

1.3 The Chair also welcomed two new SPPA colleagues, a Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Corporate Governance Manager to their first Pension Board meeting.

1.4 There were no new Declarations of Interest raised.

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. Chief Executive Overview

3.1 The Chief Executive Officer, SPPA, reflected on the work carried out and the challenges faced during his first year at SPPA, with Remedy remaining the biggest of these challenges. The following key points were also noted:

- resource had been secured to enable the agency to meet its goals, with ongoing discussions taking place with Scottish ministers for additional resource.
- ongoing work to replace contractors with permanent members of staff.
- restructuring of the Executive Team (ET), with a particular emphasis on the appointment of a Deputy Chief Executive.
- the agency remains committed to making further progress and acknowledged that SPPA is broadly comparable with other public service pension schemes in relation to the Remedy journey.

3.2 The Board raised a question about funding from the Scottish Government and whether SPPA was looking at broadening service offers to other pension administrations. The CEO confirmed that the agency could not make a profit and the work they do is on a cost recovery basis.

4. Operational Delivery

4.1 The Chief Operating Officer (COO), SPPA, provided an update on Operational Delivery and BAU work. Key points to note are:

- Service delivery has been stable over the past six months; however, the agency noted the challenges in turnaround time, increase in retirements and support needed for Remedy and automation testing.
- Issues were identified and resolved following launch of webforms at the start of the year. This had resulted in a delay to response times; however, recovery now means response times are to within one week.
- The Engage Portal has been launched, currently providing a basic service to Active members. Going forward, the portal will be extended out to deferred and retirement members. There are currently 41,000 NHS members signed up to the portal, with plans to push for increased sign-up through member communications and the Technical Working Groups (TWGs).
- There has been an amendment to divorce administration fees, which have been increased by the consumer price index (CPI). Broadly the biggest change is harmonisation across all schemes, so that charges are the same. SPPA will provide further information through the next Monthly Communications pack to the Board.

4.2 The Board discussed the casework figures provided in the papers, particularly around the number of outstanding revisions. The SPPA assured the Board that they were aware of all members affected and plans were in place to clear the outstanding cases.

4.3 Discussion was also had around call and email satisfaction levels, noting that the higher level of dissatisfaction with emails is often around response time. An SPPA Customer Experience Manager is to be recruited to increase understanding of the member journey experience and investigate satisfaction rates, to better identify, monitor and highlight any issues to be addressed.

5. Technical Working Group

5.1 The Board were presented with a paper on the NHS TWG, for noting.

6. Practitioners Contribution Project

6.1 The COO provided an update on the Practitioners Contribution Project. It was noted that funding had been secured from NHS for an extension to the project, and agreement was made on a timeline of activity at a meeting with the NHS financial liaison group.

7. Finance Summary

7.1 The Board were provided with an update on income summary, breach reporting and The Pensions Regulator (TPR) compliance. There was also an update on overpayment summary and financial monitoring.

A representative from Audit Scotland joined the meeting to observe.

8. Annual Events

8.1 The Chief Transformation Officer (CTO) provided an update on Annual Events. The key points to note were:

- there has been significant progress with production of Annual Benefit Statements (ABS)/ABS-Remediable Service Statements (RSS), however ten per cent remain outstanding.
- SPPA will be contacting those that have not received their ABS/ABS-RSS directly, providing up to date and accurate information.

The Board discussed the timelines around delivery for various cohorts, and whilst they noted the challenges, they remained concerned about the progress being made.

There were also concerns raised around clarity of how calculations for ABS are made, and SPPA agreed to ensure members are directed to clear guidance.

N0925.01

SPPA to provide signposting and lines, by 31 October 2025, to the operational teams, to ensure they are directing members to the correct information on the website, showing how calculations for ABS are made.

9. Legislative Projects (Remedy and Dashboard)

9.1 The Board were introduced to the new Programme Delivery Manager who will lead on Remedy work. This recruitment will allow SPPA to strengthen governance and

accountability within the project by replacing contractors with permanent staff. Staff have also been recruited to oversee Immediate Choice and Remedial work.

9.2 The Board were provided with an overview of the Pensions Dashboard within the papers, with a broader discussion planned for the November Training Day.

The representative from Audit Scotland left the meeting.

10. Member Engagement

10.1 The Board were updated on member engagement and communications. The key points to note were:

- there is a re-focus on delivery of RSS to members, communicating directly with members with clearly defined updates if they have not yet received an RSS.
- the Remedy hub on the website remains the one source of truth and provides members with support resources.
- the Communications sub-group has been re-established and held their first meeting in August. The next meeting will take place in October, and it is hoped this should enhance the reach of messages to members.
- a core brief has been produced, to accurately track all key messages around Remedy delivery, ensuring all areas of SPPA are providing accurate and up to date information.
- a Senior Content Designer is to be recruited, working within the Communications Team to help with messaging and how they are landing with members.

10.2 No questions or comments were raised by Board members regarding this agenda item.

11. Scheme Risks

11.1 The Board were presented with a paper on the current top five risks within SPPA, and how these impact the NHS Pension Scheme. The top five agency risks that impacted the NHS Pension scheme were as follows:

- Data Quality
- Data Strategy
- McCloud Remedy
- Operational Remedy
- Pensions Dashboard

11.2 No questions or comments were raised by Board members regarding this agenda item.

12. TPR General Code Compliance

12.1 The Board were presented with a paper on the TPR General Code compliance. The paper highlighted the mandatory requirements that pension schemes must comply with and the best practice standards which the regulator expects schemes to comply or actively work towards. The NHS Pension Scheme is currently reporting 82% overall compliance with the General Code.

12.2 No questions or comments were raised by Board members regarding this agenda item.

13. Terms of Reference

13.1 The Board were asked to note the new universal Terms of Reference (ToR), which the Chairs of all four Pension Boards have been consulted on. These will formally take effect from 1 October 2025. The context of this change was to bring consistency to all four Pension Board ToRs, with a universal language, purpose and guidance.

13.2 Significant concerns were raised by some Board members regarding recent changes to the ToR. The concerns were across several areas, particularly in relation to the lack of engagement with Board members during the revision process, the refinement in how the role and function of the Board is described and the removal of the vice chair role. It was highlighted that the Chair was part of the consultation process with the other Board Chairs and had provided feedback.

14. Review of Outstanding Actions

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

N0224.08
N0924.08
N0325.01
N0325.02

An update was provided to the following action:

N0924.01 – it was noted that functionality of Engage does not allow newsletters to be included. This will be investigated over the next few months, in partnership with the project team, and it is hoped that we can include more information in future. The action will remain open and an update provided at the next Board meeting.

15. Any Other Business

15.1 The CEO thanked David Vallery for his time and effort on the NHS Pension Board, as Vice Chair and more recently whilst stepping up as Acting Chair. Board members also echoed their thanks to David.

The next meeting will be the Training Day Event, for all Pension Boards, on Thursday 20 November 2025.

16. Summary of new Actions

N0925.01	SPPA to provide signposting and lines, by 31 October 2025, to the operational teams, to ensure they are directing members to the correct information on the website, showing how calculations for ABS are made.
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