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Meeting	Scottish Teachers Pension Board
Meeting date	11 March 2026
Meeting time	10:30-12.30
Meeting location	Microsoft Teams

Board members	Mark Cook	Chair
	Andrene Bamford	Board Member
	Andy McGoff	Board Member
	Cllr Fiona Dugdale	Board Member
	Greg Dempster	Board Member
	Kirsty Robb	Board Member
	Paul Cochrane	Board Member
	Suzanne McLeod	Board Member
Apologies	Maureen Kennedy	Board Member
	Terry Gray	Board Member
SPPA attendees	Chief Operating Officer	
	Corporate Governance Manager	
	Governance, Risk & Control Manager	
	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	
	Strategic Communications Lead	
	Employer Relationships Manager	
	Programme Delivery Manager	
	Chief Executive Officer	
Head of Strategy, Governance and Communications		
Minute taker	SPPA Governance Delivery Lead	

1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all attendees and noted apologies from Maureen Kennedy. New Board member Greg Dempster was introduced.
- 1.2 No new interests were declared.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2.1 The Board agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were a true and correct record.

3. Review of Actions

- 3.1 The Chair referenced the outstanding Teachers' Pension Board actions identified as 'propose to close' in the pack, along with four actions from the Pension Board training event in November 2025. The Board agreed that all actions identified as 'propose to close' should be formally closed.
- 3.2 One action from the September 2025 meeting, relating to Teachers' Pension Board members volunteering to join the Teachers' Communications sub-group, remained open. The Chair encouraged Board members to take up this opportunity. It was stressed that employer representation was sought on the group.

4. Chief Executive Overview

4.1 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SPPA provided opening remarks and noted key points:

- Staff engagement scores had improved, with ongoing work aimed at making SPPA a better place to work.
- Reflected on recent public attention, particularly SPPA's appearance at the Finance Public Administration Committee (FPAC) in December 2025 regarding Remedy delivery. He highlighted that the FPAC session enabled panel members to gain a greater appreciation of the issues faced by SPPA.
- Noted that SPPA is scheduled to appear again before both the Public Administration Committee (PAC) and the FPAC on 17 March to provide a further progress update on Remedy delivery.
- The recent Audit Scotland Section 22 report. The CEO advised that the observations contained in the report had since been addressed, recognising that the audit findings were retrospective in nature.
- Highlighted the remaining cases associated with Remedy delivery, with employer data issues cited as a significant blocker. The CEO expects Immediate Choice (IC) cases to be completed before the end of 2026.
- Granular data was now available for the Police scheme in respect of member pension choices, with data suggesting the majority of members are already in their best pension offering. The likelihood is this will be the same for Teachers' scheme members.
- The appointment of several Non-Executive members to the Management Advisory Board (MAB), including Paul Gray as the new Chair. Pension Board members were encouraged to attend the forthcoming Governance Seminar in May 2026 to meet Paul and the other newly appointed MAB members.

4.2 The Board noted the update and further discussed:

- The Section 22 report and if additional changes would be required as a result of this; it was highlighted that SPPA were in a state of continuous improvement and would work with Audit Scotland to keep them engaged.

5. BAU Delivery

5.1 The Chief Operating Officer, SPPA provided an overview of BAU Delivery, noting key points:

- The delayed completion of South Lanarkshire Councils 2025 data return, highlighting that SPPA had managed to close this out. The 2026 data return would see the tightening of escalation routes, with earlier escalation deadlines and increased stakeholder engagement.
- Service delivery was fairly static, with some delays in respect of Estimates. It was highlighted there had been an increase in estimate requests over last 6 months.
- A new Remedy-compliant online pension modeller for members to calculate benefits would soon be available. It was highlighted that SPPA were aiming for increased self-service delivery, reducing operational demand around estimates.
- Engage portal is live, with lessons learned from the rollout to the Police and Firefighters' schemes. Increased functionality should become available in the next few months, this will include the incorporation of Webform into the Engage platform, allowing members to see their pension details and contact SPPA in one place. SPPA are working towards a digital first future, with huge capacity gains anticipated.

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- The Teachers' summer retirement peak, which will clash with the processing of IC Remedy statements. This will mean SPPA will be working well in excess of capacity. Steps have been taken to mitigate this risk in terms of resources, but the likelihood is there will be some restrictions/delays to non-core services. Stakeholder engagement will take place, particularly with union representatives, and escalation routes will be available for vulnerable members. An invitation to all employer/union representatives will be issued for a stakeholder engagement session to plan the best way forward ahead of the summer period.

5.2 The Board noted the update and further discussed:

- The new Remedy-compliant pension modeller, with SPPA noting it is reliant on the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) in terms of timescales of when this will be available. Communications will be issued to Pension Board members once timescales are known.
- The new self-service member modeller will cover most member scenarios, including breaks such as maternity leave, with any exceptions clearly flagged.
- Data issues relating to South Lanarkshire Council and whether lessons had been learned from the 2025 system-migration issues. It was noted that engagement with other major employers falls outside the current scope, and it remains unclear whether performance will improve; however, most councils continue to meet deadlines. SPPA will work closely with employers to ensure timely data returns, with i-Connect providing significant mitigation for data-quality risks. The Chair encouraged Board members to contact any non-responding employers to support compliance.
- The accuracy of the current pension modeller, noting that some members are unsure whether to trust the figures. SPPA confirmed that the new modeller is subject to rigorous testing and, where underlying data is accurate, the Agency is confident that the outputs are reliable. It was further noted that the modeller will become more accessible and user-friendly once Engage is fully implemented.
- Core vs non-core services, with SPPA outlining the distinction between the two and the activities included within each category.

6. Technical Working Group Update

6.1 The Employer Relationships Manager, SPPA referred members to the latest report included in the meeting pack and provided a brief overview of the work of the group. It was proposed that, going forward, it be presented to the Teachers' Pension Board on an exception-only basis. This approach will ensure the report is brought forward only when specific input or action is required from Board members, with routine elements incorporated into the BAU Delivery Update. The Board were keen to keep this paper as a standing item on the agenda, so the proposal was rejected.

7. Annual Events

7.1 The Programme Delivery Manager, SPPA provided a brief overview of Annual Events, of which the key points were:

- Latest position on Annual Benefit Statements-Remediable Service Statements (ABS-RSS).
- Lessons learned for ABS and future ways of working.
- Annual Allowance (AA).
- Employer support on i-Connect engagement.

7.2 The Board noted the update and further discussed:

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- How members awaiting statements could best be supported. SPPA shares drafts of member communications with the Communications sub-group ahead of formally issuing them to scheme members. It was also noted that the next round of communications for RSS is scheduled for April.
- The use of data analytics on member newsletters to assess engagement levels and obtain feedback. The SPPA Communications Lead offered to share the feedback received with Board members

T0326.01	SPPA to share with Board members by April 2026 feedback received from scheme members in relation to member newsletters.
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- Discrepancies in the reported employer sign-ups to i-Connect. SPPA agreed to review the figures and report back to Board members. It was further noted that additional work remains to secure full employer participation, and SPPA may approach Board members for support where engagement proves difficult. Board members confirmed they are willing to assist.

T0326.02	SPPA to share with the Board by March 2026 the details of employers who have not responded to the Agency's request for data in relation to i-Connect to enable Board members to engage with those employers and encourage participation.
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8. Legislative Projects

8.1 The Programme Delivery Manager, SPPA provided an overview of Legislative Projects, noting key points:

- A recent slowdown in IC processing due to data issues from some employers, resulting in cases being handled manually rather than through automated processes. Data cleansing activity is ongoing to eradicate these issues.
- Work is continuing on the processing of ill-health cases.
- On Deferred Choice (DC), the pensions increase has been implemented and SPPA is moving forward with cases
- No specific update was available on the Pensions Dashboard, with a more detailed update to be provided in the September 2026 Board meeting.

8.2 The Board noted the update and further discussed:

- Additional insights into current data issues have been gained from lessons learned on Police and Firefighters' cases.

9. Member Engagement

9.1 The Strategic Communications Lead provided an overview of Member Engagement, noting key points:

- The Teachers' Communications sub-group was highlighted, noting that Remedy communications and member newsletters remain key areas of focus. An overview of the sub-group's work was provided, and a further request for volunteers from the Teachers' Pension Board was issued.
- Strategic communications around Engage had been issued around the launch of the system.
- A regular cycle of communications for members awaiting RSS is underway and will continue until all statements have been issued.

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- The coming months will be particularly demanding from a communications perspective, and the team is providing as much support as possible to the CEO and wider organisation. The team welcomed feedback from Board members on the effectiveness of ongoing communications and any areas where further refinement may be helpful.

9.2 The Board noted the update and further discussed:

- Engagement between meetings with employer representatives to ensure SPPA’s messaging reaches members.
- The possibility of a survey to be issued to members around engagement and possible improvements. It was agreed that the Strategic Communications Lead would speak offline with Board members to look at potential options and seek input from union representatives.
- Alternative communication methods instead of e-mail.

10. Update on Scheme Risks

10.1 The Governance, Risk and Control Manager provided an overview of Scheme Risks, noting that the paper was written from an Agency perspective with a Teachers’ Pension Board lens. The top SPPA risks that impacted the Teachers’ Pension scheme were as follows:

- Operational Remedy
- Data Strategy
- Data Quality
- Cyber Security
- Size and Shape of Agency
- Annual Events
- IT Effectiveness

10.2 The Board noted the update and further discussed:

- Cyber security, recognising it as a significant risk and exploring whether there is any additional support the Board could offer in this area. SPPA acknowledged that the current red risk position is not ideal, though it does represent an improvement. It was noted that internal capacity to undertake thorough cyber security checks and testing had only recently become available, although both Heywood and the Scottish Government (SG) have their own established cyber security measures in place. SPPA advised that, following completion of a full review, the risk score is expected to reduce by the next reporting period.
- Data and Remedy remain the principal risks; however, based on the discussions at the meeting, these are expected to reduce by the next meeting.
- The SPPA Risk Team’s work on assurance mapping, which is being progressed in close collaboration with Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) colleagues to strengthen focus and mitigation of key risks. It was noted that further activity planned for the year includes a risk maturity assessment.
- Whether actions to mitigate risks could be incorporated into future papers. SPPA agreed to explain scoring and control confidence, and highlight key mitigating actions in the next report.

T0326.03	SPPA to share with Board members by the next meeting in September 2026 the key actions and controls relevant to Teachers’ scheme against Agency risks, alongside SG guidance on Control Confidence and how SPPA uses it.
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11. Horizon Scanning

11.1 The ongoing difficulties around the recruitment of new Teachers were raised, and how this issue could potentially impact the Teachers' Pension Board. It was noted that this matter could be discussed at the Teachers' Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) meeting, if necessary.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 The next scheduled meeting is the SPPA Governance Seminar on Thursday 21 May 2026, with the Chair encouraging Board members to attend.

Summary of new Actions

T0326.01	SPPA to share with Board members by April 2026 feedback received from scheme members in relation to member newsletters.
T0326.02	SPPA to share with the Board by March 2026 the details of employers who have not responded to the Agency's request for data in relation to i-Connect to enable Board members to engage with those employers and encourage participation.
T0326.03	SPPA to share with Board members by the next meeting in September 2026 the key actions and controls relevant to Teachers' scheme against Agency risks, alongside Scottish Government (SG) guidance on Control Confidence and how SPPA uses it.