



Surrey Fire & Rescue Authority

Pension Board Report

2023/2024 – Q4

Contents

01 Overview

02 Member Self Service

03 Common Data

04 Membership

05 Completed Cases Overview

06 Completed Cases by Month

07 Complaints

01 Overview

Regulations and Guidance

January 2024

LGA issued Bulletin 77

Bulletin 77 covered many topics with the following actions arising, see below:-

The Police and Firefighters' Pensions (Remediable Service) (Amendment) regulations 2024:

Readers should note the amendment regulations and ensure that any special members who have service within the remedy period are assessed for ill health under both the legacy and reformed schemes accordingly.

Request for data:

FRAs are asked to provide Matthew's project implementation data and opt out data to bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk by 21 February 2024, using the separate data request spreadsheets.

Matthews – GAD Calculator – Second version and query log:

FRAs should:

- Read the updated user guide and query log.
- Download the new version of the calculator from the beginning of February
- Ensure that they have the most up to date version of the calculator when they update the spreadsheet at the beginning of the month to allow for the latest interest rates.
- Should share this information with anyone who is carrying out the Matthews second options exercise.

Firefighters' Pension Added Pension Compensation:

Scheme managers and administrators are recommended to read the guidance, follow the process, and use the template supporting documents to assist the process. This process should be completed by 31 March 2024.

Age Discrimination remedy – Data Sharing Agreement and guidance:

- FRAs should use the Data Sharing Agreement for cases where a firefighter was employed by a previous FRA in the remedy period.
- FRAs are also advised to follow the guidance document when obtaining the data to ensure that the data is with administrators by 31 March 2024.

Age Discrimination remedy – Remediable Service Statement (RSS) factsheet:

We would recommend that scheme managers liaise with their pensions administrator to establish what plans are in place for producing an RSS for eligible individuals.

Injury pension calculation for a retained firefighter appointed after 5 April 2006:

Administrators to review how they have calculated injury pensions for retained firefighter appointed after 5 April 2006 and consider whether a recalculation is required.

SAB Levy 2023-24 – Request for purchase order numbers:

FRAs to provide a valid purchase order number, stating the number of employees eligible to join one of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes as of 1 April 2023, using the form provided with the SAB 2023-34 levy letter.

HMRC Pension Input aggregation consultation: Readers are encouraged to read the consultation and provide any comments to HMRC by 26 February 2024.

HMRC Newsletter – January 2024:

HMRC have contacted all FRAs with information bespoke to them, relating to the Matthews first exercise and national insurance refunds, and have asked that you reply accordingly. Please provide complete information to HMRC by 5th April 2024, any information supplied after this date will not be progressed or chased.

Local Pension Board (LPB) Training Sessions: Readers are asked to make their LPB members aware of the training sessions and encourage them to book onto a session.

February 2024

LGA issued Bulletin 78

Bulletin 78 covered many topics with the following actions arising, see below:-

The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024:

Readers should make themselves aware of the amendments.

FRAs should ensure that pension contributions are deducted from carer's leave and is included in pensionable pay when carer's leave comes into force.

Administrators should ensure that if they haven't already, that they have applied the necessary administration changes needed to correct the error that occurred in the 2021 and 2022 revaluation orders for affected members' benefits.

Age Discrimination Remedy – Informal guidance note for accounting and finance:

FRAs should note the informal guidance and ensure that they are:

- paying any corrections to pension benefits (including the applicable interest) through the pension account,
- paying any compensation amounts through the operating account, and
- keeping robust records of the recommended data separately

Age Discrimination Remedy – Ill Health reassessments:

FRAs are encouraged to signpost members who are hesitant in agreeing to the re-assessment process to the factsheet.

Age Discrimination Remedy – Remediable Service Statement member video:

Readers are encouraged to direct members to the website and video, should members have any queries relating to the RSS.

Matthews GAD Calculator cost sharing: FRAs to complete the purchase order form and return to bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk by 21 March 2024.

Matthews GAD calculator version 2 corrections: FRAs should:

- Note the issues raised with Version 2 of the GAD calculator, and if they have the relevant calculation types which are affected, should stockpile those cases that haven't yet been processed and reprocess those that have been when the updated calculator is published. •
- Ensure that they have registered access to the calculator interest update files and the associated update email notification distribution list by contacting firematthewscalculator@gad.gov.uk

Matthews – Supporting documents: FRAs are recommended to use the updated version of the Individual Statement of Details documents.

Scheme Management and Administration (SMA) Committee survey: Administrators are encouraged to complete the survey and respond by 15 March 2024

HMRC Lifetime Allowance guidance newsletter – February 2024:

Readers should note and ensure that processes are updated to reflect:

- The removal of the requirement to test against the 'permitted maximum' on the pension commencement excess lump sum.
- The Event 24 reporting requirements
- The additional information that is needed from members upon retirement relating to any RBCs from other schemes.
- The transitional rules and the impact on retiring members.

HMRC Newsletter 156 – February 2024:

Readers are encouraged to:

- read Newsletter 156 – February 2024, paying particular attention to the section on Public Service Pensions remedy – tax treatment of interest.
- review the slides from the joint police and fire coffee afternoon/pensions chat on Thursday 29 February 2024

Local Pension Board (LPB) Training Sessions: Readers are asked to make their LPB members aware of the training sessions and encourage them to book onto a session.

March 2024

LGA issued Bulletin 79

Bulletin 79 covered many topics with the following actions arising, see below:-

Age Discrimination Remedy – GAD tax and contributions calculator:

FRAAs should ensure that they are using the most up to date version of the calculator and guidance.

Age Discrimination Remedy – GAD standalone Interest Calculator:

Administrators are encouraged to use the interest calculator to ensure consistency across the sector.

Age Discrimination Remedy – Immediate Choice Remediable Service Statement (ICRSS) roll out update to timetable and member communications:

FRAAs to appropriately contact the priority cohorts and inform them on the status of their RSS.

Age Discrimination Remedy – data sharing:

FRAAs and administrators to familiarise themselves with the revisions made to the document.

Matthews – GAD calculator:

FRAAs should ensure that they are using the most recent version of the calculator and are recommended not to make local copies of the calculator.

Matthews - Project Implementation data request:

FRAAs to complete the Project Implementation data request and return to bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk by 21 April 2024

FPS annual update:

Administrators should ensure that they are using the most up to date revaluation rates.

Bluelight inbox and query form:

FRAAs and administrators are requested to use the Bluelight inbox for email correspondence with the Bluelight team. FRAAs and readers are also asked to complete a query form when submitting a technical query.

The Carer's Leave Regulations 2024:

FRAAs are to ensure that from 6 April 2024 they are deducting pension contributions from carer's leave and should include this in pensionable pay.

Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) – Pension Dashboard connection guidance:

Scheme managers should ensure that they familiarise themselves with the connection guidance and are ready to connect by the deadline of 31 October 2025.

Security to protect against data breaches.

You may be aware of some high-profile data breaches that have been in the news recently, affecting well known professional services firms. We understand that the information leaked includes core personal member authentication information and XPS have taken steps to ensure members data we hold is not breached.

Member Authentication

XPS take the security of members information very seriously. Due to the risks of cybercrime, fraud associated with postal and email interception, or impersonation, it is important that the processes we use are robust. That is why we have standard processes to ensure a consistent approach is adopted for all our clients. Our current policy to authenticate a member is to ask them for 4 pieces of personal information.

- Full name
- Date of Birth (partial)
- Current Address
- NI number (partial)

However, we understand that all these data items have been compromised by at least one of the data breaches. This means that the information required to pass our security checks needs to be strengthened. To do this, we will ask the member for an additional piece of information that is unique to them and was not compromised in the breaches.

We have implemented changes that will ask members for additional personal information including their system ID, or where they do not have this, dates of joining or leaving the scheme or the related employment.

Data Transfers

There is also a low risk that there will be an increase in malicious software attacks from data transfers. Our IT Cyber Protection team have issued guidance to the whole of XPS (including the admin teams) on what to do if they receive any emails or data transfers. Data transferred through the XPS Secure site or file servers is automatically scanned for threats on receipt and the checks are repeated every night.

Ongoing

XPS will continue to monitor the position. If there are new developments, and additional security checks are needed, we will update our processes and keep you informed.

FRAs may want to highlight the risks of cybercrime and identity fraud in any upcoming member communications.

PASA Accreditation

We are delighted to advise you that XPS Administration has achieved accreditation against the PASA Pensions Administration Standards.

PASA Accreditation recognises the organisations in our industry that have evidenced compliance with the PASA Standards. This accreditation recognises the high-quality pensions administration service that XPS provides its clients.

PASA Accreditation is an independent assessment of compliance with the PASA Standards. The assessment requires applicants to:

- > Submit evidence of operational compliance with the PASA Standards; and
- > Complete an on-site review by an independent assessor to validate the evidence provided for each site where services are provided from.

The Pension Regulator has stated that good administration can be demonstrated by independent accreditation. XPS Administration will be subject to an annual assertion to show we are continuing to maintain our high standards and will be independently audited every three years.



Additional Work / Previous Minutes

Use of tracing service to confirm addresses for those members approaching, or beyond, Normal Retirement Age

Member tracing to form part of dashboard readiness review and report.

Conditional Data Testing

Scheme Specific data testing tools have been purchased and training sessions are commencing on this new software from 25th April 2024. This training should allow XPS to identify data gaps and this will be fed into the dashboard readiness programme.

Analysis of late tasks

Further to your request to provide analysis regarding the work completed outside of the KPI periods.

This is being looked at within the Administration team. It is expected that this will become available. We are looking at the best ways to present this information as it is something that we are keen to provide. A Verbal update in respect of the longest failure will be provided to the Board.

MARS Estimates

XPS have been working with SFRA to prioritise estimates required to support a specific scheme. So far, it is understood that 6 estimates have been requested and produced in enhanced timescales.

02 Member Self Service

Analysis for member self service when compared to the previous quarter show a slight increase across all membership cohorts.

Quarter 4	REGISTERED	ACCOUNT DISABLED	ACTIVATION LINK SENT	NOT REGISTERED	TOTAL	% Up Take
Actives	315	2	4	296	615	51.5%
Deferred	104	0	5	179	288	36.1%
Pensioner	302	5	15	540	857	35.8%
Widow/Dep	21	0	1	137	159	13.2%
Total	742	7	25	1,152	1,919	39.0%

<i>Fire Authority Averages for comparison</i>						
	REGISTERED	ACCOUNT DISABLED	ACTIVATION LINK SENT	NOT REGISTERED	TOTAL	% Up Take
Actives	15.4%	0.2%	0.7%	13.8%	862	15.4%
Deferred	6.2%	0.1%	0.3%	13.3%	348	6.2%
Pensioner	14.4%	0.2%	0.7%	27.8%	810	14.4%
Widow/Dep	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	36	0.6%
Total	36.7%	0.5%	1.7%	61.7%	2,056	36.7%



Age Profiles for Actives who have registered for self service

Under 22	0.00%	Aged 46 - 50	20.00%
Aged 23 - 25	1.29%	Aged 51 - 55	22.90%
Aged 26 - 30	9.68%	Aged 56 - 60	6.77%
Aged 31 - 35	10.00%	Aged 61 - 65	1.61%
Aged 36 - 40	8.71%	Aged 65+	0.32%
Aged 41 - 45	18.71%		

03 Common Data

Surrey Fire						
Data Test	Common data score			Previous Quarter		
	Max Population	Total Fails	% OK	Total Fails	% OK	
NINO	1951	1	99.95%	2	99.91%	
Surname	1951	0	100.00%	0	100.00%	
Forename / Inits	1951	0	100.00%	0	100.00%	
Sex	1951	0	100.00%	0	100.00%	
Title	1951	0	100.00%	0	100.00%	
DoB Present	1951	0	100.00%	0	100.00%	
Dob Consistent	1951	0	100.00%	0	100.00%	
DJS	1951	0	100.00%	0	100.00%	
Status	1951	0	100.00%	0	100.00%	
Last Status Event	1951	5	99.74%	5	99.78%	
Status Date	1951	16	99.18%	17	99.27%	
No Address	1951	0	100.00%	9	99.61%	
No Postcode	1951	9	99.54%	18	99.23%	
Address (All)	1951	43	97.80%	56	97.85%	
Postcode (All)	1951	51	97.39%	64	97.51%	
Members with a Fail	1951	28	98.56%	30	98.71%	
Members with Multiple Fails	1951	44	97.74%	57	97.81%	
Total Fails	1951	72	96.31%	87	96.52%	

The Common Data reports are run on a quarterly basis, just after the quarter end.

Data quality is good and where we have failures here, it is likely that at least for some of them, they cannot be rectified.

An example of this is the NI Number – we currently pay pensions to people of all ages. For Surrey Fire and Rescue, your oldest dependent is 102 and the youngest 10.

For children in receipt of a dependents pension, they will not receive a NI Number of their own until they reach age 16. We therefore have to create a temporary NI Number which carries a prefix of TN, this is not a recognised NI Number, and will therefore fail the NI Number quality test. These will naturally be resolved in the passing of time.

The tests for Title are quite specific. Missing titles will fail, as will some of the lesser-known titles. Occasionally, if a member set has been imported and there are additional spaces within the Title field, these can also cause fails.

Address / Post Code Fails can occur either where the data is missing, or, where the address does not meet the standards as dictated by the UK postal service. Typically, we see that the deferred cohort are those with the most missing fails and overseas address can fail as they do not meet UK standards for format / layout.

04 Membership

This table is designed to be a very quick, at a glance, display of the membership movements within the schemes. This will be provided on a quarterly basis at each meeting on a rolling year basis.

Quarter 4 2023-2024

Scheme	Actives	Deferred	Pensioner	Widow	Dependant
Old-FPS	1 ▲	68 -	797 -	147 ▲	7 -
New-NFPS	2 ▼	101 -	24 ▲	2 ▲	0 -
CARE - 2015	613 ▲	119 ▲	32 ▲	2 -	1 -
Total	616 ▲	288 ▲	853 ▲	151 ▲	8 -

Quarter 3 2023-2024

Scheme	Actives	Deferred	Pensioner	Widow	Dependant
Old-FPS	0 -	68 -	797 ▲	146 ▲	7 -
New-NFPS	4 -	101 ▼	23 -	1 -	0 -
CARE - 2015	592 ▼	115 ▼	28 -	2 -	1 -
Total	596 ▼	284 ▼	848 ▲	149 ▲	8 -

Please note all active member records have been moved across to the 2015 scheme with effect from 1/4/2022. The reducing active numbers within non-CARE – 2015 are where records are being cleansed. The two record still denoted as in legacy schemes are to be deleted.

05 Completed Cases Overview

Current Year 2023/2024

Surrey Fire	Cases completed	Cases completed within target	Cases completed outside target	Cases: % within target
April	40	36	4	90%
May	46	39	7	85%
June	73	64	9	88%
Quarter 1	159	139	20	87%
July	88	86	2	98%
August	33	23	10	70%
September	36	27	9	75%
Quarter 2	157	136	21	87%
October	20	15	5	75%
November	6	5	1	83%
December	8	6	2	75%
Quarter 3	34	26	8	76%
January	25	15	10	60%
February	36	13	23	36%
March	41	29	12	71%
Quarter 4	102	57	45	56%
Year - Total	452	358	94	79%

This table is designed to be a very quick, at a glance, display of the total cases completed within the year. Further details on specific workflows are shown below.

06 Completed Cases by Month

January 2024					
Service	Days	Minimum Target	Cases	Within Target	Actual Performance
Death in Service	5	100	0	0	0
Death of a pensioner	5	100	0	0	0
Deferred Benefits	10	90	0	0	0
Divorce Cases	30	100	0	0	0
Estimates	10	100	2	0	0
General	10	100	15	9	60
Processing new entrants	10	90	2	2	100
Refunds	10	100	0	0	0
Retirement Actual	10	100	3	3	100
Retirement Options	10	100	1	0	0
Transfers – in (Calculation)	10	90	1	0	0
Transfers – in (Payment received)	10	90	0	0	0
Transfers – Out (Calculation)	10	100	0	0	0
Transfers – Out (Payment)	10	100	0	0	0
Variations	10	90	1	1	100

February 2024					
Service	Days	Minimum Target	Cases	Within Target	Actual Performance
Death in Service	5	100	0	0	0
Death of a pensioner	5	100	2	1	50
Deferred Benefits	10	90	4	2	50
Divorce Cases	30	100	0	0	0
Estimates	10	100	1	0	0
General	10	100	27	8	30
Processing new entrants	10	90	1	1	100
Refunds	10	100	0	0	0
Retirement Actual	10	100	0	0	0
Retirement Options	10	100	0	0	0
Transfers – in (Calculation)	10	90	0	0	0
Transfers – in (Payment received)	10	90	0	0	0
Transfers – Out (Calculation)	10	100	0	0	0
Transfers – Out (Payment)	10	100	0	0	0
Variations	10	90	1	1	100

March 2024					
Service	Days	Minimum Target	Cases	Within Target	Actual Performance
Death in Service	5	100	1	0	0
Death of a pensioner	5	100	1	0	0
Deferred Benefits	10	90	0	0	0
Divorce Cases	30	100	1	1	100
Estimates	10	100	1	0	0
General	10	100	9	1	11
Processing new entrants	10	90	22	22	100
Refunds	10	100	0	0	0
Retirement Actual	10	100	1	1	100
Retirement Options	10	100	3	2	67
Transfers – in (Calculation)	10	90	0	0	0
Transfers – in (Payment received)	10	90	0	0	0
Transfers – Out (Calculation)	10	100	0	0	0
Transfers – Out (Payment)	10	100	0	0	0
Variations	10	90	2	2	100

Task analysis - Fails

A verbal update in relation to task failures will be provided to the Board.

07 Complaints

XPS has received a high level of contact from members in the post Remedy period particularly around the time it has taken for them to receive retirement options forms and estimates of benefits.

Our latest Position Statement goes into more detail about the challenges we have faced since 1 October (particularly with the loss of automation and the manual nature of our retirement calculations since that time). The Position statement also summarises the steps we have taken and are currently implementing to rectify the delays in the service that we have been providing.

XPS have recently deployed our own automated calculation tool within the administration team which is reducing the processing time for retirement estimates etc.

Further resources are being introduced to the administration team to help return our service to pre-1 October levels - offers have been accepted for these additional positions and they will all start with XPS shortly.


Where a member has contacted us with any concerns, we have attempted to explain the delays, apologise for them and to resolve the member's case as quickly as possible.

We will continue to monitor these and address any concerns alongside yourselves, and we appreciate your support throughout this period whilst we embed these changes.

There have been two complaints received within the latest quarter:

1: Contingent Decisions - Member wishes to complain about the time taken to respond to a Contingent Decision case re Added Years.

2: Member received information late in respect of a forthcoming retirement, pushing back the earliest date that the commutation lump sum could be paid.



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