

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Pension Board

**12 December 2023 at 1330
on Teams & Committee Room 4
County Hall, Chichester**

1. **Apologies**
Giles Sparks
2. **Declarations of Interests**
PR asked if there were any declarations of interest and the question was raised as to whether there should be a union rep in addition to Joe Weir as he has moved to an executive position now. **ACTION** PR will follow this up with JW
3. **Minutes of the last meeting**
Minutes agreed by the Board.
4. **Urgent Matters**
None raised
5. **Risk Register**
Report by the Chief Fire Officer and Scheme Manager

Recommendation on page 3 - that the Board provide feedback on the content of the risk register.

PR - There is no particular change within the ratings or mitigations. There is an increasing risk around the comms piece for those affected my Matthews and McCloud, so the comms work is very much appreciated. It is an ongoing topic for a lot for people.

No issues raised on the Risk Register.
6. **Pension Administration**
Report by the Chief Fire Officer and Scheme Manager

RW advised that Board that the team only have October data so Andy will be able to give information from the latest figures.
 - In November, all cases were processed on time and within the SLA. With regard to our online presence, 58.2% of WSFRS membership are signed up to the portal which is great progress and an ongoing journey.

AL drew attention to the following:

- The administration team continue to work on their cyber security. Another penetration test was run in Nov, with positive results and we will share results in full with RW shortly.
- The action plan has been closed so now as it has moved to BAU, vigilance and staff training.

PR - could you please clarify the calls abandoned rate?

RW – this will be for a number of reasons, for example the individuals abandoning the calls whilst waiting, possibly because they switch to online access as explained in the recorded message. In November the average wait time was 39 seconds with no calls abandoned.

AL - McCloud activity update: during October the administration team provided 3 remedial statements for staff wishing to retire. Statements required by April will be done manually rather than via an automated system. Once the system is set up, the admin team will be able to automate these statements.

RW – those statements needing to be completed by April are nine individuals and it is not an unmanageable manual process.

JW - when is software likely to be available? Whilst nine is manageable, it quickly becomes unmanageable when numbers increase. RW – we are waiting for an update, but the supplier is impacted by the changes to the law. The team speak weekly to the supplier, and we will update the board at the next meeting. We are hopeful that it will be operational by July/Aug 2024

Ill Health cases update – one has been assessed and the two other cases needed to go to the IQMP and would then be referred to Hampshire once a decision had been made.

7 Communications Report

Report by the Chief Fire Officer and Scheme Manager

RW - Feedback on the FAQs would be appreciated, the main Hampshire pension services website has newly produced videos, building up more ways of communicating to members.

PR – it would be good to see it on the WSCC pensions website when the letters go out at the end of December. If you have any questions or suggestions around Comms, please raise with the Chair.

ACTION DB will share offline with the Chair some LGPS training information sessions which could be valuable to our members

Recommendation – approved by the Board

8 Training Schedule Review

Report by the Chief Fire Officer and Scheme Manager

RW reminded everyone of the continued request that training is notified to the team so that it can be logged. Consideration is being given to available training including sessions being developed by the LGA. As soon as there are dates for this we will make sure the board is aware. PR confirmed that at least one of RA/DB/PR to attend. No further issued raised.

9. AOB

The issue of a union rep was raised. PR explained the earlier question about whether it needs to be an employee rep who is not also on the executive board. JW explained that he will be attending as a member of the scheme and as a Union Rep, as someone with a very good knowledge going forward. **ACTION** PR/JW to discuss this outside of meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Pensions Board will be 10.00 a.m. 14 March 2024

Meeting concluded at 14:20