

PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION REPORT – 28th March 2023

This report provides a progress update on a number of projects being simultaneously undertaken, along with providing information on relevant issues in the administration of scheme benefits.

1. Regulatory update –

- a. McCloud/Sargeant update – You will recall from the previous report that the remedy would require the recalculation all pensions (including dependants pensions), death grants, and deferred benefits calculated since 1st April 2014 for those that were active on 31st March 2012. This will require all employers to provide the hours each part time scheme member, including any changes, they have worked between 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2022. All Employers have also been provided with data extracts to undertake data comparisons and identify any issues. Data reconciliation and validation is progressing well and query resolution is underway. Once amending regulations are issued our software supplier will be able to reflect the changes in the pensions system. The current expectation is that regulations will be issued before the summer recess as they must be in place by 1st October 2023. Regulatory clarity is also required to deal with data discrepancies and cases where the employer no longer exists or is not able to provide data.
- b. Pru – It was identified at the UK Technical Group that there had been a deterioration in service levels experienced by funds nationally. This was raised at the both the Local Government Pensions Committee and the National Scheme Advisory Board who met with representatives from Pru. UK Technical Group representatives have met directly with PRU in October 2022 and February 2023 to review service levels during the intervening period. Funds nationally have seen a general improvement in disinvestment timescales, however, there remains a general issue regarding communication response times for scheme members, Employers and Funds. Further updates will be provided at the next meeting on service improvements by the Pru.
- c. Dashboards – The DWP issued a written ministerial statement on 2nd March 2023 announcing delays to pension dashboards connection deadlines. The Pensions Schemes Act requires schemes to provide information to a pensions dashboard in order that individuals can access pensions information in one place online. The Government hopes this will support individuals to plan for their retirement whilst giving better understanding of their pensions. Public sector pension schemes have not yet been informed of their revised connection date. We are continuing to work with our software provider to meet this legislative requirement.

- d. Revaluation date change – DLUHC issued a consultation on 10th February 2023 which closed on 24th February 2023 changing the revaluation date for LGPS benefits from 1st April to 6th April with effect from 6th April 2023. The amendment seeks to lessen the Impact of high inflation on the annual allowance. As things currently stand, LGPS career average benefits will increase by 10.1% in 22/23 but the inflationary figure used in the annual allowance calculation will be 3.1%. By moving the annual revaluation to 6th April, both the annual allowance inflation and the annual revaluation will use the same September CPI figure.
- e. Budget Announcement – the March budget introduced changes to both the Lifetime Allowance (LTA) and Annual Allowance (AA). We will need to wait for the Finance Bill for clarity on how it will impact upon LGPS members. It appears that from 6th April 2023 the LTA tax charge is being abolished and from 6th April 2024 the LTA will be removed altogether, however, it is anticipated that regulatory amendments will be made to restrict the maximum tax free cash a member may elect to receive. The AA will increase from £40,000 to £60,000 from April 2023.

2. Breaches Register

Regulation 18(5) of the LGPS Regulations 2013 prescribes that there is a time limit for payment of a refund of pension contributions:

“An administering authority shall refund contributions to a person entitled under paragraph (1) when the person requests payment, or on the expiry of a period of five years beginning with the date the person’s active membership ceased if no request is made before then or, if the person attains age 75 before then, on the day before attaining age 75.”

The National Technical Group recommend to SAB, to change the regulations concerning the payment of a refund to reflect the position prior to 1 April 2014 i.e. to remove the prescription that requires an administering authority to pay a refund on the expiry of a period of five years beginning with the date the person’s active membership ceased if no request is made before then.

In making this recommendation the group acknowledged that interest would be added up to the date of payment, as opposed to on the expiry of 5 years and if a fully completed mandate is not returned by the member, no further action would take place i.e. the group agreed not to waste time or money on using Tracing services in respect of members who have been contacted repeatedly and do not reply. The SAB have made recommendations to MHCLG.

The refunds scheduled to be automatically paid in November 2022 to February 2023 have been included on the breaches register as the scheme members have not replied in order for the refund to be paid.

3. I-connect

In order to improve the timeliness of data flow from scheme employers to the administration section, a monthly update system called 'i-connect' has been implemented.

Further development work has continued with employers to 'on board' them in order that data can be transferred electronically. The table below shows the employers who are active on i-connect. In order to expedite the transition to electronic transmission of data, Pembrokeshire College, Coleg Ceredigion and Coleg Sir Gar have all be provided with a spreadsheet template to provide updates similar to i-connect. This process is known colloquially as 'Monthly Updates'. Many of the other smaller employers already utilise 'Monthly Updates'.

Coleg Ceredigion and Coleg Sir Gar are continuing to work with their payroll provider to ensure the data required is extracted and inputted into the correct fields on the spreadsheet. This is progressing well and further test files have been received. Pembrokeshire College have provided test extracts and are working on resolving the outstanding queries identified with their payroll provider before submitting further files.

Employer	i-Connect status
ABERYSTWYTH TOWN COUNCIL	Active
ADAPT	Active
BURRY PORT MARINA LTD	Active
CAREERS WALES WEST	Active
CARMARTHEN TOWN COUNCIL	Active
CARMARTHENSHIRE AVS	Active
CARMARTHENSHIRE C C	Active
COLEG SIR GAR	
CARMARTHENSHIRE FED OF YFC	Active
CEREDIGION AVO	Active
CEREDIGION C C	Active
COLEG CEREDIGION	
COOMB CHESHIRE HOME	Active
CWARTER BACH COMMUNITY COUNCIL	Active
CWMAMMAN TOWN COUNCIL	Active
DYFED-POWYS POLICE	
GORSLAS COMMUNITY COUNCIL	Active
GRWP GWALIA	Active
IAITH CYFYNGEDIG	Active
KIDWELLY TOWN COUNCIL	Active
LLANBADARN FAWR COUMMUNITY	Active
LLANEDI COMMUNITY COUNCIL	Active
LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL	Active
LLANELLI TOWN COUNCIL	Active
LLANGENNECH COMMUNITY COUNCIL	Active

LLANNON COMMUNITY COUNCIL	Active
LLESIAINT DELTA WELLBEING LTD	Active
MENTER BRO DINEFWR	Active
MENTER CASTELL NEDD PT	Active
MENTER CWM GWENDRAETH	Active
MENTER GORLLEWIN SIR GAR	Active
MID & WEST WALES FIRE	
NARBERTH AND DISTRICT SPORTS ASSOC	Active
PEMBREY AND BURRY PORT TOWN COUNCIL	Active
PEMBROKE DOCK TOWN COUNCIL	Active
PEMBROKE TOWN COUNCIL	Active
PEMBROKESHIRE AVS	Active
PEMBROKESHIRE C C	Active
PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NAT PARK	Active
PEMBROKESHIRE COLLEGE	
PLANED	Active
TAI CEREDIGION	Active
TENBY TOWN COUNCIL	Active
TRINITY COLLEGE	Active
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF WALES	Active
WELSH BOOKS COUNCIL	Active
WEST WALES ACTION FOR MENTAL HEALTH	Active
VALUATION TRIBUNAL FOR WALES	Active
VISIT PEMBROKESHIRE	Active

4. GMP Reconciliation

When a scheme member attains State Pension Age, they will be advised of the amount of Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) which is included in their pension. The GMP relates to the part of the pension for the period between April 1978 and April 1997 for which they were 'contracted-out'. For this period, the Scheme has to guarantee that their pension will be at least the same as it would have been, had they not been 'contracted-out'. Contracting out ceased in April 2016. HMRC have now stated that they will not be sending a statement to all individuals affected specifying who is responsible for paying their Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP). The pensions section will continue to reconcile the GMP values it holds for members with those calculated by HMRC. It ensures that all individuals recorded by HMRC against the fund are correct. The pensions section has reconciled 99.76% of the records held. Further information has also been issued to HMRC in order that they can amend their records, unfortunately, a response remains outstanding. Reconciliation work has also been undertaken in respect of active scheme members and 99.40% have been reconciled. Unfortunately HMRC have not responded to all the outstanding queries and therefore the reconciled data remains the same as the previous report.

5. Data Quality Reports

The scheduled data extract for December 2022 was completed and we have been provided with the Data Quality reports from our software provider. Below are the data scores for the LGPS.

LGPS Data area	Common data	Scheme specific data
December 2022 data score	99.00%	99.38%
December 2021 data score	99.20%	99.20%
December 2020 data score	99.10%	99.20%
December 2019 data score	98.30%	98.10%
December 2018 data score	96.50%	95.80%
December 2017 data score	94.50%	85.30%

6. Workflow

The tables overleaf detail the workflow statistics for the key tasks undertaken in the section for the period 1st October 2022 to 31st December 2022 in respect of the LGPS only. Please note that in circumstances where multiple iterations for the same calculation date have been undertaken, this is recorded as a single estimate. The workflow statistics are recorded on a quarterly basis.

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