

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

PENSION BOARD

8th December 2022

PENSION SECTION SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEMES MEMBERSHIP AS AT 30 NOVEMBER 2022

Active Firefighters	1,379
2015 scheme members	1,263
Non-members	116 (8.5%)
Pensioners	2,199
Dependants	416

The percentage of non-members is reasonably high, being approximately 1 in 11 or 12. The Pension Board may wish to consider reporting this to the Scheme Manager and providing suggestions as to an appropriate course of action to increase membership levels.

2. ANNUAL ACTIVITY LEVELS

- 2.1 During the current financial year the following levels of activity have been experienced:

Age Related Retirements	43
Ill Health Retirements	1
Opt outs	17
New joiners	71
Applications to transfer in/out	13

Opt out levels appear high as the service undertook Auto-Enrolment in August this year.

- 2.2 The section has also processed the requests shown in the table below and achieved the levels of performance shown.

Request type	Received	Average Response time in days
Benefit Estimate	15	39
CETV for Divorce	8	14
General Information	5	22

The number of requests recorded in the above categories remains low. The requests recorded are only those where a response is required within a given timeframe outlined within the disclosure regulations. The Pension Board should be aware that a large number of enquiries were received earlier in the year for various pieces of information not covered by the regulations. A lot of the enquiries were identical and we believe that members were encouraged to submit them by a single individual, with the intention of causing difficulties for the section. This matter will be raised direct with the Scheme Manager at the next opportunity and the Pension Board are asked to consider whether they need to report the action as well.

3. **INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE (IDRP)**

The Scheme Administrator is not involved in the administration of the Internal Dispute Procedure and as such statistics for this area are not available. Should the Pension Board wish these to be reported they should request the from the relevant section.

4. **Ill Health and Injury Pensioners**

Reviews of Ill Health and Injury pensioners should be being carried out on a regular basis. The scheme administrator provided data to the People Support Service regarding pensioners due cannot confirm that these reviews are now being carried out. The Pension Board may wish to review the process by which these reviews are made to ensure that they are taking place.

5. **McCloud Judgement – Update**

In line with the agreement made with the Scheme Manager Category 2 members are now being contacted and offered remedy in line with the above judgement.

As at the 30th November 2022 13 members remain to be contacted of which 4 are Memorandum of Understanding applicants. The service remains on target to have notified all remaining members in line with the agreed deadlines.

6. **KPI's**

The above information is presented in line with the standard KPI's previously reported. The Pension Board are asked to confirm that they are happy with the number and focus of the indicators provided. Should the Pension Board feel that additional information is required they are asked to provide the Scheme Manager with a report indicating the information that they feel is necessary for them to efficiently perform their function.

7. **System updates**

7.1 ALTAIR Member self service

Contact is due to be made with the system supplier to move this forward to the next stage, once it has been confirmed that User Acceptance Training has been completed satisfactorily.

7.2 ORACLE Fusion

10 Members have been contacted asking if they wish to take part in the trial. Only 3 responses have been received. A follow up email will now be sent.

8. **Certificate of existence**

Certificates of existence were issued to all pensioners over the age of 85 during September. These were due for return at the end of November. At this date 13 certificates remain unreturned. These members will be notified that as we have not had a return their benefits will be suspended from 1st January.

9. **Other areas of note**

The following areas are currently under development and in some cases subject to public consultation. The Pension Board may wish to consider whether they wish to respond to these consultations or otherwise provide updates to the Scheme Manager.

A) TpR single code of practice

A copy of the draft code can be found at this link.

<https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/-/media/thepensionsregulator/files/import/pdf/full-draft-new-code-of-practice.ashx>

B) Pension Dashboards

The dashboard programme website is here.

<https://www.pensionsdashboardsprogramme.org.uk/>

The programme launched it's latest consultation on 1st December. The Pension Board may wish to consider providing a response to this consultation.

C) Strike Action by FBU members

The FBU are currently balloting on strike action by their members. If taken this will have an impact on their pension benefits. The Pension Administration team will be working with the service and the representative bodies on communication regarding this.

Paul Gwynn
Payroll and Pensions Manager