

**Teachers' Pension Scheme Pension Board (TPSPB)  
Service Delivery and Maintenance of Data Sub-Committee**

**22 September 2021 - (by Teams teleconference)**

<b>Present:</b>		
Jackie Wood	Employer Representative – Chair	JW
Susan Anyan	Independent Pension Specialist	SA
Simon Lowe	Employer Representative	SL
Heather McKenzie	Member Representative	HM
Peter Strike	Member Representative	PS
Richard Giles	TP Head of Teachers' Pensions	RG
Amy Gibbs	TP Head of Governance and Risk	AG
Sue Crane	DfE TPS Senior Contract Manager	SC
Zaheer Patel	DfE Contract Manager	ZP
Kathryn Symms	DfE Casework & Correspondence & TPSPB (Secretariat)	KS
Kelly Elliott	DfE Secretariat	KE
Jackie Garside	DfE Finance Manager (Observer)	JG
Diana Wray	DfE Casework and Correspondence Manager (Observer)	DW
Apologies:	Nil	

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
Agenda Item 1	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW welcomed those in attendance – noting the observers and their roles.</li> <li>• The minutes from 16 June 2021 were ratified.</li> </ul>	
Agenda Item 2	<p><b>Actions from the previous meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SD2/240321 – A query from TPARG regarding revisions casework and the number of member overpayments occurring.</li> <li>• AG advised that the main reason for a revision was the receipt of service and salary information after a case had been processed.</li> <li>• SC drew attention to paragraph 8 of the Quarterly Report where it is noted that a review of the revisions service level was planned. The information would be used for SLA 3 to ensure the right elements were being measured in the processing of revisions, and that the measures were more impactful.</li> <li>• AG advised that a lot of work was taking place within the revision space, including automation, and working with employers to bring volumes down.</li> <li>• JW noted that these discussions had made it clearer why revisions took place. She asked AG to provide an update in the Quarterly Report for March about the ongoing work.</li> <li>• JW noted that all other actions had been closed or will be discussed under the relevant agenda item at this meeting.</li> </ul>	
Agenda Item 3	<p><b>Bereavements Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AG drew the sub-committee's attention to the increase in the volume of bereavement cases from 2018 to July 2021, and highlighted the typically bigger caseload between January to July.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She advised that 8 staff had been added to the team since 2019 – now 26 staff. However, although attrition rates are low, complex training requirements mean new starters cannot be brought in quickly when replacing leavers.</li> <li>• Danielle Barker, the new manager, had found that processing arrangements were leading to failed SLAs. Previously, information would be requested, and a calculation case would be opened immediately. The new process means that all the information is requested upfront before the case is moved on to the calculation stage. The SLA has not changed, but the processes are now more aligned to it.</li> <li>• This is better for the member because it is clear what is needed before the case can be processed. It is also better for team morale as they can see an improvement in SLA performance - August and so far, September SLAs have been met.</li> <li>• SC reiterated that the contractual requirements has not changed and SLA measures remained the same, it was just the process that had changed. As the service lets period ended on 1 August, she had sought reassurance that the revised process would deliver the 10-day processing deadline.</li> <li>• PS was pleased to see progress, as bereavement cases are very important. He noted SLA 12a and 12b had improved. However, he did note the Guardian’s unflattering report of bereavement handling and was keen for there to be a proactive approach going forward.</li> <li>• SC acknowledged that this article had confirmed the need for improvements in the process, including an escalation to management when waiting for 3<sup>rd</sup> party information and an increased level of management oversight. Reporting to the Department has been enhanced. SC suggested that Danielle Barker explained the process changes in more detail in December.</li> <li>• SC mentioned SLA 12c has failed, but is improving. She noted the length of time to answer bereavement calls was never in excess of 1 minute, but she wanted to see that nearer 30 seconds consistently.</li> <li>• JW noted that the tracker report had no outstanding 3<sup>rd</sup> party cases for July. ZP explained that all cases were closed at the end of July as part of the new processing and then re-opened on 1<sup>st</sup> August with the original start date, which caused the slight distortion of data in July.</li> <li>• SC advised that all SLAs regarding bereavement cases were achieved for August. JW commented that this information was very positive and reassuring and thanked those involved.</li> </ul>	SD1/220921
Agenda Item 4	<p><b>Contact Centre Performance Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ZP began by stating that staffing is an ever-moving position in Contact Centres and is therefore difficult to report precisely.</li> <li>• Benchmarking was conducted across other Capita Call Centres and this showed that attrition had continued to rise and peaked in March across the piece.</li> <li>• As TP were not achieving SLAs, a remediation plan, which includes a series of measures to drive improvement in performance, was put in place. A key action being to recruit two staff in advance of attrition.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups of new staff are currently being trained; a new group went live on 9<sup>th</sup> August and another on 9<sup>th</sup> September; and more recruitment is underway.</li> <li>• SL noted that the correlation between the spike in absence and attrition with poor performance, and asked how this would be used as a planning tool. AG confirmed that this was a robust capacity planning tool and all information fed into this. It tracked past information and future engagement campaigns, as well as future processing that may affect call volumes. This would inform future recruitment processes.</li> <li>• SA asked why the measures were not in place before and if they were, why they had not worked. She requested assurances that remediation would not have to be repeated.</li> <li>• AG explained that recruiting ahead of attrition required wider Capita approval, but this would continue to be in place going forward. Capacity planning was already in place previously, there was just a higher level of focus on it now. Danielle Barker would be taking the lead on this and would be in regular contact with the Contact Centre. Any issues would be communicated at the earliest point possible.</li> <li>• SA asked how the model would manage a scenario where 50% of the workforce was lost from the Contact Centre, and what contingency planning was in place.</li> <li>• AG advised that SC was receiving weekly reporting. Cross-skilling with other contracts; members being directed to alternative methods of communication, such as the new Web Chat function; the call-back facility; and overtime could be utilised.</li> <li>• PS noted the importance of effective resilience planning.</li> <li>• JW asked if Contact Centre staff were now back in the office and AG advised that predominately new starters were attending the office for training, but around ten staff were also back.</li> <li>• SC commented that a formal issue was raised with Capita in April, and asked for a remediation plan to be put in place. The most significant result of this plan was the commitment to always recruit two staff ahead of attrition. SC asked if this provided the Committee with the assurances they needed.</li> <li>• SL replied that this gave assurances to a degree, but further assurances would be required going forward, in particular that recruiting two ahead was still in place. SA agreed and noted that the issue was raised in April but the remediation plan was only just put into place in September.</li> <li>• AG explained that recruiting, vetting and training had all taken time, but that recruiting two ahead will alleviate that in future.</li> <li>• SA noted that there was a difference between attrition and absences, and that recruiting two ahead helps attrition, but not absence.</li> <li>• JW noted that it was positive that there was a plan in place and the sub-committee is reassured by the plan. However, it was agreed that this should continue to be monitored through the quarterly report.</li> </ul>	
<p>Agenda Item 5</p>	<p><b>Deferred Members Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW noted that paper 8 was created following the last Board</li> </ul>	

	<p>meeting where it was requested that the need for deferred membership tracing be investigated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ZP stated that Capita undertook such an exercise in 2015. This resulted in only a low number of submitted claims from deferred members.</li> <li>• Improvements have been made regarding contact with members. For example, a new leaver indicator is used to encourage leavers to register for My Pension Online (MPO) if they aren't already, and they are issued with a leaver pack, which stresses the importance of making contact with the scheme.</li> <li>• ZP noted that the number of deferred members registered for an MPO had increased.</li> <li>• There is no campaign at this stage to target deferred members, but communication about Transitional Protection will be helpful for messaging about MPO registration. The Pension Dashboard will eventually be helpful to deferred members too.</li> <li>• The department felt that a further exercise at this stage was not a major priority, due to other important ongoing work such as Goodwin and Transitional Protection. Additionally, the last exercise was not particularly successful.</li> <li>• SC added that she was discussing with TP a change to the scope of Outcome Measure 14, so that it included deferred members. This would achieve good visibility on whether members leaving the profession had an MPO.</li> <li>• AG confirmed that from TP's perspective there were no administrative concerns with the paper's proposals.</li> <li>• SL asked if the previous exercise had been reviewed, if it included thresholds regarding exhaustion of trace and if there was any financial risk regarding deferred members.</li> <li>• AG advised that membership was included in the Scheme Valuation up to a certain age (75). Capita had considered the scope of the original project and whether anything could be done further, for example credit checks. This was determined to be an expensive pursuit.</li> <li>• SC stated that the department put considerable effort into motivating the supplier and utilising many avenues to advertise the scheme and contact current members, with the aim to be as visible as possible. The department's position has always been that all effort is made to be visible and accessible, so members know the onus is on them to claim their benefits.</li> <li>• SA commented that after reviewing the deferred section of TP's website she thought it difficult to locate, and the language used was not clear.</li> <li>• The sub-committee agreed that the deferred members guidance could be improved. SC stated that it would be helpful to address what deferred members could see/access in the IM&amp;C Sub-Committee.</li> <li>• JW noted that the sub-committee agreed and understood the rationale for not taking this item forward; and were reassured by SC's review of OM14.</li> </ul>	SD2/220921
Agenda Item 6	<p><b>Transitional Protection Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RG reported that the Cabinet Office had approved proposals</li> </ul>	

	<p>regarding Transitional Protection at the end of August. This enabled progression to the next step.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• However, there were unfortunately delays in the Finance Bill, which would affect some parts of the project, as this Bill will include information regarding tax and interest. This is likely to push back casework remediation from April 2022 to October 2022. However, any preparatory work that can be completed will go ahead.</li> <li>• There are no delays regarding the closure of the Final Salary Scheme on 31 March 2022. The IT strategy and the engagement strategy are going to plan.</li> <li>• RG advised that Alex Mitchell has been appointed to manage delivery of the Transitional Protection and Goodwin projects. Danielle Barker will oversee Business as Usual Operations. The two new roles will replace the Head of Operations role. Jane Mustill (PMO) started recently.</li> <li>• The senior team, who report to RG, is complete and in place.</li> <li>• There is ongoing recruitment to recruit at mid-management level to support Alex and Danielle.</li> </ul>	
Agenda Item 7	<p><b>Goodwin Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ZP advised that 675 cases had been reassessed – the team is ahead of the burn-down rate plan. He noted there had been less reliance on BAU resource and quality remained high.</li> <li>• Two team members had left, however, they had been replaced. There is a further group being recruited to the Goodwin team.</li> <li>• The project remains scheduled for completion by June 2023.</li> </ul>	
Agenda Item 8	<p><b>Discuss any issues raised from TPARG:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TPARG asked that clear communication to members about when cases will be rectified is prioritised. TPARG believe this will avoid pressure on the contact centre.</li> <li>• SC will share the IM&amp;C sub-committee paper to reassure them.</li> <li>• Bereavements was also raised by TPARG - which is already a main focus for the Board.</li> </ul>	
Agenda Item 9	<p><b>Review Dashboard and supporting papers:</b></p> <p><b>Dashboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW commented that the improvement of measures 9 &amp; 10 was positive. PS noted they were improving consistently over the period. SC added that the number of returns was improving also, showing an upward trend.</li> <li>• JW noted that the tracker evidenced that cases were being processed above or in line with the cases being received and shows consistent progress.</li> <li>• The SLAs that were not being achieved had already been discussed under other agenda items.</li> <li>• There were no further comments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Complaints Dashboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ZP explained that the spike in the number of complaints had been caused by the increase in casework processed and</li> </ul>	

	<p>communications with members, and also complaints about complaint handling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures have been introduced to try and address this. For example, holding letters, overtime, staff recruitment and staff support from other areas.</li> <li>• There are currently discussions between the department and Capita regarding the scope of the complaint KPI. SC advised that she would like to increase the scope of the KPI to include the remedial action that comes out of the complaint. The aim is to improve the member experience at the point they choose to complain.</li> <li>• JW noted there was a backlog of complaints in this quarter and last quarter; and queried whether the staffing level was right.</li> <li>• AG advised that the team had grown and was supported by the policy and technical team if needed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Quarterly Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PS commented on the large number of schools that had withdrawn from the scheme. HM agreed.</li> <li>• PS clarified that he would like reassurance of TP's ability to cope with the churn brought about by the schools leaving, and if there were any financial consequences.</li> <li>• SC advised that the financial implication had been covered in the MR&amp;IC sub-committee, and that the risk is negligible, given the number of members affected.</li> <li>• SA agreed to cover the topic at the later meeting, but confirmed that reassurances regarding financial impact had been given previously.</li> <li>• AG advised that the operational impact of the churn has also been handled very well, and that recent system changes in place for phased withdrawal were working well.</li> </ul>	
Agenda Item 10	<p><b>Agree Key Issues from the Meeting / Report to highlight at the next TPSPB meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bereavements</li> <li>• Contact Centre</li> <li>• Deferred members</li> </ul>	
Agenda Item 11	<p><b>Agree whether any individual papers or presentation should be shared with remaining Board members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was agreed that papers 8, 9 and 10, regarding bereavements, Contact Centre and deferred members, should be shared with all Board members.</li> </ul>	SD3/220921
Agenda Item 12	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	
Next meeting	15 December 2021 (by Teams)	

Minutes agreed by Chair: *Jackie Wood*

Date: 27 September 2021

Confirmed by circulation to sub-committee members on: 27 September 2021

To be ratified at sub-committee meeting on 15 December 2021