

From: Chairman – Kent Pension Board
Interim Corporate Director of Finance

To: Kent Pension Board – 4 September 2025

Subject: Pensions Administration

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report brings Members up to date with a range of matters concerning the administration of the Kent Pension Fund for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025.

The report covers the following areas:

1. Administration Team Update
2. Recruitment
3. Complaints, Compliments and Comments
4. Overpayment Recovery and Write Off Limits
5. Engagement and Systems Team (previously Communications and Support Team) Update
6. Technical and Training Team Update

Recommendations:

The Board is recommended to:

- i. Note and comment on the report

Executive Summary:

	<i>Key Highlights</i>	<i>Matters to be closely monitored</i>
<i>Administration Team Update</i>	<i>Number of member cases completed exceeded the number received – reducing the number of outstanding cases.</i> <i>Good performance against high priority legal deadlines.</i>	<i>Review number of outstanding cases on Reply Due for Retirements, New Joiners and Opt-Outs.</i> <i>Ringfencing of backlog to allow more accurate reporting of performance on new cases received.</i>
<i>Recruitment</i>	<i>22 vacancies filled.</i> <i>Recruitment commenced for Engagement & Support Officers.</i>	<i>High number of vacancies within Admin Team. Plan is being formulated to fill these vacancies and ensure adequate capacity for training and development.</i>
<i>Complaints, Compliments and Comments</i>	<i>0 complaints received.</i> <i>Low number of negative comments received in relation to the number of cases processed.</i>	<i>Some comments expressing dissatisfaction with communication to be investigated further.</i>
<i>Overpayment Recovery and Write Off Limits</i>	<i>Very small overpayment write-off resulting from an incorrect amount of overpaid pension quoted for recovery.</i>	<i>Internal Audit of overpayment recovery process.</i>

<i>Engagement & Systems Team Update</i>	<i>End of year and Valuation on track.</i> <i>Deferred Annual Benefit Statements published to MyPension Online (MPO) for first time.</i> <i>123 employers onboarded to iConnect.</i>	<i>Valuation data queries.</i> <i>Increased demand on the team from MPO registration queries.</i> <i>Approval of revised Communications Policy by Pension Fund Committee.</i>
<i>Technical & Training Team Update</i>	<i>Final McCloud data expected from Lumera in August.</i> <i>Access & Fairness consultation responded to.</i>	<i>Significant amount of work required to implement McCloud – historical rectification and business as usual.</i> <i>Significant regulatory changes expected towards the end of 2025, into 2026 as a result of the recent consultation.</i>

FOR INFORMATION

1. Administration Team Update

- 1.1 A new style performance report is being developed using the Insights reporting system provided by Heywood's. This has recently been developed, and the new Performance and Operations Manager is currently reviewing the data output to ensure it is accurately recording and reflecting performance. Some adjustments are being made, therefore for this report, data is only available for July 2025 to share an example of the output. Once fully satisfied with the output, data from a full quarter will be provided in future updates. This data will feed into the new Performance Dashboard which is currently in development. The new style Performance Report can be found at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 During July 2025 a total of 4,791 new cases were received, and 5,070 cases were completed. This has resulted in a reduction to the number of outstanding cases due for completion. The report at Appendix 1 highlights the areas where there has been a reduction/increase in the number of outstanding cases due for completion at the end of the month compared to the start of the month. Only 4 out of the 18 case types measured have more cases outstanding at the end of July compared to the start of July. Therefore, there has been a reduction in outstanding cases in 13 areas. Of the ones where outstanding cases have increased, they are very small numbers with the exception of new starters. This is likely to be the result of increased numbers received from employers at year end.
- 1.3 Of the cases outstanding that are not on Reply Due the numbers are fairly low (if the case types that Hymans are clearing are removed). The only ones that stand out are Retirement Actuals and Estimates, New Joiners and Opt-outs,

so Officers will focus on these to understand if anything can be done to reduce these numbers.

- 1.4 The performance against legal deadlines on all case types considered as priority (Deaths, Retirements and Refunds) were above 90%. Performance against KPI targets and legal deadlines are likely to be impacted by the clearance of the backlog. Lumera are providing a report of the cases being cleared as part of the backlog so these can be ringfenced and allow future performance reporting to be focussed on the cases being processed by the Kent Pension Fund team.
- 1.5 During the period 1 April to 30 June 2025, the Administration Team supported the end of year project via the release of 1 full time colleague for 6 weeks. Another colleague was on secondment to the Training Team to support the training of 4 new Pensions Assistants. The Administration Team were also adapting to working with new processes as a result of implementing Enhanced Admin to Pay (more sophisticated interfacing between admin and payroll). This new functionality supports future payments of benefits meaning cases could be allocated in date received order (to meet SLAs) rather than prioritising cases due in the month (that could have been well within SLA).
- 1.6 Hymans provide a monthly status report, reporting on progress for the backlog support for the previous month as well as the project duration to date. The report confirms the number of cases processed, the number of cases processed and checked leading to completion as well as any risks or issues.
- 1.7 Hymans staff are now signed off by Kent Pension Fund for competency on the following processes:
 - A or B Aggregations
 - ERN Aggregations
 - Concurrent Aggregations
 - Deferred Benefits
 - Refunds (1st stage)

The following processes still require sign off:

- Refund (2nd stage)
- 1.8 A summary of the casework undertaken by Hymans so far is set out below:

Aggregations (excluding Concurrent) – In July, 123 Aggregations were processed, and 117 cases were checked and completed. To date, 465 Aggregations have been processed representing 5.86% of the 7,932 cases set out in the tender.

Concurrent Aggregations – In July, 39 Concurrent Aggregations were processed and 30 were checked and completed. To date, 94 Concurrent Aggregations have been processed representing 3.83% of the 2,449 cases set out in the tender.

1.7 **Deferred Benefits** – In July, 110 Deferred Benefit cases were processed and 128 were checked and completed. To date, 229 Deferred Benefit cases have been processed representing 3.54% of the 6,465 cases set out in the tender.

1.8 **Refunds** – In July, 100 Refund cases were processed and 14 were checked and completed. To date, 120 Refund cases have been processed representing 4.27% of the 2,811 cases set out in the tender.

2. **Recruitment**

2.1 A summary of the recruitment activity over the period is shown below. Where interviews have been completed and start dates agreed, these future dates are also included:

Position	Team	Start Date	Number	External/Internal
Pensions Officer	Pensions Administration	01/04/2025	2	Internal – permanent appointment
Senior Pensions Administrator	Pensions Administration	01/04/2025	3	Internal – permanent appointment
Pensions Administrator	Pensions Administration	01/05/2025	2	Internal – made permanent further to the completion of secondments that commenced 01/03/2025
Business Management Officer (Pensions)	Pensions Projects	05/05/2025	1	External to P&T Service – 12-month secondment, candidate previously worked for KCC CYPE directorate.
Pensions Assistant (Admin)	Pensions Administration	05/05/2025	4	External to KCC – 3 x permanent appointments. 1 x temporary 6-

				month appointment.
Pensions Administration Performance & Operations Lead Manager	Pensions Administration	01/06/2025	1	Internal – permanent appointment
Pensions Project Delivery and Improvement Manager	Pensions Projects	01/06/2025	1	Internal – 2-year fixed term contract
Technical & Training Support Officer	Technical & Training	01/07/2025	1	Internal - Commencement of 6-month secondment
Pensions Administrator	Pensions Administration	01/07/2025	1	Internal – made permanent further to completion of secondment that commenced 01/04/2025
Technical Advice & Training Development Consultant	Technical & Training	01/07/2025	2	Internal – permanent appointments
Technical & Compliance Lead Manager	Technical & Training	01/07/2025	2	Commencement of 12 months additional duties (via job share), due to resignation of current post holder in Lead role.
Team Manager (Admin)	Pensions Administration	01/07/2025	1	Internal – commencement of 3-month secondment
Deputy Team Manager (Engagement & Systems)	Pensions Engagement & Systems	01/09/2025	1	Internal – commencement of 6-month secondment

2.2 The Administration section of the Fund is now carrying circa 20 FTE vacancies. This is because whilst there has been recent success filling vacancies, roles have been filled by existing team members and backfilling remains.

- 2.3 Interviews are planned in August/September to fill Engagement & System Officer vacancies. Pension Administrator vacancies within the E&S Team are scheduled to be advertised after this in September/October 2025.
- 2.4 The area with the highest number of vacancies is the Pensions Administration Team. Recruitment will begin again for this team in late Autumn 2025, to allow a period of settlement first.

3. Complaints, Compliments and Comments

- 3.1 For the period 1 April to 30 June 2025 a total of 0 complaints, 27 compliments and 24 comments were received into the corporate system called iCasework. These have been summarised below:

Month	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
Apr	0	11 8 x Good Communication 3 x Helpful Staff	5 x poor communication
May	0	7 5 x Good Communication 2 x Helpful Staff	9 8 x Poor Communication 1 x 3 rd party poor service delivery
Jun	0	9 5 x Good Communication 4 x Helpful Staff	10 9 x Poor Communication 1 x Disagreement with decisions or policies made

4. Pension Overpayment Write Offs

- 4.1 The number of pension overpayment write offs for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025 are set out below:

	Apr 2025		May 2025		Jun 2025	
	Number	Total (£)	Number	Total (£)	Number	Total (£)
£200-£5,000	-	-	1	1.80	-	-
£5,000-£50,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£50,000+	-	-	-	-	-	-

- 4.2 A review of the Pension Overpayment and Write Off process is scheduled to be carried out by Internal Audit. This is currently at the planning and scoping stage, with the likelihood of the audit commencing in September 2025.

5. Engagement and Systems Team Update

- 5.1 The team has successfully completed 99.5% of the Year End project, ensuring readiness for the data submission to the actuary for the upcoming valuation.

- 5.2 In July, the team delivered the Employer Forum, which was attended by over 100 participants and received highly positive feedback.
- 5.3 Since April, the team has hosted 2 additional webinars for employers and 4 for scheme members, covering a range of topics. The team have continued to support employers with completing their Year End returns, including conducting face-to-face meetings via MS Teams.
- 5.4 The team are actively engaging with Affinity to monitor the uptake of the Pre-retirement and Pensions and Financial Wellbeing courses, both of which remain very popular.
- 5.5 Two Summer edition newsletters have been published online: [Pension Pulse](#) for Active members and [Pension Connections](#) for Deferred members.
- 5.6 Preparations are underway for Pension Awareness Week in September, including liaising with employers who have invited the team to participate in their events.
- 5.7 The team are also preparing for the next in person Employer Forum to be held at the Ashford International Hotel on 10 December.
- 5.8 All queries related to the Remuneration Comparison project have been sent to employers, and the team are currently managing the responses. The team has commenced work on the No CARE project, alongside the Year End tidy-up reports.
- 5.9 Heywood's continue to release updates for MyPension Online on a fortnightly basis, requiring regular testing by the team. These releases include fixes for issues raised by funds and introduce new or improved features for the portal. On 30 June, Multi-Factor Authentication was implemented for member logins, enhancing portal security. For members without mobile phones or those unable to receive SMS codes, login via email code remains available. Deferred statements are being issued in July and, for the first time, will be published exclusively via MyPension Online. This has increased demand for member support in creating accounts and accessing the portal. Active member statements will follow in August, with paper copies sent to those who have opted out of online delivery.
- 5.10 The Valuation data extract was submitted in July. Any data queries will be investigated and resolved before the final version is submitted to Barnett Waddingham. Looking ahead, the team plan to run test valuations in 2026 and 2027 to improve data quality and reduce future queries.
- 5.11 The team has worked diligently to onboard employers to iConnect. Appendix 2 details the employers who have been onboarded since 1 April 2025. The team continue to work with employers on mid-year onboarding and aim to migrate an additional 78 employers before 1 April 2026.
- 5.12 Appendix 3 provides a summary of communications from members for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025.

- 5.13 A summary of member self-service (MyPension Online) registered users can be found at Appendix 4.
- 5.14 The updated Communications Policy for 2025/26 can be found at Appendix 5. The purpose of the policy is to set out the plans concerning the methods of communication with stakeholders of the Kent Pension Fund. The Policy will be presented to the Pension Fund Committee on 23 September 2025. The amendments to the policy have been mainly cosmetic changes such as including the names of the newsletters, updating the name of the member portal, and updating any dates. Information regarding iConnect has also been updated, as the system has been developed further since the last policy was published (employers can now run their own Cost Only estimates and upload documents). The policy has also been updated to include confirmation about meeting the Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.1. Finally, clarification has been included relating to one-to-one appointments with members of the pensions scheme, confirming these are online/telephone appointments.

6. *Technical and Training Team Update*

- 6.1 **McCloud** – The final interface file containing membership data to be uploaded to the administration system is due from Lumera by 22 August. Once this has been received and loaded, the Pensions Section will have to review and resolve any data or mismatch errors before reports can be run to identify those members impacted by McCloud that require benefit rectification. Lumera will be supporting the Fund with the rectification exercise. In time, all members will be written to either confirming any underpin payable or notifying them that they haven't been impacted by McCloud.

The Technical Team continue with software testing and are working on processes and procedure notes to assist the administration team once McCloud is implemented. Training has been provided to some administrators to assist with calculating urgent cases manually as the administration system cannot be used yet to provide this information.

- 6.2 **Annual Allowance exercise** – The Technical Team have been preparing for the Annual Allowance exercise for the 2024/25 tax year. Although the total number of members who will exceed this allowance, and who the team will need to write to, is expected to be under 100, the work needed to be done to identify these members is considerable. Resource will be needed from other teams in order to meet the statutory deadline of 6 October 2025.
- 6.3 **Access and Fairness consultation** - The government have published a consultation document regarding changes to the LGPS. These include changes to survivors' pensions and death grants which include backdating, gender gap benefits and reporting, opt out reporting, forfeiture updates, updating McCloud and the Lifetime Allowance regulations and other minor changes. The Technical Team, on behalf of Kent Pension Fund, have

reviewed these changes and responded to the consultation, please see copy at Appendix 6.

Further information regarding the consultation can be found here: [Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales: Access and fairness - GOV.UK](#)

6.4 Training figures for the period 1 April – 30 June 2025

In house training sessions	25
Sessions led by Training Officers	23
McCloud regulations whole section training	2 sessions

External LGA courses attended this period:

4 members of staff on the retirement course.

5 members of staff on the aggregation course.

3 members of staff on the 3-day residential course LGPS insights course.

The training sessions have reduced this month in response to the training team switching focus to prepare for the implementation of McCloud remedy.

Clare Chambers – Head of Pensions Administration – Kent Pension Fund

T: 03000 414773

E: clare.chambers@kent.gov.uk

September 2025

Appendix 1 – Administration Performance Report – July 2025

Appendix 2 – iConnect – Employers onboarded since 1 April 2025

Appendix 3 – Summary of member communications

Appendix 4 – Summary of member self service

Appendix 5 – Communications Policy 2025

Appendix 6 – Access and Fairness LGPS Consultation response
