

From: Chairman – Kent Pension Fund Committee
Interim Corporate Director of Finance

To: Kent Pension Fund Committee – 19 March 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 November 2024 to 31 January 2025. The report covers the following areas:

1. Casework Performance
2. Recruitment
3. Complaints, Compliments and Comments
4. Overpayment Recovery and Write Off Limits
5. Communications and Support Update
6. Technical and Training Updates

Recommendations:

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. Note and comment on the report

Executive Summary:

	<i>Key Highlights</i>	<i>Matters to be closely monitored</i>
<i>Casework Performance</i>	<i>An increase in the number of cases processed and overall performance levels. Improved performance on priority casework.</i>	<i>Performance on transfers/interfunds/aggregations below tolerance – significant number of cases in backlog to be targeted with 3rd party support.</i>
<i>Recruitment</i>	<i>9 vacancies filled via internal secondment. Additional Training Officer role added to team.</i>	<i>High number of vacancies – recruitment campaign underway</i>
<i>Complaints, Compliments and Comments</i>	<i>Low number of official complaints received (2) during the period.</i>	<i>Comments regarding poor communication – not raised as complaints but to be investigated further to see where improvements can be made (if possible).</i>
<i>Overpayment Recovery and Write Off Limits</i>	<i>Total of £36.10 pension overpayment written off. Policy updated following Committee Member comments. Now at final version.</i>	<i>Process for recovery of pension overpayments to be reviewed by Internal Audit.</i>

<p><i>Communications and Support Update</i></p>	<p><i>E-mails and telephone calls decreased. MPO engagement increasing steadily. iConnect onboarding progressing well.</i></p>	<p><i>Triennial Valuation year, and data expected by the Fund Actuary 4 weeks earlier than usual.</i></p>
<p><i>Technical and Training Updates</i></p>	<p><i>Response to Inheritance Tax on Pensions sent. Significant number of training sessions provided, and additional training resource recruited.</i></p>	<p><i>Delays in loading accurate data having an impact on progress i.e. testing/training/implementation. Recruitment campaign will increase demand on training officers.</i></p>

FOR INFORMATION

1. **Casework Performance**

- 1.1 Details of the administration casework performance can be found at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 During the period 1 November 2024 to 31 January 2025 a total of 13,362 cases were completed. This is an increase of 1,984 cases completed from the previous period. The average performance across all casework has increased from 79% to 80%. Performance has been categorised into red (below 80% SLA), amber (80-90% SLA) and green (above 90% SLA) in order to help Members and Officers identify where performance improvements are required.
- 1.3 Performance has improved in the following priority areas:

Case Type	Previous Quarter SLA %	Current Quarter SLA %
Initial Death Notification	80	83
Survivors Pensions	77	91
Death Grant Payment	78	94
Provision of Retirement Estimates	94	95
Pension Sharing on Divorce Estimates	95	96

- 1.4 As requested by Members, the report also now includes the current Service Level Agreements (SLA's) for each case type. There is a lack of detail on tolerances, and this is something (along with SLA's) that needs to be addressed in conjunction with Members and considering industry best practice. However, this may be something to consider once the backlog has been ringfenced and data can be presented on new and historic cases separately.

2. **Recruitment**

- 2.1 A summary of the recruitment activity over the period is shown below:

Position	Team	Start Date	Number	External/Internal
KR7 Pensions Administrator	Pension Administration	01/12/2024	2	Internal – made permanent further to completion of secondment

KR6 – Pensions Assistant	Communication & Support	01/01/2025	2	Internal – made permanent further to completion of secondment
KR10 – Training Officer	Technical & Training	01/01/2025	1	Commencement of internal secondment
KR10 – Deputy Team Manager	Pension Administration	01/01/2025	1	Internal – made permanent further to completion of secondment
KR10 – Deputy Team Manager	Communication & Support	01/01/2025	2	Internal – made permanent further to completion of secondment

2.2 In addition to the above, there will be further activity in February and March 2025 which has already been planned, with a further 3 secondments to the role of Pensions Administrator.

2.3 The team are currently carrying 21 vacancies. There are 4 vacancies on the Communications and Support Team, 3 vacancies on the Technical and Training Team and 14 vacancies on the Administration Team. Recruitment campaigns to fill these vacancies will take place over the next few months, and plans are in place to consider using temporary agency staff whilst the permanent recruitment takes place.

3. **Complaints, Compliments and Comments**

3.1 For the period 1 November 2024 to 31 January 2025 a total of 2 complaints, 11 compliments and 22 comments were received into the corporate system called iCasework. These have been summarised below:

Month	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
Nov	1 – slow or ineffective communication	3 – good communication	11 – x1 good communication x10 poor communication
Dec	0	6 – x4 good communication x2 helpful staff	7 – x5 poor communication x1 disagreement with decisions x1 third party service delivery
Jan	1 – poor communication	2 – x1 good communication x1 helpful staff	4 – poor communication

4. Pension Overpayment Write Offs

4.1 The number of pension overpayment write offs for the period 1 November 2024 to 31 January 2025 are set out below:

	Nov 2024		Dec 2024		Jan 2025	
	Number	Total	Number	Total	Number	Total
£200- £5,000	-	-	1	£18.54	1	£17.56
£5,000- £50,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£50,000+	-	-	-	-	-	-

4.2 The Pension Overpayment and Write Off Policy (**Appendix 2**) has been updated to include reporting of overpayments of £50,000 and over to the Pension Fund Committee.

5. Communications and Support (C&S) Update

5.1 **Appendix 3** shows the trend in **communications** from members (e-mails, MyPension Online visits, telephone calls and website visits) in a rolling year. It is positive to see that the number of contacts via e-mails and telephone calls is gradually decreasing, hopefully as a result of the rollout of MyPension Online as members now have an improved self-service platform. The data also shows that MyPension Online registration enquiries and website visits spiked around August/September 2024 when the Annual Benefit Statements were published.

5.2 As at the end of January, there were 24,733 members registered for **MyPension Online** (MPO). This includes 18,692 who transitioned their accounts from the old Member Self Service (MSS) platform and 6,041 who have registered new accounts since MPO went live. This accounts for approximately 15% of the total membership. The Pensioner newsletter is due to be published in April in which MPO is promoted, and Deferred Annual Benefit Statements are being published on MPO for the first time this year from which we should see an increase in online accounts.

5.3 The team held the **Employer Forum** on the 4 December 2024 at the Ashford International Hotel. The attendance was very good (94 representatives), the team have also received very positive feedback regarding the presentations.

5.4 The team has delivered 4 more **webinars to employers** and 6 more **webinars to members** since November 2024. These were on various topics.

Member Webinars:

Date	Presentation Title	In person / Webinar	Number of attendees
14/11/2024	Understanding your LGPS pension	Webinar	25
22/11/2024	pension query drop in	In person	20
28/11/2024	Understanding your LGPS pension	Webinar	97
11/12/2024	Understanding your LGPS pension	Webinar	53
15/01/2025	Ill Health Retirement and Death in Service	Webinar	36
29/01/2025	MyPension Online overview	Webinar	8

Employer Webinars:

Employer name	date	number of attendees	notes
University of Kent	22/11/2024	20	in person meeting with employer and members
various	26/11/2024	6	employer responsibilities including EMR
various	4/12/2024	94	employer forum (in person)
various	10/12/2024	6	calculation of pensionable pay figures (webinar)

- 5.5 There are now **webinars** for members and employers scheduled for the duration of 2025. These are for various subjects which were based on the feedback received. Details of the webinars and booking forms can be found on the Kent Pension Fund website.
- 5.6 The team has also been assisting employers with any **events** aiming to inform members about their pension choices. Some of the events were online but a few included in person attendance. These have been very popular, and the team has received very positive feedback from the employers and attendees.
- 5.7 Preparations are underway for the **Year End** exercise, with the website already up to date and a training webinar for employers and payroll providers planned for February. There are 50 registered attendees at the moment. Targeted engagement with poor performing employers/payroll providers has also taken place which was a new initiative for 2025.
- 5.8 Onboarding employers to **iConnect** has continued. Since the last Pension Fund Committee meeting, the team have onboarded the following employers:
- Kier Facilities Services Ltd
 - Exclusive Contract Serv Ltd
 - Vinci Construction UK Limited
 - APCOA Parking (UK) Ltd (2)
 - Dover Town Council
 - Roseacre Junior School - KCC
 - Herne Bay Junior School - KCC
 - Holy Trinity C of E Prim – KCC
 - St Bartholomew RCP School – KCC

- St George's CE High School – KCC
 - Project Salus C.I.C
 - Project Salus (2)
 - Orchard Theatre
 - Strode Park Foundation (Platters)
 - MCH (Balfour Drivers)
 - MCH (Balfour)
 - Deal Town Council
 - Edenbridge Town Council
 - Veolia Environment Services (UK) plc
- 5.9 Work is continuing with the employers who are going to be onboarded onto **iConnect** in April (approx. 160 employers are scheduled to onboard in April). This also involves data cleansing for all the employers in question. **Appendix 4** details the number of employers currently using iConnect versus those not using iConnect. The number of current employers using iConnect covers 18,692 members. When the April cohort of employers onboard to iConnect this will cover an additional 15,800 members.
- 5.10 Drafting of the spring issue of **Open Lines (Pensioner newsletter)** and the Pensions Increase information has commenced.
- 5.11 In preparation for this year's **Triennial Valuation**, the team have run a 'test' valuation to 31/3/2024 and have started to investigate and clear any discrepancies based on the member data up to this date. The purpose of this is to reduce the time to complete the actual valuation this year.
- 5.12 Heywood's continue to release updates for **MyPension Online** on a fortnightly basis, which requires a regular testing process by the team. These releases contain fixes to any problems highlighted by Funds and new or improved features for the portal.

6. Technical and Training Updates

- 6.1 **McCloud Remedy** - The team continue to undertake work to enable the implementation of the McCloud Remedy. Meetings have taken place with Heywood to create a test system for the upload and testing of data once available. In addition, further staff training has been delivered around pension transfers.

The aspect of software testing for McCloud remains a key outstanding task and is reliant on the final member data being delivered by Lumera.

- 6.2 **Government Technical Consultation on Inheritance Tax on Pensions** - In early January, a response was sent to the Government providing feedback on the consultation for introducing Inheritance Tax on Pensions. A copy of the response can be found at **Appendix 5**.
- 6.3 **Training** – Throughout the period September to December 2024, 41 in house training sessions were delivered. For the period January to March 2025, 46 in house training sessions have been scheduled. From January, the team have seconded an additional Training Officer to the Training Team to assist with delivery of training. There are currently 3 colleagues working towards the CIPP (Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals) Certificate in Pension Administration (Level 3). There is also 1 colleague enrolled onto the PMI (Pensions Management Institute) Award in Pensions Essentials (Level 2).
- 6.4 **Breach of Law** – In December 2024 it was identified that a member had not used their AVC fund before the age of 75. The member was a Deferred member in June 2000 and took payment of their main scheme LGPS benefits in 2009. The team repeatedly sent the member information concerning the options to use their in house AVC fund and did not receive a response. The team have now had contact from the member, but they are now over age 75. This has been added to the Breaches of Law Register as a breach of scheme rules but not considered materially significant enough to report to tPR.

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March 2025

Appendix 1 – November 2024 to January 2025 Performance Report

Appendix 2 – Pension Overpayment and Write Off Policy – 2025 – FINAL

Appendix 3 – Communications from Members – Rolling Year

Appendix 4 – iConnect Employer Onboarding

Appendix 5 – KPF – Technical Consultation – Inheritance Tax on Pensions – October 2024
