

Division(s): N/A

PENSION FUND COMMITTEE – 15 SEPTEMBER 2017
PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION – SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Report by the Chief Financial Officer

Introduction

1. This is the annual report is to update members on the service performance of the administration team during the year to March 2017.

Team Structure & Staffing

2. Following the introduction of the 2014 CARE scheme, this committee has received, and agreed, two reports to amend the team structure to meet the increased volume of incoming monthly data.
3. In December 2015 the proposed team was:

	Manag er	Seni or	Administrat or	Assista nt	Tota l
Data	1.00	1.50	4.00		6.50
Benefits	2.00	4.00	10.00	2.00	18.0 0
Employer			1.00		1.00
Communicatio ns	1.00				1.00
Pension Services	1.00				1.00
Totals	5.00	5.50	15.00	2.00	27.5 0

4. As reported in this annual update in September 2016 this level of staffing was not achieved, vacancies had been carried throughout the year due to recruitment issues and maternity leave.
5. Managers continued to assess incoming workloads in terms of both volume and the skills required which lead to another report being submitted and agreed in December 2016 to increase staffing levels to create an employer focussed team within Pension Services:

	Manag er	Seni or	Administrat or	Assista nt	Tota l
Data	1.00	2.00	4.00		7.00
Benefits	2.00	4.15	10.00	2.00	18.15
Employer		1.00	3.00		4.00
Communicatio ns	1..14				1.14
Pension Services	1.00				1.00
Totals	5.14	7.15	17.00	2.00	31.29

6. Some eight months on this level of staffing has not yet been achieved due to resignation; maternity leave (which will go on to 2018) / reducing hours of work and long term sickness absence. Currently 4 administrator vacancies are being advertised.

Data Returns

7. The Employer team is starting to make a difference by checking receipt of the monthly return and validating the return at the time of receipt. This process is not yet at a level state due to the fact that the employer team was not in place February 2017 so had to catch up the backlog of processing for the 2016/2017 monthly returns.
8. End of Year returns – there was an improvement in the number of returns received by deadline but, again, employers often did not carry out basic checks ahead of submitting data which meant these had to be sent back. Again, some of the larger scheme employers had issues with making these returns which, not only, has put them to the back of the queue for production of annual benefit statement but in some cases impacted on other linked scheme employers.
9. There are a number of employers who have either made multiple incorrect returns / not made any returns who will be subject to detailed reviews once the bulk of the annual benefit statements have been issued.

Service Performance

10. In previous years this report has included a comparison table of the Oxfordshire Pension Fund's performance to Industry Standard Performance Indications and the Local Government PC. However, as noted in the quarterly administration report, an error has been found in the reports used to produce this data which renders this meaningless until fixed.

Formal Complaints

11.If a scheme member wishes to complain about a decision regarding their pension they are encouraged to contact Pension Services to discuss the matter since many complaints arise as a result of misunderstanding or incorrect information.

12.However, if a complaint cannot be resolved informally the regulations set out a formal procedure, The Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP). During the calendar year 2016 (the last full year recorded) a total of 11 complaints were received. These are summarised below:

Employer	Referred To	Summary	Decision
ODST	Internal Complaint	Member left employment on 31.08.15 & is complaining that hasn't been advised of benefits due / received pension payment. Have explained that employer has not advised PS of leaving date / pay information. This is being chased by PS. Following various discussions with employer information received & options have been sent out today – no further correspondence.	Found
Abingdon & Witney College	Internal Complaint	Member has complained that they have not been advised of benefits due at SPA. Member sent information & payment of retirement grant paid on 05.02.16. Apologies sent - no further correspondence.	Found
OCC	AoD.1	Member recently retired and has complained saying that OCC CSL had "advised" her of incorrect pay details when she joined so that she did not transfer previous LGPS.As a result pension payment is now significantly lower. The current value of deferred pay at previous fund is significantly higher than final pay from OCC - therefore there has been no detriment to pension in payment.	Not found
Oxford City	Pension Ombudsman	Member signed early choice form on 26.01.15 requesting payments to be brought in to payment on 11.04.15. Letter	Not found

		sent confirming earliest date was 27.04.15....now in payment member is disputing the date & asking to be reimbursed for period 11.04.15 - 26.04.15. Not found at stage 2. Member has now referred to PO. The PO has confirmed that payment made in line with regulations / processes.	
OCC	Internal Complaint	Member unhappy about the delays in processing / making payment following flexible retirement. Hold up due to waiting for scheme employer to provide information. Didn't update member even though we are chasing employer. Information received & letter sent to member.	Found
OCC	AoD.2	Member recently retired and has complained saying that OCC CSL had "advised" her of incorrect pay details when she joined so that she did not transfer previous LGPS.As a result pension payment is now significantly lower. The current value of deferred pay at previous fund is significantly higher than final pay from OCC - therefore there has been no detriment to pension in payment. This is confirmed by stage 2 determination. Member has now emailed to thank Adjudicator for detailed and informative response. also to confirm that will not be pursuing matter further.	Not found
OCC	Pension Ombudsman	Member disagrees with Council decision not to award ill-health retirement - case referred to PO. Not upheld	Not found
Activate	AoD.1	Seeking ill-health retirement - complaint referred to scheme employer.	Not found
SODC	Internal	Member complained since retirement forms had not been sent within published service standards. Investigation	Found

		confirmed that there was a delay & a letter of apology was sent. This letter also confirmed when the information would be provided.	
OCC	AoD.1	Member transferred to PCSPS as part of government reorganisation. Main benefits were transferred by AVC was not. Now retired member is seeking 100% tax free cash from AVC. Stage 2 determination confirmed that OPF should have given member choice to transfer AVC at point of restructure by MoJ. However, since member has taken full tax free benefits at retirement they are not out of pocket by fact that they can only take 25% tax free cash from AVC. Member has now rejoined public sector and will be transferring AVC to new provider - 14.02.17	Partially Found
OCC	AoD.1	Member believes that benefits should be calculated on membership from 1985 rather than 1995 when part time staffs were brought in to scheme. There is no evidence that member sought to join scheme prior to 1995.	Not found

13. During the year the team has not made as much progress as they wished but given that there have been two office moves and continuing recruitment / training of new staff has meant workloads have constantly had to be shifted according to level of competence within the team.

14. Now that the team are settled in to their new office accommodation plans are being put in place to address the backlogs of work and to improve data capture from scheme employers. Details will be updated to Committee in future quarterly administration reports.

15. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the report.

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August 2017