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|-----------------------------------|--|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>Subject</b>                    | <b>Quarterly Administration Update</b> | <b>Status</b> | For Publication |
| <b>Report to</b>                  | Local Pension Board                    | <b>Date</b>   | 4 August 2022   |
| <b>Report of</b>                  | Head of Pensions Administration        |               |                 |
| <b>Equality Impact Assessment</b> | Not Required                           | Attached      | No              |
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## **1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To update Members on administration performance and issues for the period from 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022
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## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are recommended to:
- a. **Comment on the content of the revised administration update and indicate any areas where they would like to receive further detail**
  - b. **Highlight any areas of administration where further assurance may be required**
- 

## **3 Link to Corporate Objectives**

- 3.1 This report links to the delivery of the following corporate objectives:

### **Customer Focus**

To design our services around the needs of our customers (whether scheme members or employers). The report includes reference to feedback from our customers as to their experience of the retirement process as well as those who have been in contact with our Customer Centre.

### **Listening to our stakeholders**

To ensure that stakeholders' views are heard within our decision-making processes. The report includes information about the engagement with the employers in the scheme and how SYPA can support them to complete their responsibilities.

### **Effective and Transparent Governance**

To uphold effective governance showing prudence and propriety at all times. The report includes detail on the overall administration performance to ensure Members are able to scrutinise the service being provided to our customers.

#### 4 **Implications for the Corporate Risk Register**

- 4.1 The actions outlined in this report do not have implications for the Corporate Risk Register.

#### 5 **Background and Options**

- 5.1 This report seeks to make Board Members aware of the main areas of administration performance and any topical issues relevant to the reporting period(s) in question. To ensure that Members have access to the latest available data, this report includes data for the quarter just completed.
- 5.2 Members will note that the content of this administration update is continually reviewed to ensure it is appropriate to support scrutiny of the administration service and includes information not provided previously. This is intended to provide Members with a wider view of the issues the administration service is handling and we continue to welcome feedback on any subject areas where Members feel additional reporting would be beneficial.

##### *Staffing*

- 5.3 The following table is a summary of joiners and leavers for the administration service (i.e. excluding the smaller Investment and Finance/Corporate Services teams) during the last three months. The Authority has been successful in recruiting to existing vacancies, although internal offers made to Pensions Officers at the time of producing this report will likely result in a couple of vacancies in the Customer Services team. Although not referenced in the table below (as they are not part of the administration service), it should also be noted that two governance posts which support the work of the Board commenced work with the Authority in this quarter. These are the Governance and Risk Officer Gill Richards (transferred from Barnsley MBC) and the new Corporate Manager - Governance, Jo Garrison.

| <b>Starters</b>                    | <b>Comments</b>   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2 x Customer Services Officers     | Entry Level – one vacancy is temporary covering maternity leave.                  |
| 1 x Apprentice                     |   |
| 1 x Senior Systems Officer         | Former experienced employee re-joining.   |
| <b>Leavers</b>                     |   |
| None – internal promotions only.   |   |
|                                    |   |
| <b>Vacancies in Administration</b> |   |
| 5 x Pensions Officers              | (Entry level) vacancies following internal promotions – offers made in July 2022. |
| Communications Officer             | Appointment made – starts August 2022.  |

- 5.4 In terms of sickness absence, the table below shows the annualised absence levels for the administration service for the last quarter and the two previous full years for reference. Overall, sickness absence has reduced for both short-term and long-term absence this quarter. Absence for Covid related illness is no longer reported separately, though our records suggest around 30% of the short-term absences were Covid related.

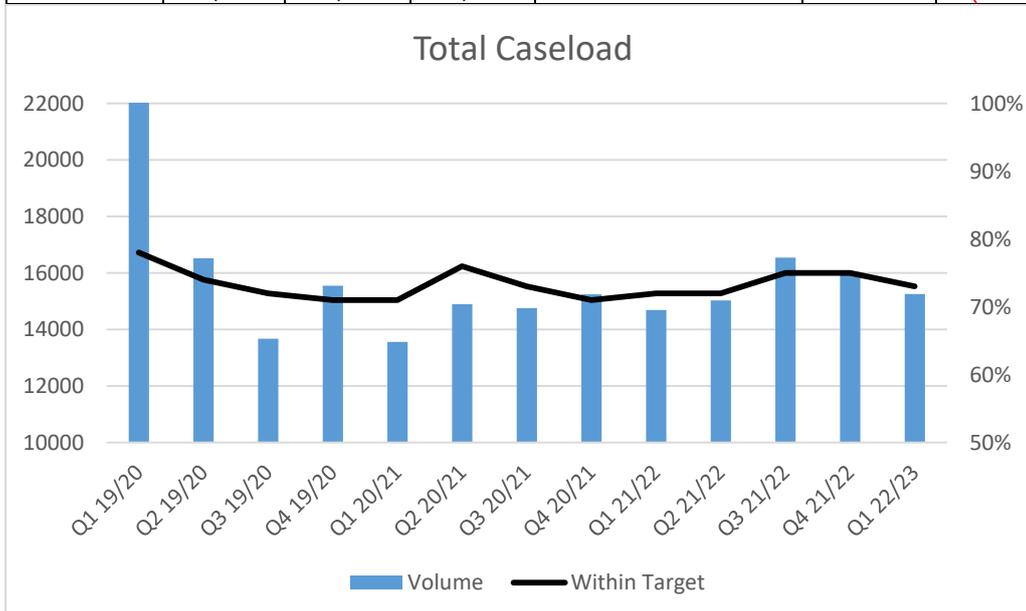
5.5 The incidence of long-term absence represents two staff on long-term absence. Both staff are being managed and supported in line with our Attendance Management arrangements.

| Average Days per FTE (Admin Service only) | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |  | Q4 2021-22 Annualised | Q1 2022-23 Annualised |
|---|---------|---------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Short-Term                                | 1.5     | 3.27    |  | 3.6                   | 2.92                  |
| Long-Term                                 | 3       | 5.48    |  | 4.88                  | 2.8                   |
| Total                                     | 4.15    | 8.74    |  | 8.48                  | 5.76                  |

*Case Work Performance*

5.6 The reporting of performance has been updated in order that members can more easily compare like-for-like periods. The table below shows the casework volumes for the last two quarters, compared with the previous quarter but also compared with the corresponding quarter for the previous year for comparison.

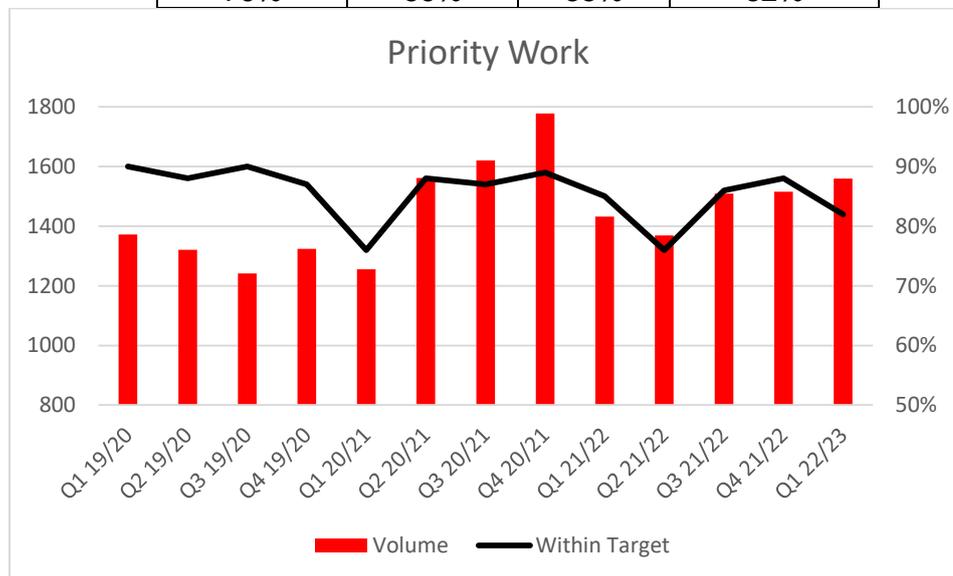
| Category     | Volumes          |            |            | Variance to Comparators |               |
|--------------|------------------|------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------|
|              | Q1 Previous Year | Q4 2021-22 | Q1 2022-23 | To Q1 Previous Year     | To Q4 2021-22 |
| Priority     | 1,432            | 1,516      | 1,559      | 127                     | 43            |
| Non-Priority | 13,258           | 14,446     | 13,693     | 435                     | (753)         |
| Overall      | 14,690           | 15,962     | 15,252     | 562                     | (710)         |



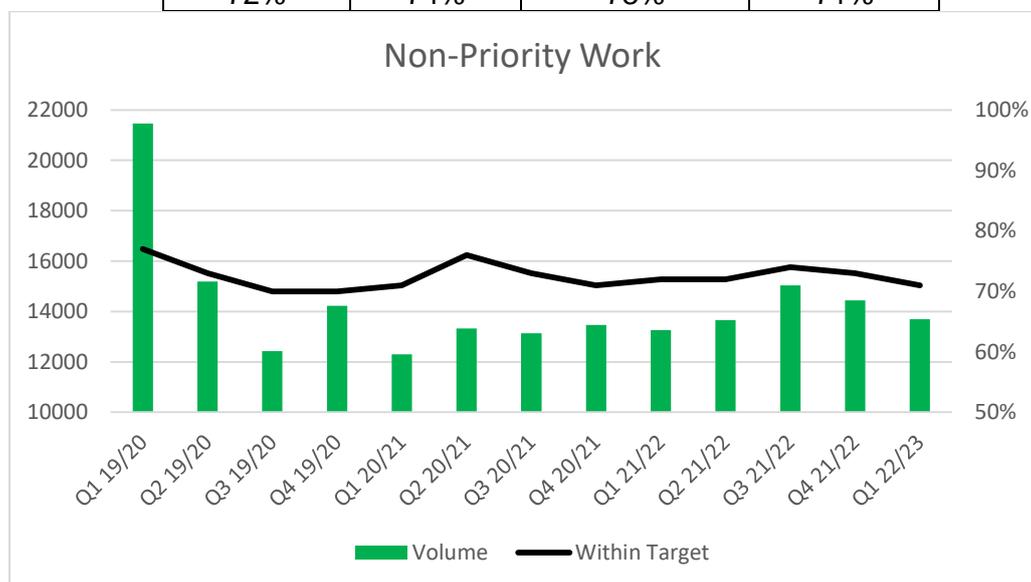
Overall case volumes completed in the Quarter dropped slightly compared with the previous quarter, but this is likely because the Projects Team (created earlier in 2022) were focused on completing data quality work ahead of the submission of the 2022 valuation data. It is anticipated the Projects Team will move on to the backlog of aggregation cases once the valuation data queries have been resolved. The overall volumes still comparable favourably with the volumes from the same quarter a year ago.

The following tables highlight the levels of performance for both priority and non-priority casework in terms of our service standards.

| Priority Performance |            |            |            |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Q2 2021-22           | Q3 2021-22 | Q4 2021-22 | Q1 2022-23 |
| 76%                  | 86%        | 88%        | 82%        |



| Non-Priority Case Performance |            |            |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Q2 2021-22                    | Q3 2021-22 | Q4 2021-22 | Q1 2022-23 |
| 72%                           | 74%        | 73%        | 71%        |



5.7 The overall number of non-priority cases completed and the target rate dropped slightly this quarter. As well as the reasons set out in 5.6, additional resources were applied to complete processing of the monthly data files to the end of March ahead of the production of the 2022 Annual Benefit Statements. 1

5.8 The table below provides a summary of performance against the main subject areas. Performance levels have remained static for the individual subject areas when compared with Quarter Four in the main.

| Case Type            | Target Days | Q1 Previous Year Volume | Q1 Prev Yr % on time | Q4 21-22 Volume | Q4 21-22 % on time | Q1 22-23 Volume | Q1 22-23 % on time | Comment  |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------|
| Priority             |             |                         |                      |                 |                    |                 |                    |          |
| Retirements          | 5           | 821                     | 76%                  | 742             | 79%                | 850             | 71%                |          |
| Deaths - Acknowledge | 5           | 257                     | 96%                  | 311             | 94%                | 286             | 90%                |          |
| Deaths - Payment     | 5           | 343                     | 98%                  | 463             | 99%                | 423             | 99%                |          |
| Non Priority         |             |                         |                      |                 |                    |                 |                    |          |
| New Joiners          | 5           | 2370                    | 86%                  | 2244            | 89%                | 2132            | 99%                |          |
| Deferreds            | 20          | 843                     | 68%                  | 1037            | 70%                | 1014            | 72%                |          |
| Refunds              | 9           | 105                     | 82%                  | 153             | 95%                | 195             | 95%                |          |
| Transfers In         | 7           | 301                     | 48%                  | 384             | 47%                | 398             | 48%                |          |
| Transfers Out        | 5           | 316                     | 68%                  | 338             | 74%                | 299             | 66%                |          |
| Divorce              | 5           | 84                      | 64%                  | 127             | 82%                | 90              | 80%                |          |
| General enquiries    | 5           | 848                     | 90%                  | 1008            | 91%                | 1113            | 56%                |          |
| Estimates            | 5           | 1780                    | 74%                  | 2048            | 82%                | 1469            | 78%                |          |
| Aggregations         | 20          | 904                     | 59%                  | 1350            | 51%                | 1025            | 62%                | See 5.12 |

5.9 Quarter 1 is the first full quarter where the functionality for deferred members to retire online was available via the member portal. The introduction of this new functionality allows us to provide a further breakdown of the performance in relation to different retirement types and this is shown in the table below.

| Retirement Case Type                                    | Target Days | Number of cases Completed | Percentage Completed Within Target |
|---|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Quotations  |             |                           |                                    |
| Active Members (inc. Flex)                              | 5           | 744                       | 75%                                |
| Deferred Members (Online)                               | 5           | 52                        | 100%                               |
| Deferred Members (Offline)                              | 5           | 220                       | 85%                                |
| Deferred Members (with Special Conditions*)             | 5           | 21                        | 62%                                |
| <b>Total</b>  |             | <b>1,037</b>              | <b>78%</b>                         |
| Settlements   |             |                           |                                    |
| Active Members (inc. Flex)                              | 5           | 533                       | 65%                                |
| Deferred Members (Online)                               | 5           | 101                       | 93%                                |
| Deferred Members (Offline and inc. Special Conditions*) | 5           | 216                       | 77%                                |
| <b>Total</b>  |             | <b>850</b>                | <b>71%</b>                         |

\* Special conditions in this context are members with a separate AVC fund (where retiring online is not possible) or those expressing an interest in trivial commutation.

5.10 The table above illustrates the service improvements available for deferred members if they use the online functionality and we will be continuing to promote this route for active members. The table also demonstrates that performance in processing active member retirements needs to be an area of focus. The table below is a further breakdown of the total time taken to complete these cases. These are pure extracts from the administration system and a more detailed investigation into the cases recorded as taking greater than 16 plus days is currently being undertaken. A verbal update will be provided to the Board

on the progress with these investigations in anticipation that further reporting might be helpful in future.

| Retirement Case Type                                   | Total Cases  | Completed 0-5 Days | Completed 6-10 Days | Completed 11-15 Days | Completed 16+ Days |
|--|--------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Quotations</b>                                      |              |                    |                     |                      |                    |
| Active Members (inc. Flex)                             | 744          | 558                | 155                 | 19                   | 26                 |
| Deferred Members (Online)                              | 52           | 52                 | -                   | -                    | -                  |
| Deferred Members (Offline)                             | 220          | 187                | 17                  | 9                    | 7                  |
| Deferred Members (w/ Special Conditions)               | 21           | 13                 | 7                   | 1                    | -                  |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>1,037</b> | <b>810</b>         | <b>179</b>          | <b>29</b>            | <b>33</b>          |
| <b>Settlements</b>                                     |              |                    |                     |                      |                    |
| Active Members (inc. Flex)                             | 533          | 346                | 119                 | 45                   | 23                 |
| Deferred Members (Online)                              | 101          | 93                 | 5                   | 1                    | 2                  |
| Deferred Members (Offline and inc. Special Conditions) | 216          | 166                | 39                  | 6                    | 5                  |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>850</b>   | <b>605</b>         | <b>163</b>          | <b>52</b>            | <b>31</b>          |

5.11 At the last meeting, members of the Board were provided with a summary of cases outstanding at the end of Quarter Four of 2021/22. The tables below update these to 30 June 2022. The first table shows cases in pending whilst we await information from third parties and the second table shows cases ready to be processed.

| Case Type           | Volumes of cases pending (awaiting external parties) End Q1 Prev Year | Volumes of cases pending (awaiting external parties) End Q4 2021-22r | Volumes of cases pending (awaiting external parties) End Q1 current year | Variance to prior reporting period |
|---------------------|---|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>Priority</b>     |   |  |  |                                    |
| Retirements         | 186   | 210  | 131  | (79)                               |
| Deaths              | 196   | 283  | 328  | 39                                 |
| <b>Non Priority</b> |   |  |  |                                    |
| New Joiners         | 110   | 62   | 80   | 18                                 |
| Deferreds           | 3,558   | 4,768  | 5,124  | 356                                |
| Refunds             | 14  | 15   | 20   | 5                                  |
| Transfers In        | 439   | 600  | 872  | 272                                |
| Transfers Out       | 250   | 237  | 245  | 8                                  |
| Divorce             | 43  | 35   | 35   | -                                  |
| General enquiries   | 86  | 53   | 59   | 6                                  |
| Estimates           | 1,254   | 1,204  | 913  | (291)                              |
| Aggregations        | 525   | 826  | 1,014  | 188                                |
| Leavers to process  | 2,116   | 2,780  | 2,550  | (230)                              |

| Case Type           | Volumes of cases to be processed/in processing End Q1 prev year | Volumes of cases to be processed/in processing End Q4 2021-22 | Volumes of cases to be processed/in processing End Q1 2022-23 | Variance to prior reporting period | Number of active cases currently outside KPI measures |
|---------------------|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Priority</b>     |   |   |   |                                    |   |
| Retirements         | 48  | 186   | 42  | (144)                              | 27  |
| Deaths              | 50  | 130   | 91  | (39)                               | 35  |
| <b>Non Priority</b> |   |   |   |                                    |   |
| New Joiners         | 99  | 53  | 78  | 25                                 | 17  |
| Deferreds           | 520   | 550   | 809   | 259                                | 562   |
| Refunds             | 11  | 12  | 13  | 1                                  | 6   |
| Transfers In        | 115   | 142   | 161   | 19                                 | 73  |
| Transfers Out       | 67  | 78  | 78  | -                                  | 12  |

|                     |       |       |       |    |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|----|-------|
| Divorce             | 25    | 7     | 12    | 5  | 0     |
| General enquiries   | 61    | 87    | 120   | 33 | 22    |
| Estimates           | 246   | 390   | 408   | 18 | 139   |
| Aggregations        | 3,397 | 3,847 | 3,856 | 9  | 3,759 |
| Unprocessed Leavers | 2,592 | 1,089 | 1,159 | 70 | 998   |

- 5.12 At a previous meeting, Members requested some insight into the expected volumes of case work to be processed as part of 'business as usual'. We have attempted to demonstrate this by adding an additional column into the table above to show the numbers of cases that are outside of our KPI target measures. The two areas of particular concern remain as highlighted in the table above. We have explained to members previously that we are undertaking a project to introduce a means of processing the leavers either using automated tools or via bulk processing (or more likely a combination of both). The first stage of this project is to process these leavers on a bulk basis in a 'cloned' system environment ready to be submitted as part of the valuation extract. This stage is expected to be completed by 31 July. We will then be carrying out additional checks to ensure the bulk process can be utilised in the live systems environment. We expect to see a significant impact on the number of outstanding leavers by the end of Quarter Two.
- 5.13 In relation to aggregations, the numbers of outstanding cases remain high and insufficient progress has been made with eroding this backlog of cases. Members were advised previously that a dedicated project team was recently set up within the wider Benefits Team to focus on dealing with specific work areas as opposed to routine case processing and it was intended a significant part of their resource time would be dedicated to processing aggregations. Unfortunately the high level of data discrepancy queries that needed resolving ahead of the 2022 valuation means that this work has been delayed but it is anticipated the project team will be able to return to processing aggregations after the end of July and some impact will be seen in Quarter Two of 2022/23.

#### *Statutory Disclosure Reporting*

- 5.14 The Board previously requested some additional information about reporting performance against statutory disclosure requirements. The time limits for statutory disclosures are less rigid but they often measure different time scales to those historically measured by SYPA. As mentioned previously, we have developed our reporting in this area and **Appendix A** shows the Quarter 1 report for the areas covered under the various disclosure regulations. The Appendix provides some level of assurance that statutory targets are generally being met in the main areas. In general terms this data shows high levels of compliance in areas that SYPA can control. This does give us some pointers as to areas where further engagement with, and training for, employers could be beneficial. Members should note the addition of the Pension Savings Statements to the table for 2022/23.

#### *Employer Performance*

- 5.15 Members will be aware that employers now submit individual data on a monthly basis and we previously reported that commitment from employers to the monthly data collection process has been good. There was concern that Covid-19 would have impacted the ability of some employers to deliver the monthly submissions. However, this does not seem to be the case and submissions have continued to be provided. The tables below show the **current** position of monthly returns received in respect of the last three months.

|                     | Number of returns expected | Returns received | Currently Outstanding | % Completion Rate | Total Scheme Members not submitted |
|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mar 2022 (due Apr)  | 542                        | 541              | 1                     | > 99%             | <10                                |
| Apr 2022 (due May)  | 541                        | 540              | 1                     | >99%              | <10                                |
| May 2022 (due June) | 541                        | 537              | 4                     | >99%              | <10                                |

- 5.16 Fortunately, the vast majority of employers have continued to provide the monthly returns even in these difficult circumstances and this is beneficial because it is now directly linked to the collection of contributions via Direct Debit (see below). An additional (highlighted) column has been added to the table above to provide some context to the missing returns. This shows the total number of scheme members that should have appeared on the monthly returns that are yet to be received.
- 5.17 There are two employers (four service contracts) with outstanding returns. One is in respect of a recent admission agreement where a multi academy trust has entered a service contract with a new provider and the provider have now committed to completing the returns by the end of July following a training session. The second is an existing provider with multiple service contracts where a small amount of data appears to have been omitted. There are not expected to be any issues with the submissions of the returns once resolved.

*Individual query employer reporting*

- 5.18 Last year we started monitoring performance of employers in respect of responding to individual queries raised by SYPA. Examples of the sorts of queries raised with employers are the provision of 2008 Scheme Final Pay for leavers (where additional information is required beyond the CARE pay included on the monthly returns); confirmation of hours changes; confirmation of role changes, confirmation of pay for Annual Allowance purposes, etc.
- 5.19 The Board previously requested that the reporting be updated to reflect the actual performance of key employers and payroll providers for each quarter so that the trends could be more effectively monitored. **Appendix B** therefore shows the performance in recent quarters for the employers or payroll providers with the highest volumes of queries.
- 5.20 Members will be aware of ongoing dialogue between SYPA and Rotherham MBC payroll services in relation to the volumes of outstanding queries for employers for whom they provide a payroll support service and at the last meeting it was requested that Rotherham MBC attend the next meeting to report on their improvement plans. Representatives of Rotherham MBC have prepared the report attached at **Appendix C** and will be attending the meeting to present the report and address any queries that members may wish to raise.
- 5.21 Following the refining of the reporting, two payroll providers (Capita and EPM) now appear on the list of employers/providers with high volumes of queries outstanding. Both organisations have recently undergone a number of personnel changes which have caused operational difficulties at their end and the Support and Engagement Manager and

his team are continuing to liaise with the new contacts provided to ensure they understand their statutory responsibilities and to provide any training/support required.

- 5.22 Note that the case completion rates showing the percentage ‘in time’ are based on our own internal targets for expected response levels which are 5 working days for urgent queries and 20 working days for standard queries. It is also the fact that there is a direct relationship between the number of members an employer has and the number of queries. It would normally be expected that Sheffield CC as by some margin the largest employer would have more queries. However, following our earlier engagement Sheffield CC have now devoted significant resources to resolve the volumes of outstanding queries and their continued positive progress in reducing the numbers of queries outstanding should be noted.

#### *Contribution Payments*

- 5.23 Members may recall that SYPA moved to the collection of contributions via Direct Debit from April 2020. The tables below show the status of payments in respect of contributions due for the latest available three months, as well as the details of any outstanding payments. Of the remaining employers not yet signed up to Direct Debit, these are predominantly service contract providers with multiple ‘employer’ contracts where they have unusual pay cycles which do not fit neatly with the monthly collection process and we have temporarily agreed they can continue to pay by BACS.

|   | Mar 22 (due Apr) | Apr 22 (due May) | May 22 (due Jun) |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Employers Paid by Direct Debit          | 508              | 507              | 508              |
| Employers Paid on time by BACS          | 33               | 32               | 29               |
| Payment received late by BACS           | 0                | 1                | 0                |
|   |                  |                  |                  |
| Payment outstanding (see 5.17 and 5.24) | 1                | 1                | 4                |

- 5.24 Of the two bodies with payments outstanding, both relate to the situations outlined in paragraph 5.17 which should be resolved by the end of July. Interest will be applied to any late payments where applicable but the amounts are likely to be modest as the total payments outstanding relate to less than ten scheme members in total.

#### *Scheme Member Engagement – Customer Satisfaction*

- 5.25 The Authority is always keen to improve engagement with our scheme members to measure the levels of satisfaction with our service and each month surveys all members who have recently retired to understand their experiences. The table below shows the overall satisfaction levels from respondents to the survey issued to members who retired in February 2022, March 2022 and April 2022 who provided an email address.

| Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with the service you receive from us? |     |
|---|-----|
| Very Satisfied  | 53% |
| Satisfied   | 44% |
| Dissatisfied  | 3%  |

|                             |                       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Very Dissatisfied           | 0%                    |
| Total Number of Respondents | 153 out of 707 issued |

5.26 The percentage of members in the green category remains over 90% which is encouraging. The number of members who were dissatisfied was five. Of the comments received, three members felt that the online portal could be improved, and we are investigating whether we can make the initial registration process in particular easier for members.

*Scheme Member Engagement – Customer Centre*

5.27 Members of the Board will be aware that the Customer Centre exists to provide a single point of contact for scheme members and employers. Feedback for the Customer Centre continues to be reasonably positive overall, though satisfaction levels have dropped below 90% this quarter. An electronic survey was issued to 3,569 members with an email address who had contacted us by phone over the months of February, March and April 2022 to ask about their experience of our service delivery and for ideas on service improvements.

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with the service you receive from us? |                         |
| Very Satisfied  | 56%                     |
| Satisfied   | 33%                     |
| Dissatisfied  | 7%                      |
| Very Dissatisfied   | 4%                      |
| Total Number of Respondents   | <b>468 out of 3,569</b> |

The 11% who were dissatisfied represented 51 individuals. As many do not leave specific comments it is often difficult to identify any recurring concerns but there are some clear themes that continue to emerge in relation to the accessibility of the online portal and also in terms of improving communications when we are awaiting information from third parties. We will be looking at some technological changes in the longer term that will help improve both of these aspects of the service but in the meantime we will aim to ensure that the Customer Centre staff can provide as much assistance to scheme members as is reasonably possible. A full list of the comments received in response to the survey has not been provided as an appendix for this Quarter but can be made readily available if members wish to receive a copy.

5.28 Email is an important channel for many of our members and, since October 2020, we have been monitoring customer satisfaction levels with our email responses by embedding “click face” surveys into our email signatures (see example below).



The table below shows the overall satisfaction levels for February, March and April 2022.

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with the service you receive from us? |                              |
| Excellent   | 60%                          |
| Good  | 27%                          |
| OK  | 3%                           |
| Poor  | 10%                          |
| Total Number of Respondents   | 181 out of 5,263 emails sent |

As with the telephony survey, the ratings have dropped slightly below 90% for this quarter. The response rates are relatively low and not all members provide information but we do follow up separately with those who leave contact details. The following was identified from comments made by members who rated the service as poor:-

- One member was very dissatisfied with our service because we were chasing the completion of a Life Certificate which the member had insisted, he had returned. Unfortunately, we hadn't received it.
- One member was unfortunately given the wrong information and was told there was a delay in paying benefits because they had not yet reached their retirement date when in fact, we were waiting for outstanding pay information from their employer. The Customer Centre is staffed with a couple of new members of the team who are still receiving training and this has been addressed with them.
- Another member was provided with a standard email containing transfer information and a link to forms on our website. Unfortunately, we had recently launched our new website and the links weren't in sync at that time. The member then received a letter and had the same issue. This issue has since been resolved and all relevant links now work.
- Another member was dissatisfied with the length of time it was taking to provide transfer information. Unfortunately, the delay was caused by the former employer. We were waiting for information in relation to an annual allowance check and we couldn't proceed until this check was complete.

*Scheme Member Engagement – online portal*

5.29 We continue to encourage all scheme members (regardless of status) to sign up to use the online portal which was enhanced and expanded in 2019. **Appendix D** shows the numbers of scheme members who have registered for the portal in the last two years and these numbers are continuing to increase.

5.30 Although the numbers registered to engage with us online are not as high as we would wish as a proportion of the scheme membership overall, evidence from other funds does suggest that our levels of registration are at least comparable with the percentage of members signed up to use online services within the LGPS more widely.

*Scheme Member Engagement – New Joiner survey*

- 5.31 As part of our wider engagement with scheme members, we wanted to gain some insight into how members who had recently joined the scheme rated our service. A survey was issued to 1,084 members who had joined the scheme in February, March and April 2022. The new joiner survey specifically asks about the welcome email/letter, including registration for the online portal. The results of the survey are shown below.

| Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with the service you receive from us? |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
|   |                               |
| Very Satisfied  | 17%                           |
| Satisfied   | 64%                           |
| Dissatisfied  | 11%                           |
| Very Dissatisfied   | 8%                            |
|   |                               |
| Total Number of Respondents   | 47 out of 1,084 emails issued |

- 5.32 The 19% of new joiners who responded to the survey represents 9 individuals. Of those, the majority of the queries related to members who did not find the process of signing up to the portal easy to follow. As mentioned above, we are hoping to make some changes to the registration process this year which will improve this position.

*Annual Benefit Statements (ABS) and the triennial valuation*

- 5.33 Members will be aware of the 2022 exercise to ensure all members receive their ABS ahead of the statutory deadline of 31 August 2022. As 2022 is a triennial valuation and the new fund actuary will require details of all liabilities as at 31 March 2022, the ABS project team had initially intended to issue the ABS's over a two month period between 1 May 2022 and 30 June 2022, two months ahead of the deadline. This was intended to assist with ensuring we met the timescales for both the submission of the valuation data to the actuary (end of July 2022) and the provision of Pension Savings Statements (October 2022).
- 5.34 Statements were successfully prepared for all deferred members but unfortunately Civica somewhat unexpectedly issued a significant systems upgrade which needed to be tested and installed before the ABS production process for active members could commence. This upgrade contained a significant number of long standing fixes and required extensive testing which delayed the original plan to have completed all statements by the end of June. The testing of the upgrade has now been completed and production of the ABS's for active members has now commenced. A verbal update on progress will be provided at the meeting but all of the year-end returns and processes have been completed and there is no reason to suggest there will be any concerns with meeting the 31 August deadline.
- 5.35 Separate to this, the data quality checks and corrections to enable the valuation data to be submitted to the actuary have been ongoing with the Projects Team for some time and the team are expected to be able to provide the data to the actuary in accordance with the

agreed timelines. A verbal update on progress against the valuation timetable will also be provided at the meeting.

*Child Review Exercise*

5.36 Members will recall we reported the outcomes of the Life Certificate exercise at the last meeting. Following a similar principle, one of the tasks performed by the administration service is the completion of an exercise which is designed to provide assurance that SYPA continues to pay monthly pensions only to those children who are entitled to receive benefits. In general terms this is up to age 18 or up to age 23 at the latest if the child remains in full-time education beyond age 18. There are specific provisions for children over the age of 23 who are incapable by reason of permanent disability of supporting themselves. The first table below provides a summary of the volumes of child pensions in payment.

| Description                               | Number |
|---|--------|
| Number of Child Pensions at 31 March 2021 | 335    |
| Plus: New Child Pensions in Year          | 40     |
| Less: Child Pensions ceased during Year   | 39     |
| Number of Child Pensions at 31 March 2022 | 336    |

5.37 The table below shows the numbers of reviews that were undertaken in the last financial year. Predominantly these will be reviews of children reaching age 18 or over age 18 but in full-time education. We would be happy to provide any further information on the child review process as required.

| Description                               | Number |
|---|--------|
| No. Reviews Instigated                    | 122    |
| Completed Reviews                         | 119    |
| Ongoing (pension suspended awaiting info) | 3      |

**Implications**

6.1 The proposals outlined in this report have the following implications:

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| Financial       | None |
| Human Resources | None |
| ICT             | None |
| Legal           | None |
| Procurement     | None |

**Jason Bailey**

**Head of Pensions Administration**

| Background Papers |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Document          | Place of Inspection |
|                   |                     |