SOUTH YORKSHIRE
PENSIONS AUTHORITY

ICT STRATEGY

2025 - 2028

Contents

Introduction

Access to effective ICT systems and infrastructure is crucial to SYPA's ability to deliver its services successfully and to achieve improvements in the efficiency of our operations, whether that is in the administration of pension benefits, the investment of the Fund's money or the corporate infrastructure required to run the organisation.

This strategy sets out what we will do over the next three years to maintain and continue to improve our technological base in a way that will support the delivery of the objectives set out in the Corporate Strategy.

Delivering for our customers is the focus of SYPA's mission statement and the focus of this strategy is about how we use technology to do that, whether that be through:

- The networks and hardware we use
- The applications and software we use and develop

This strategy is constructed around 4 themes:

- Infrastructure and Agility
- Customer Access
- Business Processes
- Information Governance and Security

Achieving the objectives set in each area will contribute to achieving the improvements in service to our customers which we wish to see.

Our Current ICT Infrastructure

The Authority's current ICT infrastructure is based on a resilient, secure, and efficient 'on premise' datacentre comprising:

- A 1Gbps client / server hard wired network infrastructure.

- Server virtualisation technology enabling server consolidation and providing improved resilience and efficiency savings.

- An enterprise storage solution delivering data resilience, high performance, and encryption.

- The Mimecast Cloud Service is used for Unified Email Management and Egress Switch provides email encryption and data loss prevention.

- Security of the Infrastructure and data is paramount and performed in accordance with ISO 27002 best practices, with assurance provided by annual IT Health Checks and Cyber Essentials Plus certification. A Managed Detection and Response (MDR) service monitors, investigates and responds to threats 24/7.

- An online backup and integrated disaster recovery solution.

End user computing is provided through:

- All staff being provided with a laptop enabled for agile working with a minimum of a two-screen set up when in the office.

- The suite of Microsoft 365 applications and tools

- Agile working provided through Wi-Fi connectivity at Oakwell House, remote VPN access using multi-factor authentication together with Microsoft 365 applications for mobile devices

- A cloud-based telephone system which incorporates MS Teams integration and a unified contact centre solution

ICT services are largely provided in house with specialist services bought in as required.

The Authority's key information system is the Civica UPM Pensions Administration system which is complemented by internally developed software: DART which assists in data cleansing and EPIC which provides a comprehensive employer portal.

Back office systems for finance and investment accounting are both external, cloud-based solutions while those for payroll and the management of attendance are externally supplied and hosted locally. There is no comprehensive HR system in place.

The Authority's main web presence (www.sypensions.org.uk), provides comprehensive information about the organisation including details of board members, committee meetings and decisions. Access is provided to two integrated online portals:

- *Mypension* – for scheme members

- *EmployerHub* – for scheme employers

A fully integrated SharePoint, Teams and OneDrive solution provides a collaboration hub in Microsoft 365 and a secure place to store, organise, share, and access information from any approved device.

What we need our technology to deliver

The Authority's Corporate Strategy sets out our objectives for the next three years and forms an ambitious and challenging agenda that requires us to equip the organisation with the technological capability that will enable us to achieve our aims effectively and efficiently. Therefore, the overall aim of this this strategy is:

To provide the organisation with the technology infrastructure required to drive and support innovation in our service delivery to achieve the objectives set out in the Corporate Strategy, whilst ensuring the integrity and security of our systems and data are prioritised.

The ICT infrastructure clearly has an impact across all of the Authority's corporate objectives, although this strategy supports the following ones in particular.

To design our services around the needs of our customers (whether scheme members or employers):

Customer Focus

To uphold effective governance, showing prudence and propriety at all times::

Effective and Transparent Governance

To ensure that all our employees are able to develop a career with SYPA and are actively engaged in improving our services:

Valuing Employees

Progress made in the last three years

The progress achieved against each of the aims of the 2022 to 2025 strategy are set out below.

Strategic Action	Progress
Developing and maintaining our ICT infrastructure to meet the needs of an increasingly agile organisation	

Review and implement the hardware replacement strategy to reflect the fundamental changes in the hardware estate brought about by the move to agile working.	- A new Hardware Replacement Policy created. - Implemented Microsoft Windows Server and Client upgrades. - Delivered on replacement programme of hardware (e.g. laptops) in accordance with the policy. - Replaced Network storage infrastructure providing significant performance improvements, security enhancements (encryption) and increased capacity.
Complete the roll out of Microsoft 365 to support the Authority's core desktop requirements including integration with telephony.	- All user and group mailboxes migrated to Microsoft Exchange online. - Transition of all documents from Microsoft OneDrive 'on-premise' to OneDrive online completed.
Maintain fully compliant Microsoft licensing.	- Carried out procurement for new Microsoft 365 enterprise license renewal for 3 years. - Reviewed Microsoft SQL server licensing options and incorporated into the enterprise agreement.
Conduct a rolling review of ICT policies in the light of changing needs of the organisation, initially prioritising password management.	- Password management controls updated and strong passwords guidance regularly promoted to all staff. - Procured a third-party resource, providing access to a suite of ICT Policy templates and reports. - Commenced the review of policies.

Using technology to support a step change in the way customers access our services

Deployment of the *MyPension* dynamic homepage and improvements to the user registration and log on experience.	- Dynamic Homepage now in operation for important announcements. - Various service enhancements delivered, including the secure upload of documents, address lookup tool and improvements for mobile devices.

Deliver improvements to the employer experience.	• Implemented new portal (*EmployerHub*) to provide numerous improvements including additional functionality and security.
Increasing the number of transactions that scheme members and employers can complete online and working to eliminate the need for paper.	• There has been some limited progress on this action – including the ongoing promotion and increasing numbers registered for *MyPension* – but there will be further work needed on this in the next strategy period.

Using technology to deliver efficient business processes

Transfer existing SharePoint site to the 365 platform and further development and exploitation of capabilities.	• Developed and implemented a new SharePoint Online portal, providing users with a secure collaboration space, with full integration to the Microsoft 365 suite of applications. All relevant content and processes migrated.
Implementation of Power BI and other reporting tools to provide more accessible management reporting across all aspects of the organisation.	• Developed new Reporting Dashboards to complement the improvements made to several key processes (e.g. Monthly Data Collection and the production of Annual Benefit Statements). • Established integration between M365 Power BI and on-premise SQL Server via a secure Data Gateway.
Continuing to develop for our own use and sell to other LGPS funds our in house developed software suite.	• Sale of EPIC (*Employer Pension Information Centre)* application to Leicestershire Pension Fund completed in the period. • We have continued to develop the DART (*Data Analysis & Reporting Tool)* and EPIC applications, including the creation of new workflow functionality and additional data cleansing reports.

Keeping data safe and secure

Continuing to build and strengthen our cyber/information security capabilities, for example through annual IT Health Checks, training for IT staff, and the promotion of user awareness through mandatory training.

- Implemented cloud AI solution to aid in the detection of sophisticated phishing and impersonation email attacks.
- Completed an M365 Security Assessment and implemented actions to address all of the key recommendations.
- Introduced periodic Phishing exercises and regular Cyber Awareness training for all users.
- Annual Disaster Recovery testing undertaken with full replication of the ICT environment.
- Cyber Security presentations delivered to the Local Pension Board and Pensions Authority members.
- Procured and implemented a comprehensive Managed Detection and Response (MDR) service with 24/7 monitoring.

Obtaining formal certification for our management arrangements in this area (e.g. ITIL and Cyber Essentials Plus).

- Annual attainment of the Cyber Security Essentials Plus certification. The certification demonstrates that we work to Government defined Cyber Security standards and assures customers and partners that we work to industry best practice.

Demonstrating compliance with the new TPR Single Code of Practice in relation to Maintenance of IT Systems and Cyber Controls.

- Following the publication of the new TPR General Code of Practice in March 2024, we reviewed our compliance with the requirements and planned any actions required for improvements.

What we plan to do over the next three years

As illustrated above, the last three years has seen huge steps forward in the technological capability of the organisation and how this is harnessed effectively to meet our objectives.

The plans for the next three years will be focussed around ensuring the solutions in place are used to optimum effect across all functions of the organisation. The plans are organised around the following four themes.

1. **Maintaining and developing our ICT Infrastructure to meet current and future organisational needs.**

2. **Using technology to support innovation and digital inclusion in how customers can access our services.**

3. **Using technology to deliver efficient business processes.**

4. **Keeping our data safe and secure.**

Ref	Strategic Action	Timescale	
		From	**To**
Maintain and develop our ICT Infrastructure to meet current and future organisational needs			
ICT1-A	Deliver improvements and upgrades to the Authority's ICT infrastructure	Ongoing throughout the strategy period	
ICT1-B	Procure and implement a next generation ICT helpdesk system	01/11/2025	28/02/2026
ICT1-C	Develop a fully revised and updated Business Continuity Strategy for ICT related functions	01/01/2025	30/06/2025
ICT1-D	Deploy the Microsoft 365 E5 stack (compliance and security tools) to maximise return on investment and to reduce associated costs.	Ongoing throughout the strategy period	
Using technology to support innovation and digital inclusion in how customers can access our services			
ICT2-A	Deliver improvements to the scheme member online portal (*MyPension*) by simplifying registration, improving security, and increasing functionality.	01/04/2025	30/06/2025
ICT2-B	Deliver improvements to the employer online portal (*EmployerHub*) by increasing functionality and reporting.	01/05/2025	31/07/2025
ICT2-C	Review the existing technology in the Oakwell House Events Room and implement upgrades to facilitate hybrid meetings and improved broadcasting of Authority meetings.	01/04/2025	30/06/2026
ICT2-D	Support the implementation of the Pensions Dashboard to required timescales.	01/09/2024	Connect by 31/10/2025
Using technology to deliver efficient business processes			
ICT3-A	Continue the implementation of Power BI to provide more accessible management information and reporting across the organisation.	Ongoing throughout the strategy period	

Ref	Strategic Action	Timescale	
		From	To
ICT3-B	Support the implementation of an integrated HR, Staff Payroll and Time and Attendance system.	01/04/2025	31/12/2025
ICT3-C	Ensure the contract for the Pensions Administration software system is managed effectively and that procurement activity and decisions are undertaken in good time ahead of the end of the existing contract.	01/07/2025	30/09/2026
ICT3-D	Support the development of the Pensions Administration software system and investigate the utilisation of Automation tools to achieve maximum efficiencies.	01/04/2025	30/09/2026
ICT3-E	Investigate the future possibility of how Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools might be used by the organisation – including assessment of potential benefits as well as the need for additional and robust governance and controls requirements.	01/04/2025	31/12/2025
Keeping our data safe and secure			
ICT4-A	Maintain and continually strengthen our cyber security defences – including as part of this, developing and implementing an updated, internal-facing Cyber Security Strategy.	Ongoing throughout the strategy period – with the Cyber Security Strategy in place by September 2025.	
ICT4-B	Ensure that our cyber and information security capabilities are thoroughly embedded and tested – through activities including (but not limited to) annual IT Health Checks, ensuring continued Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation, specialist training and CPD for all IT staff, promotion of user awareness through regular and frequent training and exercises.	Ongoing throughout the strategy period	
ICT4-C	Demonstrate compliance with the TPR General Code of Practice in relation to Maintenance of IT Systems and Cyber Controls	01/04/2025	31/08/2025

Ref	Strategic Action	Timescale	
		From	To
ICT4-D	Support the work to improve data security aspects of Information Governance including the update and implementation of revised data classification, retention, encryption and minimisation policies and procedures.	01/02/2025	31/03/2026 and ongoing thereafter
ICT4-E	Continue the rolling programme of review of all ICT Policies to ensure these are current, sufficient, and fit for purpose.	01/10/2024	31/10/2025 and ongoing thereafter

How we will measure our progress

The following section sets out the different measures and sources of evidence that will be used to monitor and report back on progress against the objectives and actions planned.

1. **Maintaining and developing our ICT Infrastructure to meet current and future organisational needs**

   Success in this area will be measured and evidenced through:

   ◆ Availability (uptime), performance and capacity of the Corporate Network Infrastructure and key systems/applications.

   ◆ Availability (uptime), and performance of Cloud based services and applications.

   ◆ Helpdesk and ICT support metrics; the number of requests and incidents logged.

   ◆ User feedback, and satisfaction levels determined by surveys.

   ◆ The completion of specific projects (e.g. implementation of a new ICT Helpdesk system).

   ◆ The results of annual ICT disaster recovery rehearsals.

   ◆ A reduction in overall costs by the consolidation and exploitation of the M365 E5 stack.

2. **Using technology to support innovation and digital inclusion in how customers can access our services**

   The overall measure of success in this area will be determined by member and employer satisfaction levels. Other indicators include:

   ◆ An increase in the types of transactions that can be completed online.

   ◆ For scheme members, simplified registration to reduce the volume of support calls to the Customer Services Team.

   ◆ For employers, improved self-service reporting functionality.

   ◆ The completion of specific projects (e.g. implementation of Pensions Dashboard).

3. **Using technology to deliver efficient business processes**

Success in this area will be measured through:

◆ Improvements in the quality-of-service provision from the external software provider.

◆ The completion of specific projects (e.g. development of Automation and the assessment of AI tools).

4. **Keeping our data safe and secure**

The overall measure of success in this area will ultimately be determined by the number and severity of any identified data/security breaches. Other indicators include:

◆ Achievement and maintenance of the relevant accreditations.

◆ The completion of specific projects (e.g. implementation of a data classification scheme, and adherence to data/document retention policies).

◆ Number of incidents (breaches, phishing attacks, malware infections) including those reported by the Managed Detection and Response (MDR) system.

◆ The detection and timely rectification of vulnerabilities.

◆ Effectiveness of User Awareness Training; assessment of user performance and the company / individual user risk scores, phishing test success rate.

◆ Audit findings; the number and severity of non-compliance issues.

Resourcing our ICT Strategy

The resources planned within the medium term financial strategy to support delivery of this ICT Strategy are as follows.

Planned Budgets	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
ICT Team - including Systems team	943,110	971,400	1,000,540
ICT Infrastructure - including Cyber Security	289,290	293,810	299,330
Pensions Administration System (including additional consultancy budget)	336,000	342,720	349,570
Back office systems - Finance, HR & Staff Payroll, Risk Management, Procurement platform, etc.	86,820	45,350	46,360
ICT Capital Expenditure	60,000	60,000	60,000
Income from sales of DART and EPIC	(16,530)	(16,810)	(17,100)
Total	**1,698,690**	**1,696,470**	**1,738,700**

The resourcing available reflects the significance of this strategy and our ICT infrastructure and cyber security to the achievement of all aspects of our corporate strategic objectives and services.

The budget for back office systems includes an additional amount in 2025/26 to fund implementation costs of the new HR and Staff Payroll system.

The budget for the pensions administration system now includes resources for the commissioning of additional specialist consultancy services when required to support us in developing the system and our use of it to support the goals around automation, data quality and the user experience included in this strategy.

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