

Pension Board

Date:	11th November 2024
Classification:	General Release
Title:	GMP Project & Website Update
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Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	Service Delivery
Financial Summary:	£3,000

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to update the Pension Board on the various projects and governance activities being undertaken by the Pensions and Payroll Team to improve the administration of the City of Westminster Pension Fund (COWPF) Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

2. Summary

2.1. GMP Project: We are progressing as planned and expect the first set of results from the manual cases in November. We intend to put any changes in benefit into effect before April 2025 Pensions Increases.

2.2. Pension Website: We are currently creating the new website; however, the project has been delayed due to lack of resource availability and has a new expected completion date of 31st March 2025. We will need to enter a 5-month contract with Hymans Robertson at a cost of approx. £3k to continue our current website until completion.

3. Projects

3.1. Guaranteed Minimum Pension Project

As a reminder, there are/were four stages to GMP Reconciliation and Rectification Project:

- Stage 1 – GMP Reconciliation (completed 2020),
- Stage 2 – GMP Analysis (completed 2023),
- Stage 3 – GMP Rectification (completed 2023)
- Stage 4 – GMP Adjustment Implementation and Communication (started end 2023).

We are currently at Stage 4 – GMP Adjustment Implementation and Communication and expect this final stage to complete in 2025.

Stage 4a – Bulk Changes to Member Records – Calculation by Mercer Ltd, Implementation by Hampshire Pension Services

In terms of bulk changes to member records –

- 730 members had no change to their pension benefit as their GMP was correct.
- 55 members received an increase in their pension benefit as they had historically been underpaid due to incorrect GMP. The original number of members due an increase was 56, however on further review from HPS, one member was not eligible. Members eligible for an increase were informed by letter and received their increase in February 2024 pension payroll.
- 291 members received a decrease in their pension benefit as they had historically been overpaid due to incorrect GMP. This original number of members due a decrease was 318 however due to further review by HPS and mortality of members, 27 members became ineligible. The members receiving a decrease have been given three months' notice with letters being sent with August 2024 pension payroll informing them of their decrease taking place in November 2024 pension payroll.

- 241 members had cases that needed full rectification (manual cases) so were descoped from the bulk rectification process and handed back to City of Westminster Pension Fund.

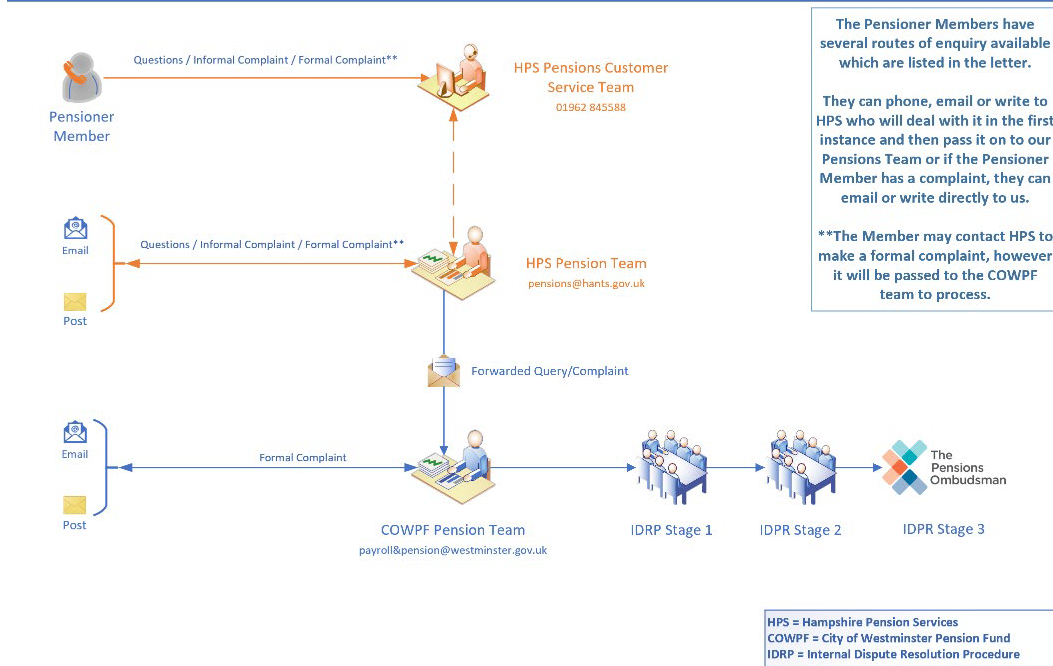
Stage 4b – Manual Changes to Member Records – Calculation by Intellica Ltd, Implementation by Hampshire Pension Services

Intellica Ltd, began reviewing the manual cases in September 2024. As per my previous paper, Intellica will attempt to do a bulk rectification exercise with these manual cases and then isolate those that are truly manual and need further investigation / decision. We will know the results of Intellica's work in November 2024. We aim to contact members who will receive a change in pension benefit in November 2024. We then intend to implement any increases (plus remedial underpayments) and decreases in pension benefit in February 2025 payroll. If there is any delay due to unforeseen circumstances or if extra quality control is required, we will defer changes in benefit until after 2025 Pensions Increases (PI) in April 2025. This is both because our policy is to give members receiving a decrease three months' notice of the decrease and as work begins on PI calculations each February, we have a window where no extra calculations can take place.

Stage 4c – GMP Query Management

In July 2024, we agreed the query / complaints process with Hampshire Pension Services and will use this for tracking and managing queries as they come in. At the time of writing this paper, we have several queries which we are tracking through to completion using a purpose-built tracking spreadsheet. Three of those queries were dealt with as Stage 1 IDRP (Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure) cases We are also working in collaboration with Hampshire Pension Services with each query.

2024 GMP Decrease Letter Query Process for Members in Receipt of Pension



3.2. Pension Website Project

In my last paper, I stated that the project was on track to go live in November 2024. However, since then, there has been a set-back due to a lack of resource to help with content design, creation and curation. Therefore, we are getting an extension of the website hosting at Hymans Robertson until 31st March 2025 for approximately £3k.

Although disappointed to ask for another extension, I am very satisfied with the work done so far. We have completed the member journey mapping, and we are underway with the employer journey mapping. By mapping the user journeys, we can create meaningful streamlined content which is the goal of this process. We have designed the website front page (1st draft) and are in the process of creating dedicated member category pages as per our user research recommendations. With special thanks to Matthew Doyle and Kieren Mollison for leaning into the project, I am happy to say that we have had real engagement from the Digital Creative Services team and have started mocking up the new website already. The project delay is simply down to lack of resource in content design, creation and curation as stated above. What this means in practice is that my colleague Zuzana Fernandes and I have

taken over the task of designing the website (based on existing website templates) with the Digital team and we are using the User Research we completed in 2023 to guide us as well. The content team will then provide some resource to audit our finished work and make recommendations as they find necessary.

In terms of next steps, we will be working with the Digital team to create content, model it on the demo site and then go back and refine the content as needed in an iterative and agile process. This will take place from October 2024 to January 2025 until we have a full demo site. We will then present the full demo site to the Board at the next Board Meeting in the Spring.

We have also had good engagement with Hymans Robertson about discontinuing our hosting and Andrew McKerns has given us permission to use copy from their shared hosted content (should it be helpful) which is a generous offer and for which we are grateful. Hymans Robertson also confirmed that they will pass on the domain name www.wccpensionfund.co.uk to us at point of discontinuation so that we can avoid the potential for scams by letting the domain name go free. We will need to pay for the domain name for a period until we are satisfied that our users will naturally go to the new site and then we can let it go.

In terms of project management going forward, I am going to take over formally managing the project using a monthly Project Board and bi-weekly project meetings. We are lucky to have finance graduate Matthew Mandell-Nash to assist with the project management also for which I would like to thank the Treasury Team. Matthew and I prepared the necessary formal project documentation (risk logs etc) during w/c 7th October 2024 and successfully held the first Project Board before the end of October. We agreed the iterative process and aim to have the majority of the content curated before the New Year.