

Judicial Pensions Board

Key issues discussed at the meeting held on Friday 1 October 2021

Administration

The Board discussed the appointment of the new Interim Chair of the Judicial Pensions Board (JPB) and the ongoing recruitment campaign for three new independent Board members.

The Board was updated by the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) Deputy Director for Pensions Operations who confirmed that MoJ now had an agreed Stability Plan in place with Xafinity Punter Southall (XPS) monitored by the MoJ Pensions Operations Delivery Board. The MoJ Pensions Operations team had in place its own Stability Plan and Annual Work Planner which were subject to regular review and, following a recent recruitment campaign, augmented resource was now in place across the MoJ Pensions Operations Project Delivery and Administration Teams. The Deputy Director also updated the Board on the progress of the Reform Scheme 2022 programme. The Board sought and received assurance that the level of resourcing across the MoJ team was expected to be sufficient to cope with the likely uptick in work caused by the administration of the new 2022 scheme and other projects.

Representatives from XPS informed the Board that recruitment to the new administration team in Middlesbrough was progressing with the Operations Manager, Administration Manager and Deputy Administration Manager posts now filled. Some staff will also be transferring from the existing team in Wokingham to provide continuity of scheme knowledge.

The Board received a briefing on XPS's quarterly performance and Stability Plan and requested an update on the small number of 2020/21 Pension Saving and Annual Benefit Statements which remained outstanding due to unresolved queries. The Board also sought an account from XPS on a recent data breach affecting 12 members. Assurances were provided that XPS processes had been updated and staff training provided to prevent the recurrence of any similar breach in future.

Fee Paid Judicial Pension Scheme (FPJPS) Data Queries

The Head of Pensions Operations informed the Board that MoJ had engaged contractors to work with colleagues from the Project Delivery function on developing a data strategy and corresponding data improvement plan for the FPJPS. The Board was also briefed on plans for a wider data reconciliation as part of the overarching data strategy, as well as the scoping exercise for the additional data requirements of the new Reformed Scheme 2022 and the McCloud options exercise.

Pensions Savings Statements (PSS) and Annual Benefit Statements (ABS)

The Board was informed XPS had issued 98.9% of JPS 2015 PSS and 99% of JPS 2015 ABS on time. Although a small number of statements were still to be issued due to ongoing query resolution, the Board agreed that this did not amount to a breach of material significance requiring a report to the Pensions Regulator.

Complaints

The Board discussed the effectiveness of complaint handling at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure and received an update from the Chair of the Disputes Resolution Committee (DRC) on cases which had been heard at recent DRC meetings held on 16 June and 19 July.

GIAA Audit

The Board was informed that the GIAA Audit had concluded and all follow-up actions had been completed within the agreed timescales. MoJ intended to commission a further GIAA audit which would focus on the management and performance of the updated MoJ/XPS contract, including performance against the new KPIs and SLAs which had been included in a recent contract variation.

Date of next meeting: Friday 3 December 2021