

**TEACHERS' PENSION SCHEME PENSION BOARD (TPSPB)  
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING  
Wednesday 8 April 2020 1400–1500 (By teleconference)**

<b>Present:</b>			
<b>Board members:</b>			
Neville Mackay - Chair	NM	Paul Faulkner - TP Director of Operations	PF
Susan Anyan - Independent Pension Specialist and Chair of IM&C sub-committee	SA	Amy Gibbs – TP, Analytics and Risk Manager	AG
David Butcher - Employer Representative and Chair of Commercial sub-committee	DB	Anna Alderson – DfE PMO	AA
Julie Huckstep – Member Representative and chair of IM&C sub-committee	JH	Sue Crane – DfE, Senior Contract Manager	SC
Jackie Wood – Employer Representative and Chair of SD&MoD sub-committee	JW	Jeff Rogerson – DfE, Head of Pensions - Governance, Assurance & Accounts	JR
	IP	Peter Springhall – DfE, Head of TPS Supplier Management	PS
<b>Apologies:</b>	LP	Karen Cammack – TPSPB Secretariat	KC
Kate Copley – DfE, Deputy Director Teacher Reward and Incentive Division		Ann Ratcliffe – TPSPB Secretariat	AR
		Kathryn Symms – Policy Team Leader Casework, Correspondence & TPSPB	KS

This is the second extraordinary TPSPB meeting, called to review business continuity planning resulting from the move to TPS home-working as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting took place by telephone conference and comprised the four sub-committee chairs alongside key TP and DfE representatives.

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
Agenda item 1	<b>Introduction:</b> NM welcomed attendees for an update on COVID-19 Business Continuity and other issues.	
Agenda item 2	<b>COVID-19 update (Papers 2, 3 &amp; 4):</b>  NM drew attention to Paper 4 which he felt would be a key document to support the update and discussion, and invited AG to provide an update.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AG confirmed that daily meetings continue as per the Business Continuity Framework. Silver teams have been established to deal with actions and gold teams to focus on delivery. 98% of staff in the pensions and benefits workstream are now working remotely. Bandwidth has been increased to support homeworking, and there are plans to expand it further.</li> <li>• Member contact centre staff are now working from home after initial teething problems, related to mobile phones, were quickly resolved.</li> <li>• 30 mail-room staff remain on site, but follow social distancing protocols and enhanced hygiene arrangements. They are actioning same-day mail and return home once this is scanned/processed. The arrangements are subject to daily monitoring to ensure any issues are identified immediately.</li> <li>• NM recognised the good work that TP is continuing to do to support its staff, but asked whether there was anything TP were not able to do. AG confirmed the challenges associated with the</li> </ul>	

	<p>employer contact centre, as they use different hardware, but TP is addressing this by enhancing the ability for effective communications with them via the portal. Generally, it is business as usual from an operational perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TP also continue to liaise with TPR e.g. on issues of compliance. TPR has recently released guidance to the industry about Business Continuity planning and the importance of staff well-being. TP’s plans are in line with the guidance.</li> </ul> <p>NM referred to Paper 4, which provides an insight into how performance targets are being maintained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC advised that the graph was developed as a tool to help her understand how TP is keeping up with work. As SLAs are retrospective, she needed something to focus on forward planning to provide assurance that TP are maintaining the workload. She advised that at the end of January there were 18k pieces of work in progress, and at the end of March this was 14.5k, so she was confident that TP is in a good position. She explained that the chart detailed 2 days’ work (2 and 3 April, when working from home was in place). The “bars” indicate outstanding work and the “lines” how much work was processed in that period. She was reassured that TP have the capacity to deal with the workload, although it was more difficult to assess whether the time-focused targets are being met (e.g. the 3-day turnaround).</li> <li>• AG indicated that a full month’s data (to 31 March) would be available for the 22 April Board meeting, which would provide a clearer picture. JR advised that additional information on SLA performance was being compiled and would also be available for the next meeting and that today’s papers would be also be updated for that meeting. The consensus of the sub-committee chairs was that it was a helpful graph that was easy to follow.</li> </ul> <p>NM referred to Papers 2 and 3 – the updated Business Continuity plan and the Risk Register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC advised that the risks on Paper 3 comprised those from the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers, but viewed through the COVID-19 lens. Board members felt the two reports were useful and complementary and that it was valuable to highlight the key risks.</li> <li>• Responding to JH’s query, AG confirmed that the employer’s portal can be accessed remotely and is not tied to the workplace.</li> <li>• NM noted that Paper 2 highlighted two areas where the net level of concern was high: employer contributions and processing of amendments to teachers’ pensions.</li> <li>• Employer Contributions: JR explained that employer contributions were within expectations and the end year cash and resource position is well within tolerances. JR and finance colleagues, in both TP and the department, meet regularly to monitor. Whilst</li> </ul>	
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	<p>the scheme is able to draw down funds from HMT, the expectation is that contributions from employers will continue as normal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amendments to benefits: JR advised that MDC means that TPS data is sufficiently accurate to put new pensions into payment. However, revisions may be more difficult or done later than normal. Because this is difficult to quantify, the level of concern is considered high. There are no issues at present, but TP will need to monitor this closely.</li> <li>• JH asked about the contingency to cover staff sickness (re Business Process 5). PF noted that the ill health and death in service team were most exposed in that respect, so plans are in place to upskill technical team staff to address any potential spike.</li> <li>• JW asked whether there were any plans for a “payment holiday” (re Business Process 11). JR advised there were no plans, but that debtor cases are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, usually via repayment plan.</li> </ul>	
Agenda item 3	<p><b>Review of Actions log from 25 March 2020:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EAP6/250320 – JR confirmed that there are still some outstanding actions which TP is progressing; the audit plan will be shared with the MR&amp;IC sub-committee once complete.</li> <li>• EAP10/250320 – PS confirmed that he and DB had agreed to replicate the approach taken for the other sub-committee meetings and would hold a telephone conversation on the morning of 22 April. They would then provide an update to the rest of the Board at the afternoon meeting.</li> </ul>	
Agenda item 4	<p><b>General Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NM proposed that the 22 April TPSPB meeting have a reduced agenda focussing on TP’s Business Continuity Plan, with an open discussion around how TP is coping with circumstances arising from COVID-19 and its impact. There was general agreement, in particular from the four sub-committee chairs, to the approach.</li> <li>• NM also considered that a broader agenda item such as a programme and project update would be useful. JR suggested that TP may be able to refresh and re-use a presentation given to DfE recently. AG agreed to liaise with colleagues and JR/NM to discuss further.</li> <li>• JR provided an update on how the department is dealing with the impact of COVID-19, and the challenges this has thrown up. The department has adopted three strategic priorities: to support the government’s response to COVID-19, to maintain critical links e.g. with suppliers and to minimise the impact and plan for the future. To support this, colleagues within the division are:</li> </ul>	EAP1/080420

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- working to help close schools, universities and colleges and provide support to those remaining open for key-workers.</li> <li>- liaising with exam boards and universities regarding the admission processes and providing clear communications on how this will work.</li> <li>- Providing advice on teacher recruitment, such as how to interview remotely, ensure safeguarding via vetting; and prepare for summer retirements.</li> <li>- Maintaining initial teacher training provisions, aiming to attract sufficient new applicants.</li> <li>- Ensuring STRB continues so that an up to date pay document is ready for schools to use in September.</li> <li>- Working on the early career framework and new professional qualifications for next year.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The four sub-committee chairs explained how their organisations were coping with the different ways of working.</li> </ul>	
<p>Agenda item 5</p>	<p><b>AOB:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NM asked whether there were any plans for TP to circulate a letter to all pensioner members along the lines of that circulated by PCSPS. JR noted the high number of TPS members with an MPO account and explained that this and the website were TP's preferred method of communication. AG confirmed that the volume of website traffic had increased and that a range of COVID-19 messaging, including FAQs has been included.</li> <li>• SA advised that her organisation is reviewing queries to determine what future communications should focus on. Anecdotal evidence so far indicates a low level of queries.</li> <li>• JR confirmed a dramatic decrease in TP's white mail and highlighted that some organisations are currently reducing or closing their call centres. TP are well placed to deal with payments which should reduce the number of call centre enquiries.</li> <li>• PS advised that Cabinet Office have issued a policy notice regarding supplier engagement. All the provisions put in place by the commercial team are compliant.</li> <li>• He also advised that the contract extension is on course to be signed next week. The 30-day notice period ends on Saturday 11 April; thus far no challenges have been received. As electronic signatures are acceptable the process will not be delayed.</li> </ul>	
	<p>NM thanked TP for participating in the meeting and advised that he will send out a short update to remaining Board members ahead of the minutes.</p>	

Minutes agreed: *Neville Jacky*

Date: 16 April 2020

Minutes circulated to Board attendees for review on 16 April 2020.

The minutes will be uploaded to the Governance area of TP's website (being redacted where required) and a copy securely stored.