

Report Title:	Administration Report
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Julian Sharpe, Chairman Pension Fund Committee and Advisory Panel
Meeting and Date:	Pension Fund Committee and Advisory Panel – 13 March 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Damien Pantling, Head of Pension Fund
Wards affected:	None

REPORT SUMMARY

This report deals with the administration of the Pension Fund for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022. It recommends that Pension Fund Committee Members (and Pension Board representatives) note the Key Administrative Indicators throughout the attached report.

Good governance requires all aspects of the Pension Fund to be reviewed by the Administering Authority on a regular basis. There are no financial implications for RBWM in this report.

The Committee are asked to note that Administration Reports are provided to each quarter end date (30 June, 30 September, 31 December and 31 March) and presented at each Committee meeting subsequent to those dates.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That the Pension Fund Committee notes the report;

- i) Notes all areas of governance and administration as reported;**
- ii) Notes all key performance indicators; and**
- iii) Approves publication of the quarterly Administration report on the Pension Fund website.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1. The Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund Committee has a duty in securing compliance with all governance and administration issues.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1. Failure to fulfil the role and purpose of the Administering Authority could lead to the Pension Fund and the Administering Authority being open to challenge and intervention by the Pensions Regulator.

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1. No direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. None.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1. The Pension Fund Committee review and approve a risk register on a quarterly basis, prepared in line with CIPFA's guidance on "managing risks in the LGPS – 2018". The latest risk register (including relevant actions and mitigations) has been prepared alongside the amendments within these revised policies, with any relevant changes considered and documented as appropriate in the quarterly review of the risk management report.

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1. Failure to comply with pension legislation could result in the Administering Authority being reported to the Pensions Regulator where failure is deemed to be of a material significance.

7.2. Equalities: An Equality Impact Assessment is available at Appendix 2 to this report. The Equality Act 2010 places a statutory duty on the council to ensure that when considering any new or reviewed strategy, policy, plan, project, service or procedure the impacts on particular groups, including those within the workforce and customer/public groups, have been considered. There are no EQIA impacts as a result of taking this decision. Equality Impact Assessments are published on the [council's website](#)

7.3. Climate change/sustainability: N/A

7.4. Data Protection/GDPR. GDPR compliance is included as a specific risk on the register in regard to processing and handling personal data, this is dealt with in the appendix along with the relevant mitigations.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1. The Pension Board were consulted in detail through the approval of this report.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1. The Local Pension Board was consulted on the contents of this report

10. APPENDICES

10.1. This report is supported by 2 appendices:

- Appendix 1: Administration Report 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022
- Appendix 2: EQIA

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1. This report is supported by 0 background documents.

12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputy)			
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	17/02/2023	
Emma Duncan	Deputy Director of Law and Strategy / Monitoring Officer	17/02/2023	
Deputies:			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)	17/02/2023	23/02/2023
Elaine Browne	Head of Law (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	17/02/2023	02/02/2023
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	17/02/2023	
Other consultees:			
Cllr Julian Sharpe	Chairman – Berkshire Pension Fund Committee	17/02/2023	
Alan Cross	Chairman – Local Pension Board	17/02/2023	27/02/2023

13. REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Pension Fund Committee decision	Yes/No	Yes/No

Report Author: Damien Pantling, Head of Pension Fund, 01628 796701



THE ROYAL COUNTY OF
BERKSHIRE
PENSION FUND

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

QUARTER 4 – 2022 (Q3 2022/23)

1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022

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1. ADMINISTRATION

1.1. Scheme Membership

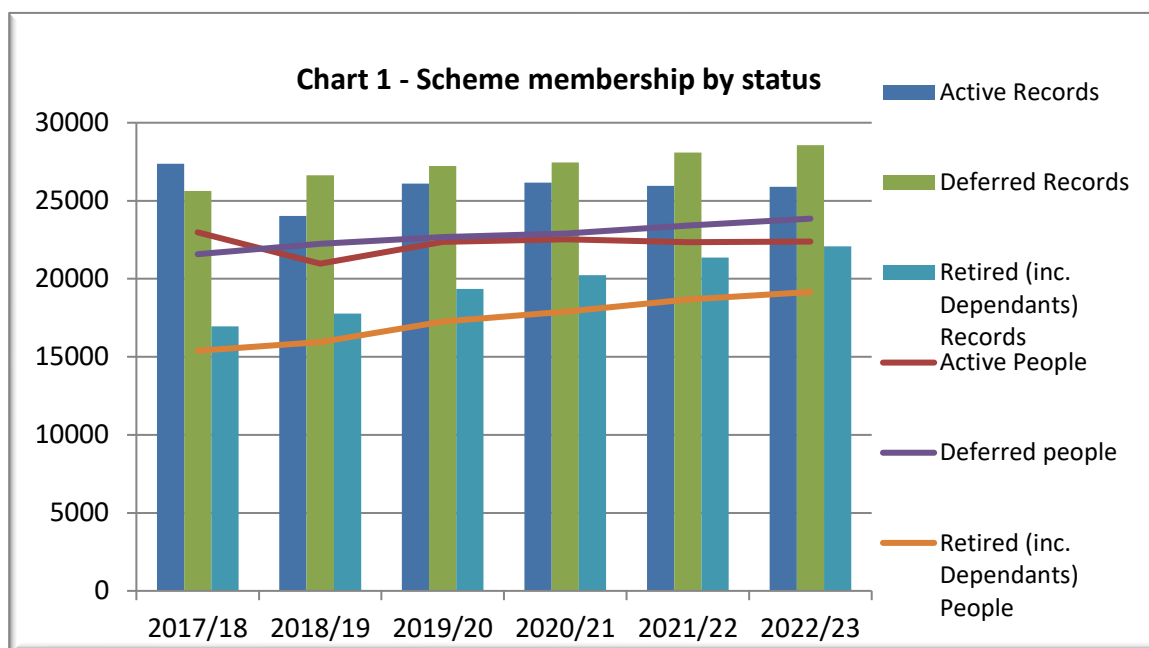


Table 1 – Total Membership as at 31 December 2022

Active Records	25,886	Active People	22,393
Deferred Records	28,568	Deferred People	23,852
Retired Records	22,073	Retired People	19,153
TOTAL	76,527	TOTAL	65,398

1.2. Membership by Employer

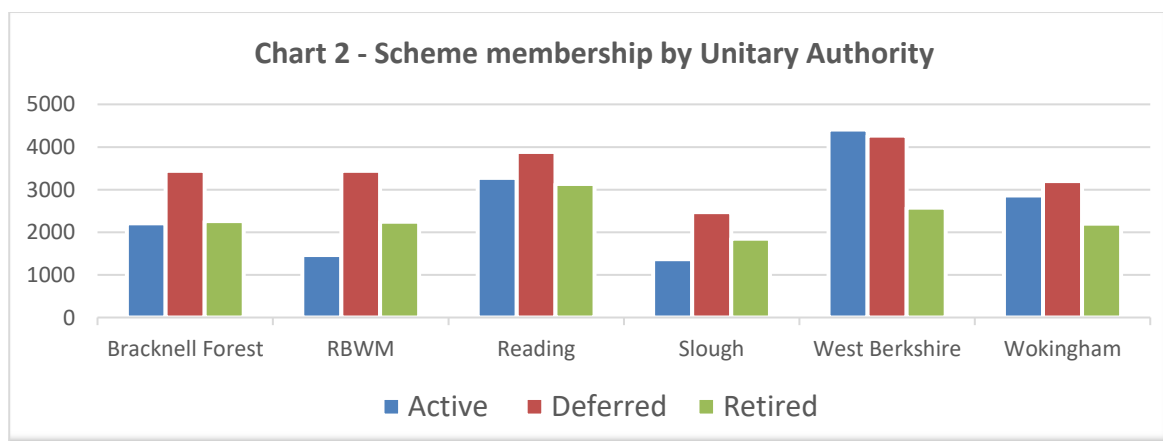
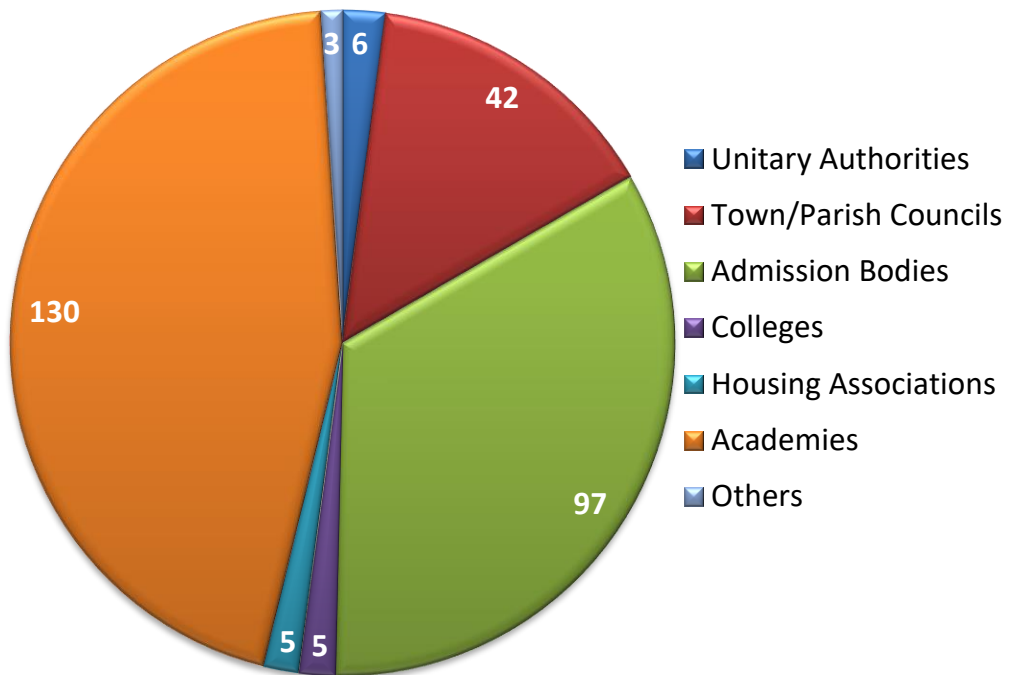


Table 2 - Membership movements in this Quarter (and previous Quarter)

	Bracknell	RBWM	Reading	Slough	W Berks	Wokingham
Active	-56	-21	+53	+31	-90	+15
	-43	+5	-46	-35	-151	-11
Deferred	-2	-13	+15	-16	+67	+19
	+42	-33	+20	+12	+38	+55
Retired	+19	+20	+33	+12	+29	+25
	+56	+51	+72	+28	+121	+59

1.3. Scheme Employers

Chart 3 - Employers with active members

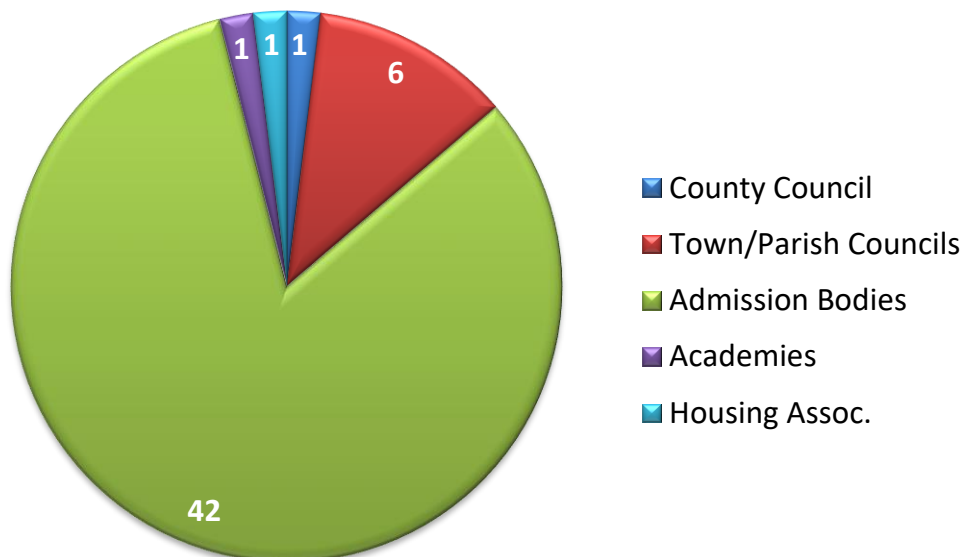


New employers since last report:

Admission Bodies: None

Academies: None

Chart 4 - Employers without active members



Exiting employers: None

1.4. Scheme Employer Key Performance Indicators

Table 3 – i-Connect users Quarter 3 (1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022)

Employer	Starters	Leavers	Changes	Total	Submission Received Within Specification
Bracknell Forest Council	177	182	246	605	100%
RBWM	127	101	147	375	100%
Reading BC	269	125	378	772	100%
Slough BC	137	64	154	355	100%
West Berks Council	428	227	524	1,179	100%
Wokingham BC	140	132	165	437	100%
Academy/ School	479	277	696	1,452	29.58%
Others	113	74	141	369	100%

NOTES: Table 1A above shows all transactions through i-Connect Software for the third quarter of 2022. Changes include hours/weeks updates, address amendments and basic details updates.

The benefits of i-Connect are:

- Pension records are maintained in ‘real-time’;
- Scheme members are presented with the most up to date and accurate information through “my pension ONLINE” (Member self-service);
- Pension administration data matches employer payroll data;
- Discrepancies are dealt with as they arise each month;
- Employers are not required to complete year end returns;
- Manual completion of forms and input of data onto systems is eradicated removing the risk of human error.

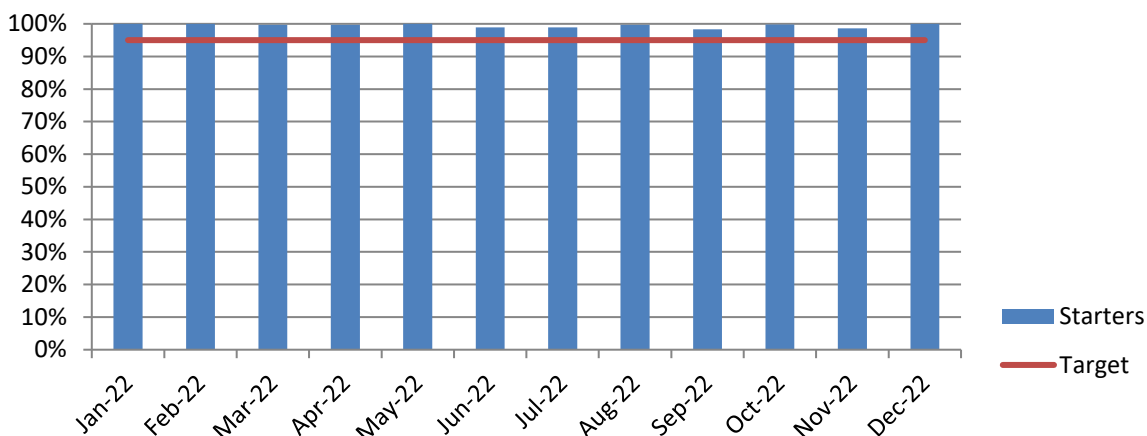
Since 1 October 2022, The Holt School have on board i-connect Software representing circa 70 scheme member records. Officers continue to work closely with The Slough & East Berkshire MAT which represents circa 200 scheme member records endeavouring to on board before Year End 2023 processing begin.

Overall, including The Slough & East Berkshire MAT, 131 scheme employers are yet to on board i-Connect Software which represents circa. 2,200 scheme member records (8.50% of total Active Scheme members).

The Pension Fund remains committed to continuing to work with these scheme employers to help them to onboard, where it is possible for them to do so. Scheme employers with fewer than 10 scheme members (77 employers) have the option of using an on-line portal version of i-Connect Software rather than submitting via “.csv”.

1.5. Key Performance Indicators

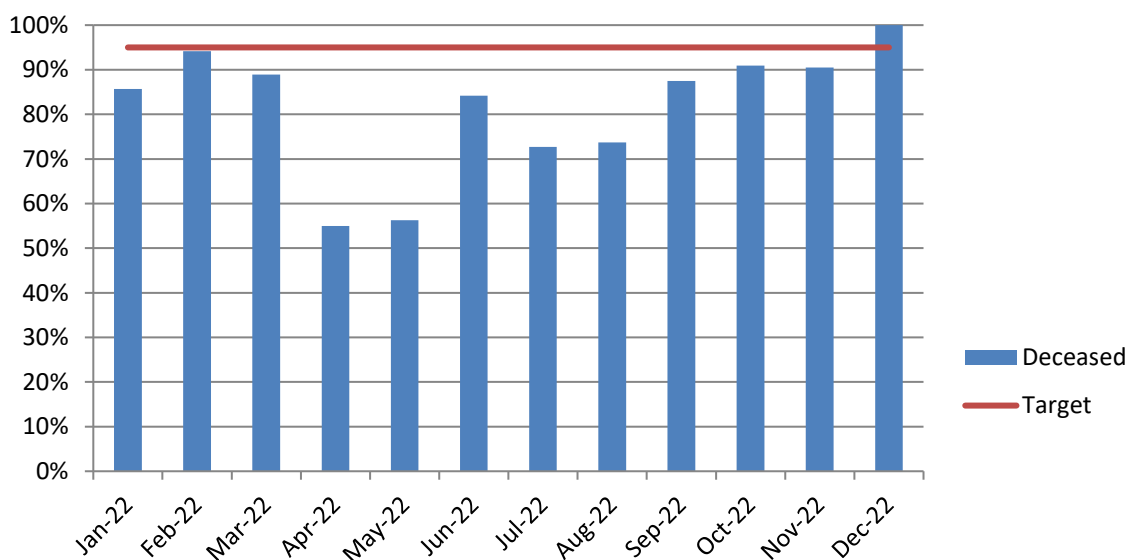
Chart 5A - KPI 1 - Starters processed within 20 working days



	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Starters	100	100	99.73	99.7	100	98.9	98.9	99.7	98.37	99.81	98.58	100
Target	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
Total	473	576	747	353	764	654	728	673	429	1040	989	591

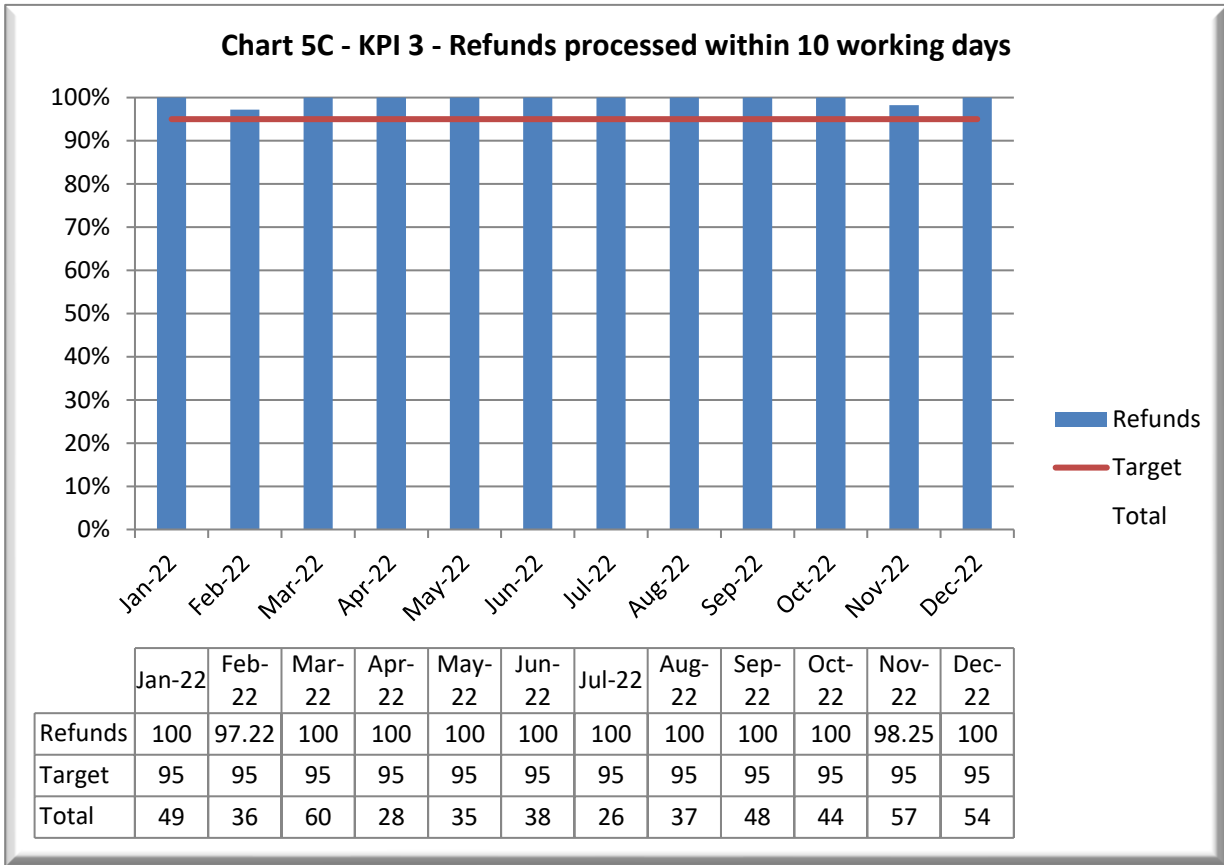
CIPFA Benchmark: Two months from date of joining the scheme or if earlier within one month of receiving jobholder information.

Chart 5B - KPI 2 - Deceased processed within 5 working days

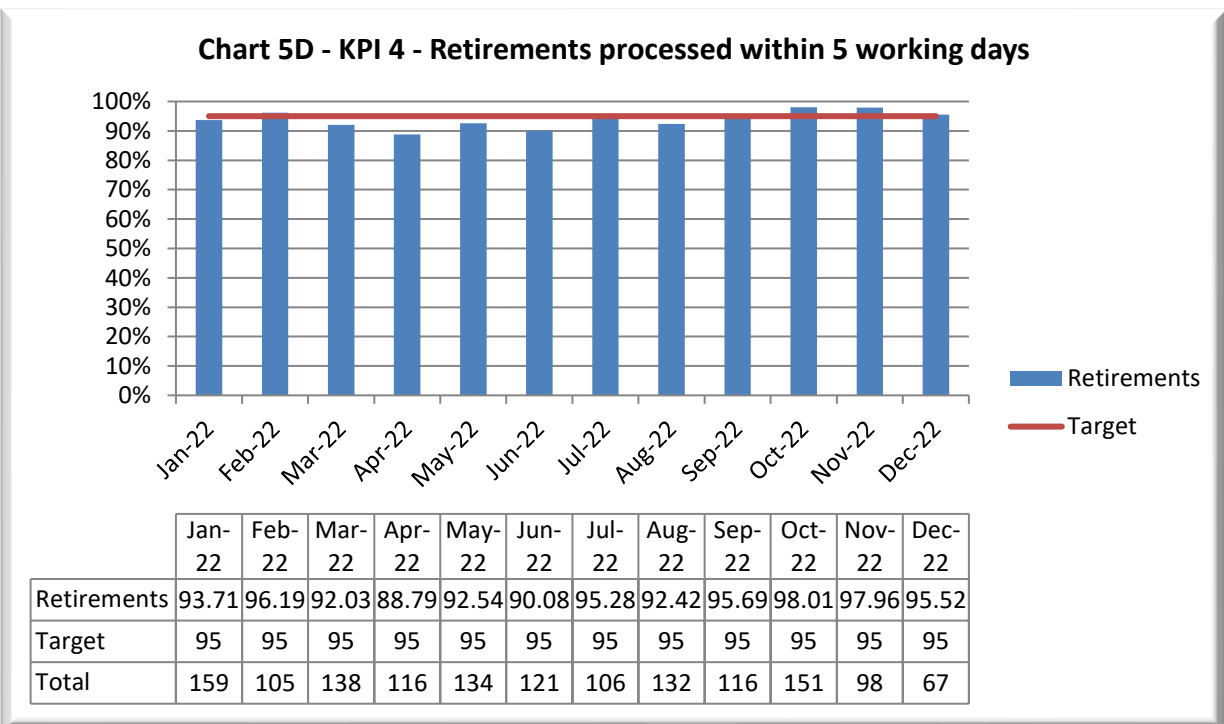


	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Refunds	85.71	94.12	88.89	55	56.25	84.21	72.73	73.68	87.5	90.91	90.48	100
Target	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
Total	21	17	18	20	16	19	22	19	16	11	21	6

CIPFA Benchmark: As soon as practicable and no more than two months from date of notification of death from scheme employer or deceased’s representative.



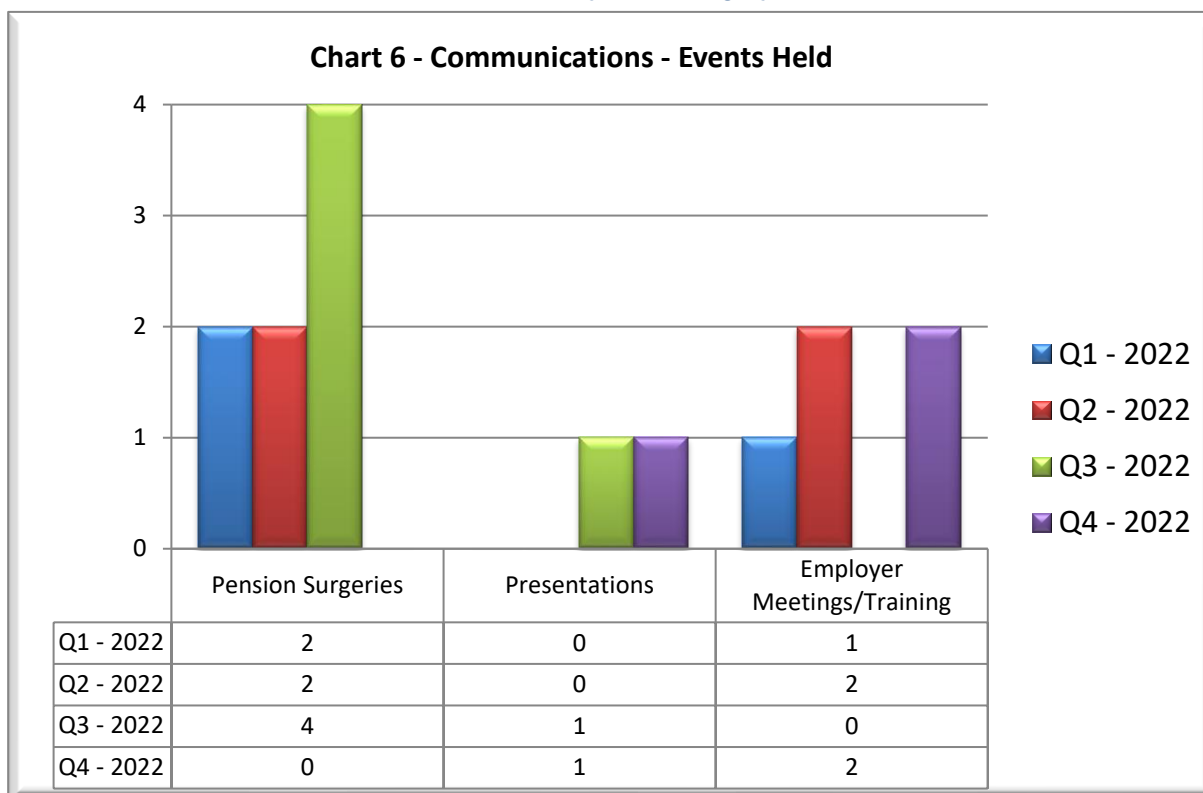
CIPFA Benchmark: No more than two months from date of receiving the scheme members signed declaration requesting to receive a refund of employee pension contributions.



CIPFA Benchmark: One month from date of retirement if on or after normal pension age or two months from date of retirement if before normal pension age.

1.6. Communications

Events shown have been held remotely, including hybrid.



1.7. Stakeholder Feedback

As part of the Pension Fund's aim to achieve Pension Administration Standards Association (PASA) accreditation it is a requirement to report to Members the comments and complaints received from scheme employers and their scheme members on a periodic basis. Please see below feedback received from stakeholders during the fourth quarter:

Date Received	Method	Feedback
29/11/2022	Email	[NAME], you need to have a huge pay rise.....Thank you for your responses, please tell you line manager that I have been very impressed by the service-with a virtual smile - that I have received. I will think of you as I blow out my 100 candles.....
20/12/2022	E-mail	[NAME], Thank you very much for your letter and thank you to you and all your team who have been very supportive and helpful. It's a really strange feeling to retire especially as I have worked full time since I was just under 16. I guess I look upon it as a new phase. Thanks again for making this all happen so seamlessly and your prompt responses and support. Much appreciated. Best Wishes.

24/12/2022	E-mail	To [NAME], Thanks for all your help and support sorting my pension for me, have a lovely Christmas.
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2. SPECIAL PROJECTS

2.1. McCloud Judgement

In 2014 the Government introduced reforms to public service pensions, meaning most public sector workers were moved into new pension schemes in 2014 and 2015.

In December 2018, the Court of Appeal ruled that the 'transitional protection' offered to some members of the judges' and firefighters' pension schemes, as part of the reforms, gave rise to unlawful discrimination.

On 15 July 2019 the Chief Secretary to the Treasury made a written ministerial statement confirming that, as 'transitional protection' was offered to members of all the main public service pension schemes, the difference in treatment will need to be removed across all those schemes for members with relevant service.

The changes to the LGPS include transitional protection for members who were within 10 years of their Final Salary Scheme normal pension age on 1 April 2012, ensuring that they would receive a pension that was at least as high as they would have received had the scheme not been reformed to a Career Average Revalued Earnings scheme from 1 April 2014.

Officers understand the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is to consult on further regulations governing the application of the McCloud remedy to the LGPS.

The DLUHC has confirmed to the Local Government Pension Committee (LGPC), in a recent update, that work continues on the steps to rectify the discrimination as it affects the LGPS in England and Wales, with the government planning to publish its response to the 2020 consultation on amendments to the statutory underpin later this year, after which the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board will resume its McCloud implementation groups.

An updated version of the draft regulations implementing the remedy will be published alongside the consultation response, covering new powers relating to the statutory underpin. However, a further consultation will take place in 2023 to ensure the updated draft regulations are accurate in light of the changes made.

The government will also consult on other aspects of the McCloud remedy which did not feature in our original consultation, such as compensation and rates of interest.

These new regulations are expected to come into force in October 2023, while a consultation will also take place covering new statutory guidance on McCloud implementation.

2.2. Pensions Dashboard Programme

A national pensions dashboard has been on the horizon for some time, but now the Pension Schemes Act 2021 has received Royal Assent it is anticipated the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will begin to consult on detailed dashboard regulations and work with regulators to begin supporting both private and public sector pension providers and pension schemes to comply with their dashboard compulsion duties. It is anticipated the Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) will publish further detailed instructions on how a scheme administrator must operate with the dashboard ecosystem.

Officers recognise it is important not to wait for all this consultation and guidance. Almost every aspect of administering a pension scheme is easier to achieve if data is actively managed and incorporates both Common and Scheme Specific data activities, an area officers have successfully improved over the last three years.

Officers acknowledge Pensions Dashboards, if done well, could be a game changer in getting individuals to better engage with their pensions and a better efficiency of pension scheme management. Officers understand the Pensions Dashboard will go live during late 2024 and officers will provide further details to Members in due course.

2.3. Berkshire Pension Fund Website and other Communication

Officers reported during September 2022 that they are only too aware of the need to ensure Scheme employers and their Scheme members are kept, more than ever before, up to date about all changes to the Scheme that impact on them, delivering news about such changes quickly and efficiently.

Officers have looked at driving changes to the communication work that they do, including a review and development of the Pension Fund website to further improve on existing functionality, all aimed at improving engagement with Scheme employers and their Scheme members. The review of the website is now complete, ahead of the original deadline of 31 March 2023.

An ongoing item is to a) target those Scheme members who are yet to register for 'my pension ONLINE' and b) target those who are already registered but chose, as part of the implementation of 'my pension ONLINE' in 2013, to continue to receive a paper copy Annual Benefit Statement to go solely online.

In respect of a), Officers are working with Heywood Pension Technologies who have launched a Transformational Member Experience Programme aimed at developing the functionality and user experience of 'my pension ONLINE' product. Officers are willing to act as a TEST site and will target those Scheme member who are yet to register as part of this programme going LIVE.

In respect of b), Officers have sent the first of three letters to Scheme members, in consideration of the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2013. A deadline to respond to at least one of the three letters is 31 March 2023, if a reply to continue receiving a paper copy Annual Benefit Statement is not received by this date no further paper copies will be sent.

Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

www.rbwm.gov.uk



1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	Administration Report
Service area:	Finance
Directorate:	Pension Fund

Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

13 March 2023 Committee Meeting –

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2. Relevance Check

Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?

- If Yes, state 'Yes' and proceed to Section 3.
- If No, please explain why not, including how you've considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

No, full assessment not required as this report is unlikely to have a specific impact on individuals or groups of people with protected characteristics

If 'No', proceed to 'Sign off'. If unsure, please contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

Who will be affected by this proposal?

For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff

Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented?

For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?

What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?

- How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?
- Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?

What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment?

Please consult the [EQIA Evidence Matrix](#) for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document (Section 2.3).

4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'.

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the EQIA Guidance document (available on the intranet).

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age			
Disability			
Sex			
Race, ethnicity and religion			
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment			
Pregnancy and maternity			
Marriage and civil partnership			
Armed forces community			

Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty			
Children in care/Care leavers			

5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.

<p>What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it? For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group</p>
<p>Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.
<p>How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future?</p>

6. Sign Off

<p>Completed by: Damien Pantling</p>	<p>Date: 18/02/2023</p>
<p>Approved by:</p>	<p>Date:</p>

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

Reviewed by:

Date: