

FPS Bulletins 75 – 77

75 – Nov 2023

Matthews 2nd Options Exercise

- **Matthews GAD calculator** has been released along with a user guide and has to be updated each month to allow the latest applicable interest rates A second version of the calculator is being released by the end of the year.
- **Deceased members**
 - There are specific provisions in the Firefighters' Pension Schemes (England) (Amendment) Order 2023 that relate to deceased members:
 - [Special Death Grant](#) – for those who have died in the period 7/4/2000 to 5/4/2006
 - [Additional Death Grant](#) – for those who
 - Joined the modified scheme as part of the 1st options exercise
 - Purchased their past service to 1 July 2000
 - Been entitled to purchase pre-July 2000 service as part of the 2nd options exercise but died before having the opportunity to make a positive election

The Home Office are considering a scenario where an individual who was not identified under the first options exercise, so were never given the opportunity to join the modified scheme but have since died and are unable to make an election under the second options exercise - Presently the regulations do not provide any remedy for such cases.

- **Monitoring and Reporting** – FRA's will be asked by the LGA to provide data on a quarterly basis including GAD calculator inputs and outputs for all individual who elect to join the 2nd options exercise
- [Member FAQ's](#) – are available on the FPS member website and will be publicised through the Fire Weekly Bulletin
- [Historical payscales](#) are available on the FPS Regulations and Guidance website for retained firefighter from 1977 to 2023 for any assumptions needed
- **Consequential Loss Claims** – all claims have to be submitted to the Court by the 31/1/2024

Sargeant Age Discrimination Remedy

- [Member Contingent Decisions Guidance](#) is available on the FPS website and will be published in the Fire Weekly Bulletin
- **Aggregation of concurrent service** is not supported in the scheme regulations. A section covering this has been included within the [members short guide to the FPS 2015](#) on the FPS regulations and guidance website.
- [Retirement FPS 2015 factsheet](#) has been updated to reflect the revised early retirement factors and will be published in the Fire Weekly Bulletin
- A factsheet regarding [eligibility to join FPS 2015](#) was last updated in Oct 2019. It is for the FRA locally to determine whether a role meets the definition of 'firefighter' under the interpretation of the Regulations.

- [The Pension Regulator – 2022/23 Governance and Administration survey](#) results have been published on the governance and administration practices among public service pension schemes against six key processes. 67% of Firefighters’ schemes responded to say they had all six processes in place, which is a crease from 74% in 2021. [The six key processes factsheet](#) is going to be updated and will give further guidance to FRA’s to achieve a higher rate of understanding and compliance.

76 – December 2023

- **Employer Contribution Rate 1/4/2024 – 31/3/2027** – as a result of the 2020 valuation of the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme (England) by the Government Actuary’s Department, the [actuarial report](#) shows that the employer contribution rate will rise from 8.5% to 38.7% of pensionable pay for the above period.
- **Matthews - Deceased Members** – template letters have been published on the [special members of the FPS 2006](#) section of the FPA regulations and guidance website for FRA;s to use.
- **Age Discrimination Remedy Immediate Choice Remedial Services (IC RSS) Statement and Timetabling** – Administrators have been asked to commence testing the use of the OC RSS.
- **Local Pension Board Training** – going forwards the LGA will provide quarterly training and are in the process of finalising the agenda and dates.
- **The Pension Dashboard Programme** – currently consulting with the industry regarding the final staging guidance that will be published by the Money and Pensions Service in the Spring of 2024. The guidance will confirm the staging date and the summer of 2025 is expected to be the staging date for Public Service Pension schemes. [Regulation 15\(2\) of the Pensions Dashboards Regulations 2022](#) confirms Scheme Managers have a legal duty to have regard to this guidance.

77 – January 2024

- [The Police and Firefighters’ Pensions \(Remediable Service\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#) were laid on the 18 January 2024 and come into force on the 9 February 2024.

Matthews 2nd Options Exercise

- Matthews 2nd options Exercise data return for Quarter 1 (1 Oct 2023 – 31 Dec 2023) sent by 21 February 2024 deadline
- Matthews GAD Calculator: Second version published on the 1 February 2024.

Sargent Age Discrimination Remedy

- **Added Pension Compensation** – Added Pension arrangements do not exist in the legacy schemes so when members are ‘rolled back’ to their relevant legacy scheme any Added Pension Contributions that have been paid between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 must be returned to the member. [Guidance](#) on dealing with cases has been produced and process has to be completed by the 31 March 2024.
- [Data Sharing Agreement and guidance](#) has been made available on the FPS regulations and guidance website to allow information to be obtained to complete the GAD tax and

contribution calculator where a firefighter was employed by a previous FRA during the remedy period (1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022)

- [Contingent Decisions Guidance](#) has been updated to confirm there are no circumstances where a member would need to make a contingent decision for transfers
- [Remedial Service Statements Factsheet](#) has been produced to help Scheme Managers / Administrators understand the regulatory requirements and deadlines associated with the production of an RSS. Scheme Managers need to liaise with Administrator to establish plans in place for producing an RSS for eligible individuals.
- **Injury Pension Calculation for a retained firefighters appointed after 5 April 2006** – following an amendment in January 2007, (backdated to 6 April 2006) the regulations instruct the application of [Schedule 1, Part 3 of the Firefighter’s Compensation Scheme \(England\) Order 2006](#) for retained individuals. Administrators have been asked to review how they have calculated injury pensions for retained firefighter after 5 April 2006 and consider whether a recalculation is required.
- The Pensions Regulator [six key processes factsheet](#) has been refreshed following the 2022-23 Governance and Administrative Survey to improve understanding and compliance:
 - 1. Documented policy to manage board members conflicts of interest
 - 2. Access to knowledge, understanding and skills needed to properly run the scheme
 - 3. Documented procedures for assessing and managing risks
 - 4. Process to monitor records for accuracy / completeness
 - 5. Process for resolving contribution payment issues
 - 6. Procedures to identify, assess and report breaches of the law.
- **Public Service Pension Increase 2024**
FPS pensions will increase by 6.7% from 8 April 2024 (a lower, pro-rata increase will apply to pensions that started after 23 April 2023).
- New General [Code of Practice](#) from the Pensions Regulator was laid in Parliament on the 10 January 2024 and brings together ten existing codes of practice on scheme governance and administration.
- **Local Pension Board Training Sessions**
The LGA are offering training sessions on the following dates:
 - Tuesday 26 March 2024 10:00 – 14:00 (MS Teams)
 - Monday 17 June 2024 13:00 – 17:00 (MS Teams)
 - Wednesday 18 September 2024 11:00 – 15:30 (In person - 18 Smith Square)
 - Thursday 23 January 2025 10:00 – 14:00 (MS Teams)

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