

## **Pension Fund Board**

### Agenda Item 8

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#### **Administration Strategy Statement**

Lead Officer: Jason Vaughan: Executive Director – Resources and Corporate Services  
(Section 151 Officer)

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#### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The pension fund is required to maintain a significant number of policies and statements in accordance with the LGPS regulations. Peninsula Pensions are seeking to update the Administration Strategy.

#### **2. Issues for consideration**

- 2.1 The Board is asked to Consider the attached draft of the Administration Strategy and comment as appropriate.

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Peninsula Pensions (PP) collaborates with Employers to provide an excellent administration service for all scheme members. The Employer & Communication team's key role within PP is to offer training, support, and guidance to all employers to ensure that they are fully aware of their responsibilities and can meet them. Despite this, there are some employers that fail to engage with the team, resulting in numerous requests being made for information. This impacts both on the resource required by PP to deal with these requests, and the quality of service provided to scheme members.

- 3.2 The current pension administration strategy (PAS) sets out the timescales for provision of information from employers to the administration team, in addition to the statutory timescales relating to provision of information to scheme members from PP within the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2013.

<https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/PublicDocs/Corporate/EVO6f1PDXjVEmI4ICBwwwOgBAxLjOgqmsmlg3DMY1HKUeg?e=DpBjOr>

They also include the ability to charge fees where an employer is underperforming, which to date has not been put into practice.

- 3.3 Peninsula Pensions has considered other administering authority Pension Administration Strategies and contacted them for further discussion. From these discussions, it is apparent that usually one fine is sufficient for providers to improve their overall performance and engagement and prevent future breaches occurring. It is also apparent that employers (and their payroll providers) prioritise the submission of pension information to administrators that enforce charges, ahead of those who do not charge for late submissions.

#### **4. Key revisions to the Pension Administration Strategy document**

- 4.1 The intention is to introduce a revised Pension Administration Strategy from 1st April 2024 and approval is sought from both the Devon and Somerset Committees accordingly. Peninsula Pensions has made amendments to the Pension Administration Strategy and consulted with employers accordingly for both the Devon and Somerset LGPS Funds. The consultation period ran from 16th November 2023 to 31st December 2023 and feedback received has been included at Appendix A. The feedback table also includes the responses from Peninsula Pensions.
- 4.2 The revised Pension Administration Strategy, which is attached as Appendix C, has taken account of feedback received, and includes some key additions and changes to improve understanding in relation to support, expectations, and a move to instigate fines for individual employers. The latter will avoid all employers essentially covering the additional administrations costs for under performance of the minority. The key changes included are:
- Introduction of Employer fees for underperformance/lack of engagement.
  - Peninsula Pensions Communication Policy Paper (Appendix A of the Pension Administration Strategy)
  - Introduction of Audits on individual employers and their responsibilities
- 4.3 Peninsula Pensions where possible, wish to encourage employers to produce the information relating to members that have left the scheme, prior to the date that they leave the scheme, in line with the Pension Administration Strategy. This will enable the team to calculate pension benefits and arrange payments due in a timelier manner to ease transition of members from employment to retirement

without delay. Appendix B provides examples with regards to suggested timescales within the Strategy.

- 4.4 Peninsula Pensions are working with Audit colleagues to strengthen the new process and provide assurance around both the quality and timeliness of data provision from individual employers. The aim will be to have a database in place which stores the data that Employers provide, highlighting performance within the prescribed parameters. When completed, the summary dashboard from the database, and reports relating to the new internal administration targets agreed, will form part of the report delivered to the Pension Board in future.

## **5. Summary**

- 5.1 It should be noted that the intention of these amendments is to ultimately improve the service that scheme members receive, allowing for timely administration of their pension benefits in line with the statutory timescales. The Pension Fund should not be funding the additional administration costs caused by lack of engagement by certain individual employers. The charges will be used to purely cover the additional administration work that Peninsula Pensions has undertaken, as opposed to benefiting from them financially. The implementation of the charges is a last resort, where an employer has either failed to engage, or continues to underperform with their responsibilities.

## **6. Consultations undertaken**

- 6.1 Employers have been consulted on the draft Administration Strategy and a summary of the feedback received is contained in Appendix A.

## **7. Background papers**

- 6.1 None

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

**Feedback to consultation:**

In total 29 responses across both Devon and Somerset LGPS Funds were received, this included 4 of the employers who offer payroll services to other Fund employers. The feedback has been considered and adjustments made to the Pension Administration Strategy where indicated below. Peninsula Pensions are grateful to those Employers that have interacted with the Consultation and provided the feedback.

<b>FEEDBACK FROM ALL EMPLOYERS</b>	<b>RESPONSE / CHANGE (if applicable)</b>	<b>Change made to PAS (Y/N)</b>
<b>Record Keeping</b>		
No particular comments except that the aim should be to clearly state to MINIMISE the admin necessary for Employers. Stop asking us to send information that you can copy across internally from the EAS5 forms to the CARE spreadsheet.	Whilst understanding the viewpoint of this employer, with one member in the Fund, this situation is not common. Where there is more than one member with an employer, the position would be different, and the proposal would not work. This will however be noted as an area to be considered further in future for smaller employers.	N

<p>I am very concerned by the whole tone of the document which comes across as confrontational and punitive rather than focused on building relationships, knowledge and understanding. My comments will be very similar for each section but in particular the level of charges proposed are, to be frank, ridiculous between one publicly funded body and another. Fees escalating by £100 per day are out of all proportion and unjustifiable, taking resources away from children's education. I ask you to reconsider and amend.</p> <p>It is in all our interests that the data held is accurate and updated in a timely manner but this is just one of many complex and time critical tasks undertaken by schools and inevitably there will be times when deadlines are not fully met - flexibility and working together to resolve is what is required in these circumstances not an immediate threat of exorbitant charges.</p> <p>Many of the data requirements in this document, relating to tasks that could be chargeable if notification is delayed, are notified to Peninsula Pensions by our managed service payroll provider, Somerset Council.</p> <p>Whilst we as the employer understand our responsibilities, we ask you to refer to the Council's response to the draft strategy in respect of pages 11 to 13. We support their comments.</p> <p>A number of the requests are not practical. An example is notifying Peninsula Pensions of new starters within one month of their start date. Whilst this would always be our expectation there will be circumstances where a starter in the latter days of a month may not be added to the payroll until the following month because our HR/Finance Officer was not aware or the employee delays providing you with necessary information to set up their payroll record. A second example is an employee with a start date of the very early part of the current month could be in post more than a month by the time the report is produced and sent, even though we do it as soon as possible after the payroll has been closed.</p>	<p>The draft document is intended to clearly state the roles and responsibilities of both the Employer and Administrator to ensure that together the scheme member is provided with the best service possible and in line with the statutory requirements.</p> <p>The main intention is to continue to engage, work with and support employers, which we will emphasise further within the document.</p> <p>However, tools need to be in place to implement charges where appropriate for both lack of engagement and underperformance . Whilst appreciating that resources are difficult across all areas of public sector, the fees escalating by</p>	<p>Y</p>
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	<p>£100 per day are associated with information affecting large numbers of LGPS active scheme members, and in order that they are looked after correctly considering both statutory timescales and good practice, it is imperative this information is received on time.</p> <p>Where employers are having difficulty with provision of information, then by contacting the team without delay, they can work with employers to reduce or stop future fees occurring. There will be a formal document provided for completion for this purpose.</p>	
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<p>Employer data is not always actioned following submissions sent to the Administering Authority, sometimes it takes over 3 months even though the submission has been made in the month the payroll is run. I have Members on a regular basis complaining that their data has not been updated by the Administering Authority and this is frustrating when they wish to transfer another pension or view their records. New starters find this particularly frustrating as they are waiting for a significant time before they are added to the scheme.</p>	<p>All new members joining the LGPS should receive a welcome pack from PP within 2 months as set out in the Disclosure Regulations. If a member contacts employers with this complaint, please let PP know so that this can be investigated further.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Do the penalties work against PP as well as the employer</p>	<p>PP performance is monitored regularly by Officers within both Funds, and in addition, is reviewed quarterly by the Fund's Pension Board and Committee. Any breaches are recorded, and where considered to be 'significant', are reported to The Pension Regulator which may result in fines being issued. The ultimate review is the direct feedback from scheme members, and where they believe there has been</p>	<p>N</p>

	<p>maladministration, they are able to progress complaints via the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure, or further to The Pension Ombudsman.</p>	
<p><b>Communication and Liaison</b></p>		
<p>Some communication with the Employer and Communications team can be frustrating when different team members advise different rules or requirements for the same requests they send to the employer, which leads to confusion. Communication is not always in good time which puts added pressure on resources for employers to respond. Teams do not always respond promptly to queries.</p>	<p>The Employer guidance section of our website is intended to provide the information required to enable Employers to meet their responsibilities. If the information required is not available, and a problem with communication occurs as outlined, then the Employer &amp; Communications Team Manager should be contacted to resolve the issue and avoid any further future problems. Expected response times will be added to</p>	<p>Y</p>



	the strategy accordingly.	
No designated person from PP but demanding one from the employer?	There is a designated employer and communication team whose primary work is to support, guide and train employers. Our Member Services teams are employer specific and can help with member queries accordingly. These details are held within the <a href="#">about us</a> pages on our website and will be made clear on the document.	Y
Please can you direct me to the Fund approved wording for Contracts?	The website is currently being updated to provide clearer messaging for new scheme members to assist with meeting the statutory timescales for provision of information. A link will be provided once finalised.	N

Fund & Employer Responsibilities		
<p>As well as monitoring and applying charges to employers for failing to meet deadlines, (I feel this is acceptable for those employers who are non-compliant) however, it is also rather unfair when the Administering Authority do not always update and administer records in a timely manner. With Members having to constantly chase for their pensions or records. I have had occasions where I have submitted Members details and when the Member contacts Peninsula they are told that the employer has not submitted their details when clearly we have. The Administering Authority needs to also monitor their own deadlines and give out correct information to Members rather than just blaming the employer.</p>	<p>Work processed within PP is monitored daily to ensure scheme members are responded to as soon as possible and within the statutory timescales. It is difficult to respond in relation to incorrect information being provided to members without knowing the context, however, should this occur in future, please contact the Employer &amp; Communication team, who will investigate the position further.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>I think employer performance targets for notification of new starters and leavers (under age 55) should be increased from 1 month to 6 weeks.</p> <p>I would suggest a slight change to the wording of the last bullet point so it reads as follows: 'Applying charges where an employer consistently fails to engage with the Fund to ensure scheme members are not disadvantaged'.</p> <p>I do not think conscientious employers should be charged for consistently providing data and engaging with the Fund. There are anomaly cases which may slip the deadlines such as the late notification of a starter/leaver.</p>	<p>When setting timescales for both employers and PP, the disclosure timescales are considered which must be adhered to, unfortunately the suggested increase in timescales would not permit time for the</p>	<p>N</p>

	administrative work by PP to be finalised within the statutory timescale.	
Notify Peninsula Pensions of periods of unpaid absence not covered by Assumed Pensionable Pay (APP). Performance target is within 1 month, when is this counted from, please?	Within 1 month of return to work.	Y
Provide monthly CARE data within required format. What is your definition of pay run? I understand the interface deadline to be 14th of the following month.	The content has been altered to make it clear that information is expected within 2 weeks of the pay period that it is paid in.	Y
<b>Audit</b>		
Suitable timescales for our response should be agreed in advance.	Agreed	N
<b>Outsourcing</b>		
5% charge is once again disproportionate and unjustifiable.	This charge has been removed. Instead, there will be updates to our outsourcing processes to ensure smoother transfer of staff and onboarding of new admission bodies.	Y
<b>Underperformance Fees</b>		
How have the fees/penalties been calculated. Regulation 70 of the LGPS Regulations 2013 allows '.....where costs	This response takes into	Y

<p>have been incurred'. What are you including in your calculations? I think that you need to show why the frequency of subsequent charges ie Annual Allowance pay data is daily.</p> <p>Failure to notify PP of new starters joining within 1 month should be 2 months - If a starter joins on 20th of the Month and they are paid on 31st of the following month - they may not be on the return of the month they joined but on the second return.</p> <p>Both any retirement type, death in service notifications and resole member queries need to be longer timescales. In our small organisation I am the only one who completes forms and if I am on leave for 3 weeks then the proposed timescales will never be met.</p> <p>Estimate requests in excess of 1 per member in a rolling year - if a member makes 2 requests does this mean as an employer I have to say no?</p>	<p>consideration all feedback relating to underperformance fees and the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2013.</p> <p>The fees/penalties have considered the additional time and resource required. The daily rate across staff grades has been averaged, whilst also considering other south west administrators charge and ensuring consistency. If considered on an individual basis, it is likely that the charges would be higher.</p> <p>In relation to new starter members, it has been proposed that PP set up a specific new starter website page to</p>	
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	<p>satisfy the disclosure requirements. Employers can then link to this when roles offered, as part of the documentation provided with contracts. Where employers share this information with members, a fee will not be invoked, assuming full starter information is received by PP within 2 months of the start date. (Ideally this would be received within 1 month, to enable PP to add the scheme member record to our database and allow them access to the online portal).</p> <p>The fee for estimates relates to employer led retirements e.g. ill health, redundancy. One estimate for each</p>	
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	<p>type of specific 'retirement reason for leaving' will be provided.</p> <p>Scheme members are advised to use the Member Self Service online portal to calculate their pension entitlement.</p> <p>For information, a 'strain' cost only report for a group of scheme members is not included as an estimate request and can be obtained by contacting the Employer &amp; Communications team accordingly.</p> <p>Retirements and deaths are the highest priority work type for PP and have set regulatory timescales. There is a duty to provide benefit information relating to these areas as quickly as possible to enable members</p>	
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	<p>to make future financial decisions/make the change from salary to pension as smooth as possible.</p> <p>To enable employers to automate information via their payroll system following their 'final pay period', in addition to satisfying the regulatory timescales as administrators, a compromise is suggested whereby the timescale is adjusted in line with the aforementioned, provided that earlier notification of basic leaver information is given by the employer, to enable PP to provide key information to scheme members ahead of their leaving date.</p>	
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Alternatively, if employers can action interim 'payroll runs' as opposed to one single monthly pay run, information could potentially be automated earlier for provision to PP in line with timescales.

Timescales for all types of Leavers, and responses to enquiries have been adjusted accordingly to make consistent.

The statutory timescales are quoted in 'months'. The timescales within the Strategy are therefore now quoted as either 'months' when relating to statutory requirements, or a period of 'time' when relating to either Peninsula



	Pensions or Employer internal timescales for ease/clarity as opposed to 'working days'.	
<p>If staff leave start of month, processed end of month (in line with payroll date) this may not be processed within month of leaving. We pay staff retrospectively, so if they left end of a month the final pay wouldn't be processed until next payroll. This would be more fair to be within two months of leaving date or within 15 days of last pay period. To send an estimate then follow up with adjusted form, makes more work for us and LGPS.</p> <p>If staff are casual (e.g. invigilators), we review anyone who has not been paid within last 3 months and make them leavers as of last payment date, therefore this would be outside of the month timeline.</p>		

<p>I am very concerned by the whole tone of the document which comes across as confrontational and punitive rather than focused on building relationships, knowledge and understanding. My comments will be very similar for each section but in particular the level of charges proposed are, to be frank, ridiculous between one publicly funded body and another. Fees escalating by £100 per day are out of all proportion and unjustifiable, taking resources away from children's education. I ask you to reconsider and amend.</p> <p>It is in all our interests that the data held is accurate and updated in a timely manner but this is just one of many complex and time critical tasks undertaken by schools and inevitably there will be times when deadlines are not fully met - flexibility and working together to resolve is what is required in these circumstances not an immediate threat of exorbitant charges.</p> <p>Many of the data requirements in this document, relating to tasks that could be chargeable if notification is delayed, are notified to Peninsula Pensions by our managed service payroll provider, Somerset Council. Whilst we as the employer understand our responsibilities, we ask you to refer to the Council's response to the draft strategy in respect of pages 11 to 13. We support their comments.</p> <p>A number of the requests are not practical. An example is notifying Peninsula Pensions of new starters within one month of their start date. Whilst this would always be our expectation there will be circumstances where a starter in the latter days of a month may not be added to the payroll until the following month because our HR/Finance Officer was not aware or the employee delays providing you with necessary information to set up their payroll record. A second example is an employee with a start date of the very early part of the current month could be in post more than a month by the time the report is produced and sent, even though we do it as soon as possible after the payroll has been closed.</p>		
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<p>As stated we understand the charging of fees for non-compliance or under performance, however these should only be charged after extensive discussion with the employer as to why the non-compliance has occurred. Non-compliance could occur for a variety of reasons and is not always willful or negligent. As mentioned communication with the Administering Authority can be difficult and the lack of availability of a team or lack of internal communication can be frustrating.</p>		
<p>Additional charges need to be on a lesser timescale as these are too short.</p>		
<p>The member has up to 30 days from returning from unpaid absence to decide whether to apply for additional pensions to cover, so the 1 month period of notification would not be possible.</p>		
<p>Failure to notify Peninsula Pensions of a member leaving the LGPS (as opposed to retirement – relating to either termination of employment or opting out) within 1 month £50.00 per member. This would not be possible for claims-based members as we leave the payroll record open for 8 weeks following the actual leave date in order to late or outstanding claims. This decision to delay PAYE closure was in conjunction with LGPS at that time.</p>		
<p>Failure to notify Peninsula Pensions of any retirement type within 15 days of retirement date £200.00 per member.</p> <p>We are not sure how we could meet this lead time. Usually, retirement actions are negotiated around business and personal needs and our first notification of an intention to retire would be via a trigger workflow. By which time and given most LGPS members are subject to one month’s notice – we would have missed the 15 days deadline.</p>		
<p>Failure to respond to requests to resolve member queries (for example queries related to annual returns or leaver forms) within 10 working days of request £50 per member request plus an additional £50 per member for each subsequent month late</p> <p>Small organisations, such as ourselves, may only have one member of staff that deals with pensions. If that member</p>		

<p>of staff takes a two-week holiday they would be away for 10 working days. Therefore, to enable small organisations to achieve, rather than set them up to fail and be fined, could we please request that this 'Description of Failure' is amended to within 12 working days of request?</p>		
<p>Failure to notify Peninsula Pensions of any retirement type within 15 days of retirement date £200 per member plus an additional £200 per member for each subsequent month late</p> <p>If an employee were to retire at the beginning of the month, they would still receive salary on 25th of that month for the days worked. Therefore, to allow for action after 25th of the month, could we please request that this 'Description of Failure' is amended to within 20 working days of retirement date?</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no context the monetary amounts quoted for the charges and why some are higher than others.</li> <li>• The timescales proposed will result in employees at the Council duplicating work in order to ensure we receive no charge</li> <li>• The timescales proposed will limit the holiday an employee can take, or alternatively, result in us needing to train and potential pay an employee more money, to cover in the absence of the employee normally processing our pensions</li> <li>• We have no alternative provider to go to. Given we are all in this together, would it not be more effective to report on a regular basis any delays, then use this information to target specific employers that cause delays rather than all employers?</li> </ul> <p>Overall, whilst it is appreciated that consultation is happening, the proposed changes are not to the benefit of the Council and could result in us facing significant cost. We have at times, had delays in you as a provider responding to queries and whilst this may cause an element of frustration we would not consider charging you. It is for this reason we are not supportive of the proposed charges. I should also note that because of your Christmas shut down the consultation in essence</p>		

<p>ends earlier and not on 31st December (assuming consultation is a two way process until the end date).</p>		
<p>Starters are reported to Pensions via Altair reports on the 23rd of the month. We are only able to report once they have been set up on the payroll, unable to report if not set up on the payroll. Therefore potential fines for late starters. Would we still be fined?</p>		
<p>changes are reported via Altair reports for changes that have happened during that pay run. If for example, a manager does not change the hours on iTrent for one of their staff at the correct time, we are unable to report the hours change until it has been updated on iTrent and run through the payroll. This would create a potential fine. Would we still be fined?</p>		
<p>Our Auto Rem process will fit this criteria, the Rems are run and produced on the 23rd of each month (for employees that are made a leaver during that pay run).</p> <p>However any late leavers that we receive would potentially incorporate a fine and also Casual employees (Including bulk leavers where we do an exercise to remove casuals that haven't been paid for a year therefore high numbers). It would not always be possible to produce a Rem for a casual employee within 1 month of their leaving date.</p> <p>Manual Intervention are now completed by the end of the month. However if we had a complex Rem to complete, if we kept pensions informed would they be able to waive the fee?</p>		
<p>If the leaver is at the beginning of the month will it still incur a fee as this will be produced as part of the auto rems.</p> <p>If it will then we will have to do a manual rem when processing the leaver. The Auto Rem will still be produced and need to be checked to ensure that the figures are the same as the manual rem that we would have done in advance. This is a duplication of work. Is there any leeway with this?</p>		

<p>Due to the large volume of queries, we receive we may struggle with this so will there be any leeway if there is evidence that we are trying to keep on top of these? Presumably, fees will just be for new queries after April and not for outstanding queries although we hope to clear all of these by then</p>	<p>For pre- April 2024 cases, fees will apply if they remain outstanding, but will only be applied from 1 April 2024.</p>	
<p>Do you mean estimates that apply to retirement and redundancy estimates where we ask for strain costs?</p>	<p>Please see earlier response.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>I assume this relates to employer led estimates (redundancy, flexible etc)? What if they are completely different types - e.g. employer looking at redundancy in April but member not selected for redundancy and then member interested in Flexible Retirement in December? It doesn't seem fair to be penalised for unpredictable situations within a year.</p>	<p>Please see earlier response.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>The timescales given in a number of the “failures” in Appendix C are also of concern to us. Examples are, but not limited to:</p> <p>Schools may not be available or know in a timely manner of a death in service to enable notification within 10 days, during a long school holiday period. This could also apply to a small employer with one administrator who is on holiday or other absence.</p> <p>New starters to be returned within one month of start date – this is not practical. Somerset Council and many of its employers have a pay date of the last working day of the month. A new employee with a start date near the end of the previous month or very early in the current month, is unlikely to be reported in time. Somerset Council payroll is finalised just a few days before payday. We have multiple processes to complete in the next week or so and it is unlikely that our pension returns will be completed in the timescales listed. This would also apply to many of our client payrolls.</p> <p>New starters with a payroll paid earlier in the month are also likely to be later than one month from start date in</p>		

<p>many circumstances. We have insufficient resource to stop our other payroll work to produce pension returns for individual payrolls. Our process is to do this for all at a similar time.</p> <p>To support our request for this deadline to be extended, we also note for new member records, Peninsula Pensions have 3 months to update their records and you will do this on receipt of the interface. We therefore do not see why the employer timescale should be within a month and what costs are incurred by the Administering Authority if it is later.</p> <p>We suggest that the request for Annual Allowance data should have a date quoted.</p> <p>A charge for a non-quantified event is unreasonable. All charges should have a specified non-compliance.</p> <p>We suggest that you explain the transfer of fines, and when this may happen, in more detail.</p> <p>The final charge appears to be a catch all which may include “failures” detailed above and for which there is little or no quantifiable time.</p> <p>We do understand that a comment was made to one of our representatives at the meeting that the charging schedule isn’t being aimed at us (Somerset Council) but being instigated to target poor performers, but this does not remove the fact that the strategy states that all employers are responsible for meeting the unreasonable timescales given and we do support multiple fund employers.</p>		
<p>Failure to notify PP of other changes relating to an active member. As with new starters, this is not practical and needs to be a period after the pay day that this change takes effect from in the Payroll system as this will then also allow for retrospective changes and the change to appear on monthly payroll reports.</p>		

<p>With the on-line system being removed we are no longer able to do our own estimates and dates can shift – with the removal of the facility to do the estimates ourselves, we believe this number should be increased significantly.</p>	<p>1 estimate per year per employer led retirement type should provide the required information in relation to strain cost for an employer to decide regarding retirement. There is also the strain calculation report for employers which can be provided by PP, to help when looking at potential costs. The members benefits should only increase, assuming follow up estimates will be using a later date.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p><b>Other comments</b></p>		
<p>Why isn't the aim of your Administration Strategy clearly stated to MINIMISE the admin necessary for Employers. Stop asking us to send information that you can copy across internally from the EAS5 forms to the CARE spreadsheet.</p> <p>And please stop using EGRESS as a 'secure' email process. If you can confirm the very confidential EAS5 information you can send other missives without making employers log on to another process just to view emails. Using a third party platform runs the additional risk of data leaks, losses or ransomware of the external organisation and is simply over-bureaucratic.</p>	<p>Devon County Council Data Protection and Cyber Security officers advise all staff to use Egress in their day-to-day business to safeguard information and reduce the threat</p>	<p>N</p>



	of data leaks etc mentioned.	
<p>This proposal completely undermines the good working relationship built up over many years with Peninsula and seems to be a fundamental change in the organisation's culture and approach. Is this really what you are seeking to achieve?</p>	<p>The aim is to always work with employers for the benefit of scheme members in a timely manner and in line with the <a href="#">Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations</a>. However, where underperformance has arisen and there is lack of engagement, charges will be implemented to employers as set out below.</p>	N
<p>The proposed Administration Strategy does set out clear guidelines for Employers and the Administering Authority, however it does put a lot of emphasis on the Employer meeting all the requirements whilst we feel that there are issues with the timescales for the Administering Authority who are quick to blame employers for not submitting information. Concern is therefore raised in these case where fees could be imposed.</p> <p>I sincerely hope that pragmatism and understanding is applied for employers who provide information on a consistent basis, not the administration of fines. Missing deadlines for certain scheme members will happen unfortunately and sometimes this is purely down to timing.</p> <p>New starters or leavers can sometimes be omitted from the monthly reports as this may be the timing of a</p>	<p>Where information is not provided within statutory timescales, then members will be advised that this is pending from the employer.</p> <p>If an employer and PP are working together to move a case forward within an agreed timescale,</p>	

<p>manager completing the leaver process, the timing of an employee completing their new starter process or the time the monthly report is run.</p> <p>I completely understand the need for a cost-effective, inclusive and high-quality pension administration service requiring the joint working of both Fund and Employer but not at the expense of co-operating employers who sometime miss performance target levels.</p>	<p>then there will be a discretion which can potentially be used to not impose the fee, and a form provided for completion for this to be considered.</p>	
<p>We are understanding of the need of performance targets that are enforceable and agree with the general aims of the strategy. Understandably, the strategy is from the perspective of the administration of the scheme but whilst employers may need change some things to fit in with the requirements, there does need to be some understanding of how employers operate in reality.</p> <p>With regards to the performance standards and additional charges, there does need to be clear guidance on how the determination on failures will be made and consistently applied, how and when they will be notified, and what the appeals process is. There is the possibility that the employer could be fined multiple times for the same failure (initial fee, fine from external organisation, additional staff charges and interest). This could potentially be deemed as excessive.</p> <p>There are inconsistencies in time measurements throughout the performance standards and additional charges. For example, in some cases a period of time is used (days/weeks/months), and other cases it is working days. Also, the terms pay run, final pay day, final pay period are used but they do have different meanings. It would be good to have some clarity on why different measurements and terms are used in different cases.</p>	<p>The successful administration of the Fund relies on all parties understanding their roles and responsibilities and working together to achieve this. The strategy sets out performance targets to ensure regulatory timescales are also met.</p> <p>Documentation has been produced to ensure discussions involving any failures follow the same format and processes are being developed to be implemented from 1 April 2024 to ensure consistency. This</p>	<p>Y</p>

	<p>will include an appeals process.</p> <p>The strategy has been adjusted to incorporate weeks and months only.</p>	
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## Appendix B

The timescales for provision of information from employers included in the Pension Administration Strategy, are directly linked to the statutory disclosure timescales, to allow the administration team sufficient time to adhere to these accordingly. Please see examples below:

<p><b><u>Disclosure timescales</u></b> (Total time to achieve task)</p>	<p><b>Employer timescales</b></p>	<p><b>Peninsula Pension (PP) timescales resulting</b></p>
<p><u>Retirements</u></p> <p>To accurately calculate and inform the member of the options available to them upon retirement.</p> <p>Within 1 month following date benefit becomes payable (2 months if retiring before normal pension age)</p>	<p>For members in receipt of regular pay, where the employer can accurately project pay to the date of retirement, up to 1 month prior, or within 1 week following final pay period (provided basic leaver information is received in advance of this, or an interim pay run is arranged).</p>	<p><u>Normal Pension age</u></p> <p>= 1 month less time employer takes to provide information</p> <p><u>Best case scenario:</u> If provided in advance = <b>1 month</b> resulting for PP action</p> <p><u>Worst case scenario:</u> If provided after final pay period – potentially would be 1 month after member has left = <b>zero time</b> resulting for PP action (Hence request of basic leaver information in advance)</p> <p><u>Before Normal Pension age</u></p>

		<p>= 2 months less time employer takes to provide information</p> <p><u>Best case scenario:</u> If provided in advance = <b>2 months</b> resulting for PP action</p> <p><u>Worst case scenario:</u> If provided after final pay period – potentially would be 1 month after member has left = <b>1 month</b> resulting for PP action</p>
<p><u>Leavers (not retirements)</u></p> <p>To accurately record and update member records on pension administration systems for those members leaving the scheme, without entitlement to immediate payment of benefits. Provide them with the options available and deferred benefit entitlement.</p> <p>Within 2 months of receiving notification that pensionable service has ended</p>	<p>For members in receipt of regular pay, where the employer can accurately project pay to the date of retirement, up to 1 month prior, or within 1 week following final pay period (provided basic leaver information is received in advance of this).</p>	<p><u>Best case scenario:</u> If provided in advance = <b>2 months</b> resulting for PP action</p> <p><u>Worst case scenario:</u> If provided after final pay period – potentially would be 1 month after member has left = <b>1 month</b> resulting for PP action</p>

<p><u>New Starters</u></p> <p>To produce a statutory notification and forward to member's home address, together with information relating to the LGPS including how to request a transfer, form relating to previous service, and link to expression of wish form.</p> <p>Within 2 months of joining the scheme or within 2 months of request being made</p>	<p>Provision of new member information within 1 month of joining the scheme</p>	<p>If provided within one month by Employer – PP have <b>1 month</b> to provide the notification to the member.</p> <p>Internal reports of new scheme members are arranged for printing on a 2-week cycle to ensure this target is met.</p>
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