

## LGA SURVEY REPORT TEACHERS' PENSION SCHEME ADMINISTRATION LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICE PROVISION DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

The Prime Minister introduced [restrictions due to the COVID-19 outbreak](#) on 23 March 2020. The aim of the survey was to find out whether the restrictions were impacting on local authorities (LAs) in their administration of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). The survey was sent to all 173 counties and single-tier LAs in England and Wales on 26 March 2020; the survey closed on 9 April 2020.

94 LAs responded to the survey, this was a response rate of 54%.

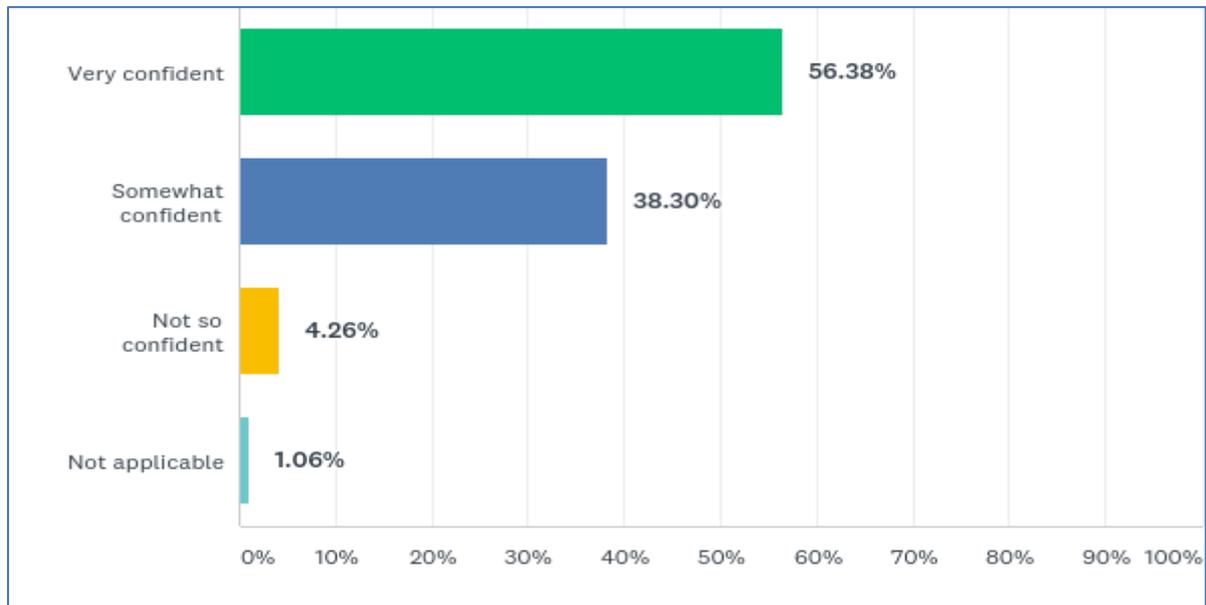
Type of authority	Number of responses	Response rate
Counties	18	10%
London boroughs	17	10%
Metropolitan districts	18	10%
Unitaries	29	17%
Welsh authorities	12	7%
Total	94	54%

### SUMMARY

- Nearly 95% of respondents were confident of submitting monthly contributions to Teachers' Pensions (TP) by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- 86% of respondents were confident that they would be able to submit Monthly Data Collection service and salary returns to TP by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- Nearly 78% of respondents were confident that they would be able to submit their End of Year Certificate to TP by 29 May 2020.
- 89% of respondents were confident that they would be able to process new retirements and death benefits.
- 25% of respondents indicated that remote working was impacting on their ability to administer the TPS.
- Meeting statutory deadlines and the roll out of Monthly Contributions Reconciliation were key areas of concern.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

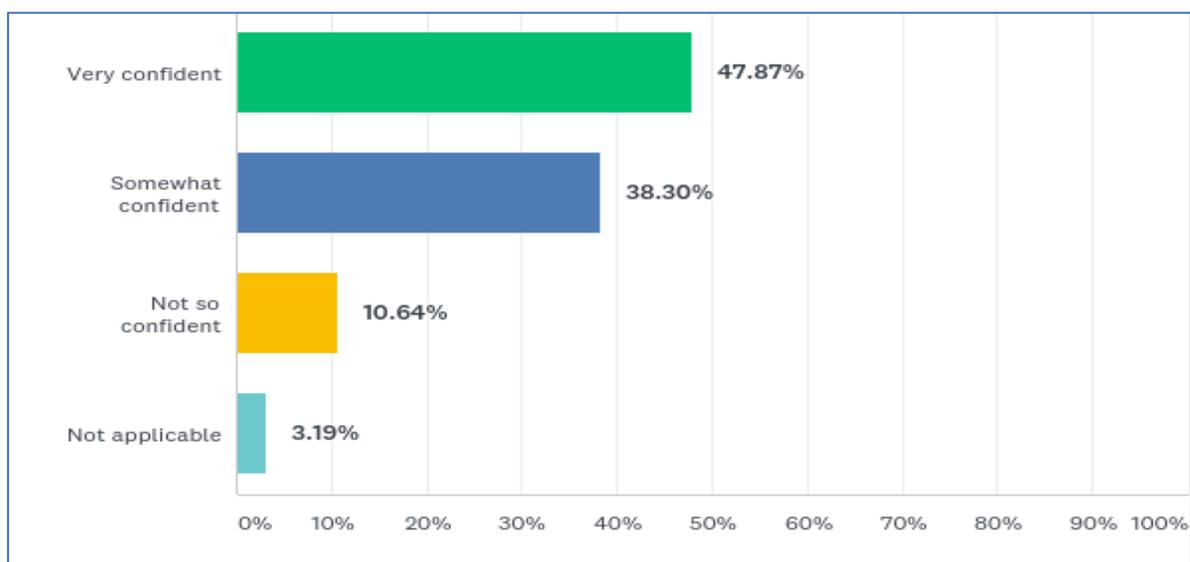
**How confident are you that you will be able to submit monthly contributions to TP by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month?**



Nearly 95% of respondents were very or somewhat confident of submitting monthly contributions to TP by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month. The four LAs who were 'not so confident' gave the following reasons:

- Meeting the deadline is dependent on access to information and communications technology (ICT) systems
- They are reliant on third party providers providing timely information
- It is dependent on the in-house workforce remaining well.

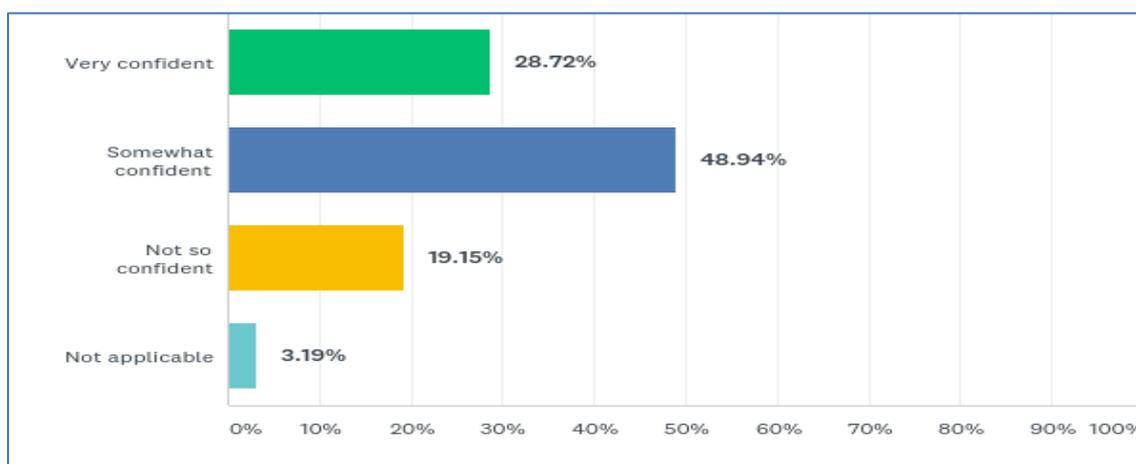
**How confident are you that you will be able to submit MDC service and salary returns to TP by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month?**



86% of respondents were very or somewhat confident that they would be able to submit MDC service and salary returns to TP by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month. Ten LAs indicated that they were 'not so confident' and cited the following reasons:

- It is dependent on ICT performance to access the TPS website to upload MDC files
- Staff availability, particularly small teams that would be severely impacted by illness
- Receiving timely information from LA schools that already struggle with the monthly deadline
- Other deadlines eg LGPS annual return in April.

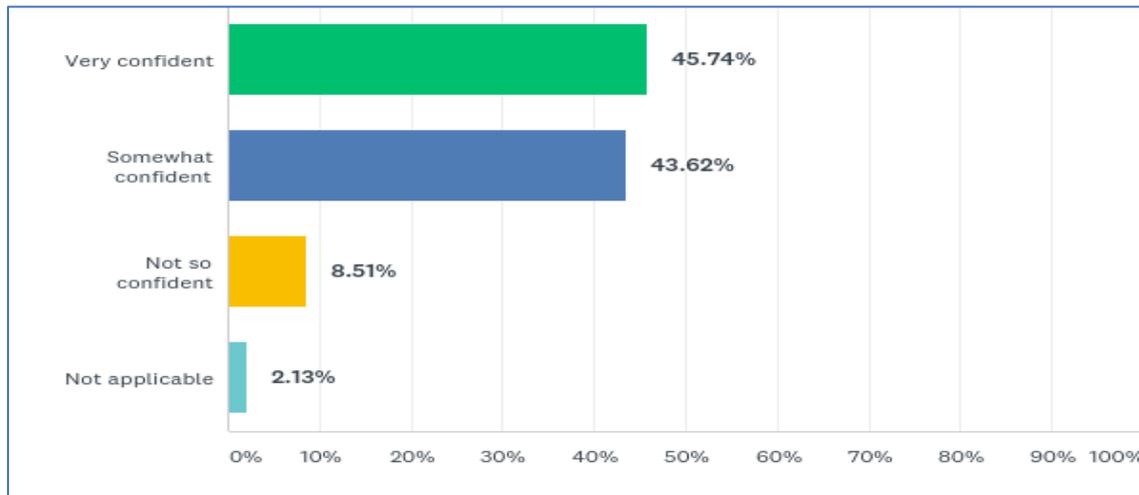
**How confident are you that you will be able to submit your end of year certificate (EOYC) to TP by 29 May 2020?**



Nearly 78% of respondents were very or somewhat confident that they would be able to submit their EOYC to TP by 29 May 2020. The 19 LAs that were 'not so confident' commented as follows:

- It is dependent on staff resources being available: accountants, auditors as well as TP administrators
- It will also depend on accurate and timely submissions from third party providers
- Processes were taking a bit longer while working at home
- The EOYC balancing is a team effort and could be impacted by home working
- No access to printers while working at home could be an issue in respect of printing the certificate
- Some paperwork for the EOYC is held in the office.

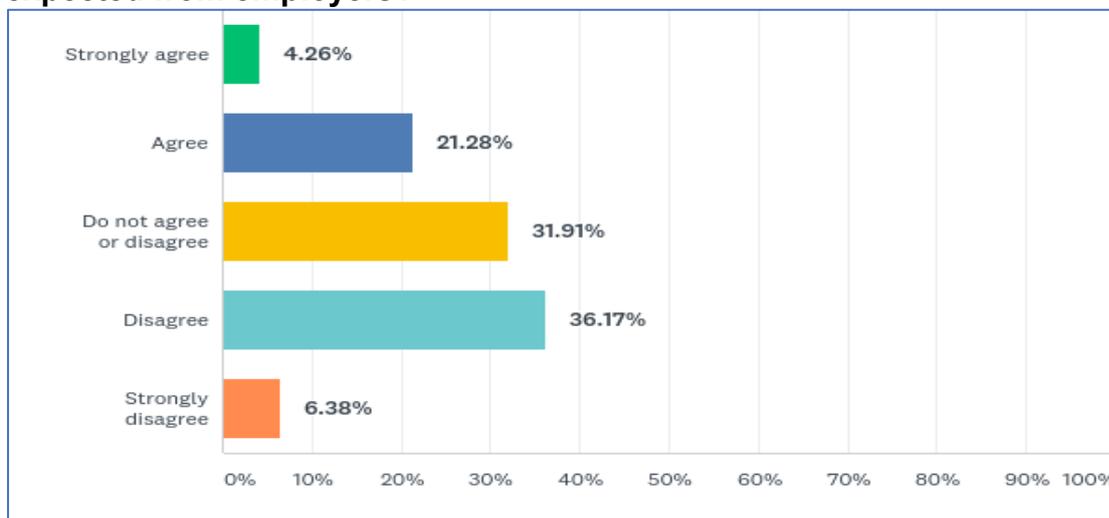
**How confident are you that you will be able to process new retirements and death benefits?**



89% of respondents were very or somewhat confident that they would be able to process new retirements and death benefits. Comments from the eight LAs that were not so confident were as follows:

- It is dependent on ICT systems access including My Pension Online
- We will not be able to process paper forms sent to the office
- It is dependent on communications with third party payroll providers and schools that are closed/increased absence
- Paper forms:  
More time is needed to process eg scanning  
Difficult to process where there is no access to scanners and printers at home  
Reliant on the post
- If staff numbers decreased significantly due to illness, limited staff resources could be prioritised for the payment of employees.

**Is remote working impacting on your ability to administer the TPS to the level expected from employers?**



25% of respondents indicated that remote working was impacting on their ability to administer the TPS to the level expected from employers, highlighting the following:

- ICT issues:
  - intermittent and slower system performance
  - lack of adequate computer equipment reported by one LA
- Processing paper forms
- Lack of printing and scanning facilities to process paper forms
- Lack of access to historical payroll data held at LA offices
- Face to face discussions are missed
- Concern about school closures and increased team absence levels.

**Are there any other national or local COVID-19 related pension issues that you would like us to raise?**

- Statutory deadlines

LAs may require additional time to meet TPS statutory deadlines, given the likely absence due to sickness of LA staff and external auditors. It is requested that consideration be given to the following:

- That no penalties are issued for late payment of contributions and MDC returns from employers who are usually reliable
- EOYC process – concern that if the lockdown continues, external auditors would not be able to visit LA offices to undertake their work eg for sight of forms that may not be available electronically

- Monthly contributions reconciliation (MCR)

It was requested that delaying the roll-out of MCR be considered. It was felt that it would be difficult to pilot MCR properly whilst employers were working remotely and there was a risk that piloting could be undertaken by inexperienced staff if a significant number of staff were absent due to sickness.

- Employer Portal

It was requested that TP put in place a fast track method to set up additional staff with access to the employer portal.

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