

# LGPC MEETING – 24 March 2025

## Meeting agenda

<b>Item</b>		<b>Timings</b>
1	Welcome, apologies for absence and declarations of interest	11:30
2	Minutes of meeting held on 25 November 2024 – Paper A	11:35
3	LGPC budget - Paper B (Confidential)	11:40
4	Regulations update for England and Wales – Paper C	11:50
5	Normal Minimum Pension Age increase – Paper D	12:05
6	SAB update for England and Wales – Paper E	12:20
7	Regulations update for Scotland – Paper F	12:30
8	Regulations update for Northern Ireland – Paper G	12:35
9	National POG update – Paper H	12:40
10	Training and conference update – Paper I	12:45
11	Any other business	12:55
12	Dates of future meetings	13:00

## Paper A: Minutes of meeting held on 25 November 2024 - Hybrid

### PRESENT

Cllr Nathan Yeowell	Chair, LGA
Cllr Martin Bailey	LGA
Cllr Jayne Dunn	LGA
Cllr Keith House	LGA
Cllr John Fuller	LGA (partial attendance)
Cllr Doug McMurdo	LGA
Cllr Eddie Reeves	LGA
Ben Lavelle	MHCLG
Paul Duggins	MHCLG
David Murphy	NILGOSC
Kevin Gerard	Technical Group representative
Linda Welsh	SPLG
Eva Sobek	SPPA
Alan Wilkinson	SPPA
George Graham	SAB representative

### Secretariat

Lorraine Bennett	LGPC
Joanne Donnelly	SAB
Rachel Abbey	LGPC
Toni Durrant	LGPC
Holly De-Buriette	LGPC

### Non attendees

Cllr Mark Durham	LGA
Cllr Joyce Welsh	LGA (apologies)
Cllr Vince Maple	LGA (substitute for Cllr Welsh)

### 1. INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair, Cllr Nathan Yeowell [NY], welcomed everybody to the hybrid meeting. NY welcomed five new committee members: Cllr Martin Bailey [MB], Cllr Jayne Dunn [JDn], Cllr Joyce Welsh [JW], Cllr Mark Durham [MD] and Cllr Vince Maple [VM] and

congratulated Cllr Keith House's [KH] move to full member. Attendees introduced themselves and outlined their LGPS responsibilities.

## 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Joyce Welsh, Cllr Vince Maple (due to attend only for the first 30 minutes) and Cllr John Fuller (who could only attend from 11:30 am).

No declarations of interest were made.

## 3. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 July 2024 were agreed as a true and correct record.

## 4. MATTERS ARISING

### Restructure of the LGPC secretariat team

Lorraine Bennett [LB] provided an update on the LGPC Secretariat's restructure. The team has grown over time in response to increasing demand for their services. The aim of the re-structure was to improve resilience with the introduction of a new management layer. Two new posts have been created – one each on the training and technical teams. The recruitment process for both posts is underway with interviews planned for the beginning of December.

### Government pensions review

Jo Donnelly [JD] provided an update on the Pensions Review following the Mansion House speech.

The initial findings from phase one of the Review do not contain much about the LGPS. They are focused on defined contribution schemes and will have little impact on the LGPS.

The Government has launched an LGPS consultation: [Local Government Pension Scheme \(England and Wales\): Fit for the future](#). The key proposals in the consultation involving investment and pooling are:

- establishing minimum standards for pools, including FCA regulation – this requirement is currently met by five of the eight pools
- requiring pools to manage assets internally – two pools currently have this capability

- delegation of investment strategy implementation to the pools, with funds taking principal investment advice from the pool
- mandating the transfer of legacy assets to pools
- requiring funds and pools to work more closely with Combined Mayoral Authorities (and the Welsh equivalent) and to formulate a plan for more investment in local growth, taking into account local growth plans
- requiring pool boards to include shareholder representatives and an invitation for views on how Scheme member interests are taken into account by the pools.

Each pension fund will remain a member of a single pool. There is an expectation that pools will collaborate, but JD does not predict that pensions funds will move from one pool to another, nor cross-invest across different pools.

The consultation also includes proposals affecting governance of the LGPS:

- requiring that each administering authority appoint a senior LGPS officer with overall delegated responsibility for the management of and administration of the fund
- requiring committee member knowledge and skills training equivalent to that of pension board members
- mandating the publication of a governance and training strategy and an administration strategy
- introducing biennial independent governance reviews led by the Scheme Advisor Board (SAB) – SAB is recruiting a new member of staff to facilitate the reviews.

The consultation also confirms the Government is also considering a requirement for all administering authorities to appoint an independent adviser.

The consultation does not propose any change to the structure of LGPS administration. There is no requirement for a reduction in the number of funds, but collaboration is mentioned.

The consultation allows limited time for responses, given the holiday period, as it closes on 16 January 2025.

George Graham [GG] expressed concern about the operational challenges of local investment strategies, noting the need for bespoke solutions that pools might not yet have the capacity to deliver. JD agreed and stressed that collaboration between pools would be essential.

NY noted that the Government had indicated its support for consolidation, but that no such requirement was included in the consultation. He suggested that inter-pooling arrangements and collaboration between the pools on specific asset classes should be explored further. He noted the potential role of organisations like the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF) and the Pensions and Lifetime Savings Association (PLSA) in facilitating such efforts. There is potential to work with combined authorities and create pooled investment vehicles to spread risk.

MB enquired about the absence of private equity from the consultation. JD responded that while there were no explicit references to private equity, elements like local growth and UK-focused investments encompass similar growth objectives.

GG noted that the proposed requirement for independent advisors to become formal committee members could be seen as a step toward professional trusteeship, which may not align with the LGPS governance model. JD agreed and suggested that this issue be raised in consultation responses.

NY raised concerns about resourcing for the biennial independent governance reviews proposed in the consultation. JD explained that the new member of the SAB team will oversee and facilitate the reviews. The reviews will be delivered by experts including professionals, recently retired staff and other volunteers.

## **5. SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD (SAB) UPDATE FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

JD presented the key points from Paper B and provided a detailed update on SAB activities.

### **Fair Deal**

An MHCLG consultation on incorporating new Fair Deal into LGPS regulations is expected in the coming months. This would provide enhanced protections for LGPS members involved in outsourcing arrangements. MHCLG has yet to respond to the 2019 Fair Deal consultation. There may be a response to the 2019 consultation, or a new consultation on the legislative changes needed to implement the policy.

### **Gender pensions gap and opt out monitoring**

SAB has an ongoing project to address the gender pensions gap and broader disparities in pension outcomes across members with other protected characteristics.

JD highlighted the importance of monitoring opt outs. Some LGPS members leave the Scheme due to financial pressures, but there could be many other reasons for their decisions. The Board is looking for a way to monitor opt outs effectively. Administering authorities cannot provide full information because they may not be informed about members who opt out of the LGPS from the start of their employment.

To address this, SAB is engaging with employers through LGA networks and conducting surveys targeting academies and local authority employers. JD highlighted the need for employer engagement to make progress on opt outs and closing the gender pensions gap.

## **Compliance and Reporting issues**

### **Audit**

Delays to local authority audits is a continuing concern for LGPS administering authorities. JD described recent SAB engagement with government ministers on this topic, including meetings with Jim McMahon (Minister for Local Government) and Emma Reynolds (Minister for Pensions). The Board is hopeful for progress on separating pension fund accounts from the host authority's accounts.

### **Funding strategy statement guidance**

SAB is expected to approve the new funding strategy statement guidance at the Board's meeting this afternoon. This is the second publication that the Compliance and Reporting Committee has produced.

### **Peer support offer**

The Board is starting a project to scope out a new peer support offer for LGPS administering authorities. There is a new member of staff joining the SAB team in December to lead on this project.

## **Investment issues**

### **Fiduciary duty**

The Board has received the advice it commissioned on the possibility of criminal liability as a result of holding investments associated with occupied territories in the Middle East. The Board has published the advice, provided by Nigel Giffin KC, on its website without additional comment, allowing funds to review the legal implications independently.

The SAB has recently published guidance on managing lobbying and political pressure, which includes best practice for maintaining neutrality. This guidance has

been well-received, particularly given recent increases in lobbying on contentious investment topics.

The SAB is looking into whether legal advice on fiduciary duty, originally published in 2014, needs to be updated.

JDn raised concerns about how recent political developments, including an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court, could affect funds' fiduciary and legal responsibilities. JD responded that while this development does not appear to affect LGPS funds directly, SAB will follow up with Nigel Giffin KC to seek further clarification.

Cllr Doug McMurdo [DMc] suggested expanding the scope of the legal advice to cover conflicts across the world rather than concentrating on the Middle East. He noted that the conflict in Yemen, also raises significant ethical and legal concerns. JD agreed that this could form part of a wider approach to understanding global investment risks.

### **Climate risk reporting**

The Government has not yet responded to the 2022 consultation on governance and reporting of climate change risks in the LGPS. The Board expects developments in this area in 2025. A new consultation is expected on proposals that align with regulations in place for other UK pension schemes.

### **Other issues raised**

MB asked whether the automatic refund of contributions paid to members of the LGPS with less than two years' service was affecting younger scheme members. He understood that this did not happen in other public service pension schemes. LB confirmed that:

- the payment of a refund of LGPS contributions is not automatic
- a member who leaves or opt outs of the LGPS after less than two years may claim a refund, request a transfer to a different pension scheme or wait to make a decision
- if they re-join the LGPS before taking a refund, the two periods of membership are combined, making it more likely that they will meet the two-year 'vesting' period and qualify for an LGPS pension
- under current rules, a refund must be paid within five years of leaving the LGPS, but the SAB and technical team are pushing to remove this requirement

- the LGPS previously had a vesting period of three months, but this was increased to two years in 2014, in line with the other public sector pension schemes.

## 6. REGULATIONS UPDATE ENGLAND AND WALES

LB presented the key points from Paper C.

### McCloud

Work on implementing the McCloud remedy continues. Administering authorities have a deadline of 31 August 2025 to re-visit past calculations and pay any arrears and interest. This deadline will be particularly challenging because of delays to software updates.

The LGPC Secretariat has continued its support to administering authorities by delivering:

- an updated version of the technical guide which includes more information on re-visiting past cases and eligibility for protection
- two webinars on McCloud and two webinars on McCloud and transfers that were attended by 500 people
- template forms and other documents for the McCloud project.

The team will consider delivering further webinars for administrators in 2025 if there is demand. They are also working with Affinity Connect on delivering member webinars in 2025.

The Public Sector Transfer Club provides for pension transfers on preferential terms when a member moves their pension from one public service pension scheme to another. These transfers must usually be completed within a year of joining the 'new' scheme, with an extension possible in 'exceptional circumstances'. The Cabinet Office, which is responsible for the 'Club' arrangements, has agreed that delays in administration due to the implementation of the McCloud remedy count as 'exceptional circumstances' for this purpose.

DMc questioned the risks associated with missing the 2025 deadline. LB clarified that the statutory guidance requires authorities to have regard to the timeline but it is not a legislative requirement. The statutory guidance also includes information on prioritisation, with retirements and deaths at the top of the list.

GG noted that software developments mean that they can process new cases, but more updates are needed to be able to re-visit past cases affected by McCloud. As a result, the number of backlog cases has mostly stabilised, but it remains large.

## **Pensions Review – call for evidence**

LB apologised to the committee for not consulting them before submitting the LGPC's response to the Government's pensions review call for evidence. The tight deadline did not leave time for wider review of the response. The response focused on administrative concerns and affordability, which is the priority for Scheme employers.

## **Consultation on inheritance tax and pensions**

The Chancellor announced in the 2024 Budget that unused pension funds and death benefits will be included in a member's estate for inheritance tax purposes from April 2027. This change primarily affects defined contribution schemes but will also impact death grants paid by the LGPS. Discretionary death grants, such as those paid by the LGPS, are currently not in scope of inheritance tax.

The Government is consulting on the implementation of this policy. The LGPC Secretariat will submit a response, and share that response with administering authorities, before the consultation closes on 22 January 2025. Initial thoughts on the proposal are that:

- One of the main aims of the policy is to prevent double taxation of certain payments made by defined contribution pension schemes. This is not an issue in the LGPS, but death grants paid by the LGPS would be affected by the proposed solution.
- Administering authorities would need to liaise with personal representatives about tax liability before paying a death grant, which would inevitably cause delays in making a payment.
- The process would be complicated in cases where the value of the estate changes after an LGPS death grant has been paid. This could mean that administering authorities have to collect further tax from beneficiaries.

## **Lifetime allowance abolition**

The lifetime allowance (LTA) previously placed a limit on the amount of pension savings an individual could build up in their lifetime without incurring a tax charge.

The LTA was abolished in April 2024 and replaced by two new lump sum allowances.

There was very little time to implement this change and as a result there were errors and problems with the regulations and guidance. Two further sets of regulations came into force on 18 November 2024 to correct these errors. The LGPC Secretariat will revise its guidance to reflect these changes.

## **Pensions Dashboards**

Pensions dashboards will allow people to see details of all their UK pensions in one place, including the state pension.

### **DWP Ministerial Statement on dashboards**

The DWP used a Ministerial Statement to re-affirm their support for dashboards and commit to the existing connection timetable. The statement also asks the Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) to prioritise the launch of the MoneyHelper dashboard before working on connecting commercial dashboards.

Public service pension schemes must connect to pensions dashboards by 31 October 2025.

### **PDP confirms identity service provider**

Data security is a vital issue for dashboards. Identity verification will be essential to make sure that the correct information is supplied to the right person. PDP has confirmed that users of pensions dashboards will verify their identities with GOV.UK One Login. This will make it easier for those who have previously registered with One Login for other Government services.

### **The Pensions Regulator (TPR) and dashboards**

TPR will be engaging with pension schemes on data quality from October 2024 onwards. They will have an interest in data quality scores and data improvement plans.

TPR will use surveys to gather data on schemes' dashboards readiness.

### **Dashboards guides published**

The LGPC Secretariat has issued two dashboards guides to assist administering authorities – a connection guide and an AVC connection guide.

LB highlighted challenges with supplying AVC data to dashboards. There are two approaches:

- the AVC provider supplies data to dashboards directly
- the AVC provider supplies data to the administering authority to supply to dashboards.

Different providers have varying approaches to data sharing. Collaborative work with the wider industry is ongoing to develop a pragmatic solution.

## **Increase to the normal minimum pension age**

The normal minimum pension age (NMPA) will increase from 55 to 57 from 6 April 2028. This changes the earliest age that members can take their LGPS pension, except in cases of ill health.

This was delivered in the Finance Act 2022. The Act allows protections for members with an 'unqualified right' to take a pension before age 57 on 4 November 2021. Individual scheme rules, including the LGPS regulations, will need to be amended to accommodate the increased NMPA for joiners after that date. The LGPS regulations could also be changed to give members who joined before 4 November 2021 the continued right to take their pension from age 55. MHCLG has not yet considered whether the LGPS regulations will provide for protected pension ages.

Administering authorities are frequently asking what MHCLG's approach will be. The LGPC secretariat is writing a paper on the implications of the different approaches that MHCLG could take.

The NMPA increased from 50 to 55 in 2010. That change was straightforward in the LGPS because members at that time did not have an 'unqualified right' to take their pension before age 60 – they needed their employer's or former employer's permission to do so. No protections were introduced to the LGPS in England and Wales. The position is more complicated this time, particularly in relation to transfers.

The Committee will decide on their recommended approach to this issue. LB will prepare a paper for them to consider at the next meeting.

## **Survivor benefits**

LB announced that a consultation is expected in early 2025 on equalising survivor benefits. This is as result of the Goodwin case, which identified inequalities in how benefits are calculated for widowers versus same-sex partners in the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The LGPC secretariat will monitor developments and help funds implement any changes.

## 7. REGULATION UPDATE SCOTLAND

Eva Sobek [ES] provided updates on Paper D:

- Exit credits: SPPA received a large number of responses to the consultation that closed in May 2024. They plan to lay regulations and update the funding strategy statement guidance early in 2025.
- McCloud remedy: The LGPS Scotland regulations concerning annual benefit statements for members with McCloud protection will be amended to bring them into line with the rules in England and Wales. The changes are expected by the end of 2024.

## 8. REGULATIONS UPDATE NORTHERN IRELAND

The Committee noted the key points from Paper E, which was presented by David Murphy [DM].

- there was much press interest in the Budget and Mansion House speech, but these had no impact on the LGPS in Northern Ireland
- the Northern Ireland Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board met in November and discussed pensions dashboards and the McCloud remedy
- LGPS (Northern Ireland) Regulations were amended for McCloud and annual benefit statements before the 31 August deadline in the same way that the rules were changed in England and Wales.

GG asked about the legal challenges related to McCloud brought by trades unions that DM had reported at previous meetings of this Committee. DM confirmed that the legal process is ongoing. Around a quarter of the claims have been unsuccessful as the individuals are not in scope of protection. The first management hearings related to the remaining 18,000 cases are expected in March 2025.

## 8. TECHNICAL GROUP UPDATE

Kevin Gerard [KG] presented the key points from Paper F.

At the last Technical group meeting, the group discussed:

- The group's priority to remove the five year time limit for paying contribution refunds
- Limit on payments that can be made without probate or letters of administration: the group proposes raising the current £5,000 cap to £20,000 to reflect inflation and support bereaved families. They requested that the

Scheme Advisory Board contacts HM Treasury on behalf of administering authorities to pursue this change

- AVCs: Addressing delays and inconsistencies with AVC providers, particularly around data sharing for dashboards
- The demands of validating service for the teachers' excess service project

The Technical Group is being replaced by the National Pensions Officer Group to meet the evolving needs of LGPS administering authorities and employers. The Chair of the new group will attend future meetings of this committee. As this was KG's final meeting, NY and the LGPC members expressed their thanks for his attendance and contribution over the years. NY praised KG and members of the Technical Group for their efforts.

## 9. TRAINING AND CONFERENCE UPDATE

Toni Durrant [TD] provided updates from Paper G:

- Fundamentals training aimed at committee and board members is underway in York, London and online. Feedback so far is largely positive. Around 90 delegates will attend each of the three days. Numbers in York are on the low side and so 2025 events will be held in London and online only.
- Annual Governance Conference 30-31 January 2025: the event is nearly sold out for in-person attendance, with places still available to join online.
- The training team delivered 17 commissioned training events in 2024, a significant increase on previous years.
- The team has announced the training programme for 2025. They have made changes to some courses in response to feedback from attendees, such as splitting the transfer training into two courses to reflect the increased complexity.
- Award in Pensions Essentials qualification: the first cohort is reaching the end of this level 2 general pensions training, with the second and third cohorts due to start in 2025.
- LGPS qualification: the team is developing a Level 3 LGPS-specific qualification. The first intake of students will start the course in April 2025.
- The team delivered a presentation at the Pensions Managers' Conference in November on both qualifications and will deliver a webinar in early December. 70 funds have already signed up for the webinar which indicates that there will be significant interest.

- Following on from the team re-structure mentioned at the beginning of this meeting, the training team is recruiting a new member of staff. Interviews are scheduled for the beginning of December.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None to report.

## **11. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Future meetings will be held on:

- 24 March 2025
- 21 July 2025
- 24 November 2025.

DRAFT

## Paper C: Regulations update England and Wales

### Decisions

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

### Consultation on inheritance tax and pensions

The technical [HMRC consultation on inheritance tax and pensions: liability, reporting and payment](#) was discussed at the last meeting. If the proposals are taken forwards, LGPS death grants paid from April 2027 will be in scope of inheritance tax. This would represent a significant burden and change in process for LGPS administrators.

The [response on behalf of the LGA and LGPC](#) was shared with administering authorities in January. Our response concentrated on:

- the unfairness of active member death grants being scope of inheritance tax when insurance-based products will be out of scope
- concerns about delays in payment and the financial impact on vulnerable individuals and families, particularly single parent families who would be disproportionately affected
- how the potential tax implications should be taken into account by administering authorities when they are deciding how to distribute a death grant
- concerns about interest charges that are likely to apply in complex cases where the administering authority must gather a large amount of information before making their decision
- the challenge of communicating the changes to members
- recommending an increase in the limit set out in the Administration of Estates (Small Payments) Act 1965 from £5,000 to £20,000, a change that has already been made in Northern Ireland
- the increased complexity and the tax knowledge that will be required of pension administrators
- practical issues, particularly relating to deaths where no personal representatives have been appointed, those that have been appointed are not responsive or multiple representatives providing conflicting information.

## **Upcoming consultations**

We expect to see a number of MHCLG consultations in the first half of 2025 covering a wide range of policy areas. The proposals include:

### **Survivor and death benefits:**

- equalising survivor benefits for same sex and opposite sex partners, backdated to 2005 when same sex civil partnerships were introduced
- removing the upper age limit of 75 for the payment of death grants and backdating the change to 2011
- removing the requirement to pay a death grant to the personal representatives when it is paid more than two years after the member's death.

### **Gender pensions gap:**

- assumed pensionable pay to apply in periods of unpaid shared parental leave, and unpaid additional maternity or adoption leave. This would mean that a member's pension would continue to build up as normal for the full 12 months of maternity/adoption leave
- pension contributions to be compulsory for unpaid breaks of less than 31 days taken with the employer's permission
- reducing the cost of buying back pension 'lost' in an unpaid period of more than 30 days. The cost will be based on the member's normal pension contributions, with the employer paying the usual employer contributions
- allowing the member 12 months to make a decision to buy back the pension 'lost' in an unpaid period, an increase from the current 30-day limit
- under current rules, the maximum unpaid period that a member can start a shared cost contract to cover for pension purposes is three years. This upper limit will be removed
- compulsory reporting on the gender pensions gap from 2025.

### **Forfeiture:**

- removing the requirement for the member to have left the LGPS because of the offence
- removing the three-month time limit for employer to make an application for forfeiture

## **Introducing Fair Deal to the LGPS:**

- removing the option to offer a broadly comparable scheme to staff who are compulsorily transferred
- removing pension costs from contract negotiations by having the deemed employer route as the default option
- contractor pays the Fair Deal employer's primary contribution rate, either fixed at the rate fixed at the start of the contract or the new rate following the next valuation
- the option to extend 'protected transferee status to new employees employed wholly or mainly on the transferred service.

## **Changes to National Insurance database**

Some LGPS rules are affected by whether an individual has membership of the Scheme with different administering authorities. We created and maintain a database that funds can access to check for other periods of LGPS membership. The main purposes of the database are to:

- prevent double payment of death grants
- prevent a refund of contributions being paid to a member who does not qualify for one
- check for previous membership that may be aggregated or that may affect a member's McCloud protection status
- ensure that a transfer only proceeds if all LGPS benefits are being transferred.

We have recently introduced an application programming interface (API) to allow pension administration software to link directly to the database. Users can call the database directly from their pension administration system as part of a refund, transfer or death process rather than having to log in to the database separately.

One software supplier has taken up the API and users are taking advantage of this development. Other suppliers have also shown an interest.

## McCloud update

### New resources for administering authorities – Club transfers

Pension transfers between public service pension schemes that take place within a year of the date the member joined the new scheme are calculated under preferential terms known as the public sector transfer club ('Club transfers').

Club transfers for members protected by the McCloud remedy can be particularly complicated. For membership in the remedy period (1 April 2014 to 31 March 2022 in the LGPS), the transferring scheme must supply transfer calculations based on both CARE and final salary membership. Administering authorities must provide these dual calculations for new Club transfers out requested by members protected by the McCloud remedy, and for Club transfers completed before the regulations were amended to reflect the McCloud remedy in October 2023.

Pension software has not yet been updated to deal with Club transfers for this group of members. Indeed, suppliers have suggested that this development may take a further two years to complete.

We have produced resources to help administering authorities when processing transfers out for members protected by the McCloud remedy:

- **Club transfers out and McCloud guide** – summarises the information that must be supplied to the receiving scheme when a member requests this type of transfer
- **Club transfer calculator** – to work out the additional figures that must be supplied to the receiving scheme that are not yet included in the transfer calculation produced by the pension administration system.

### McCloud webinars for members

With the support of the Communications Working Group we have worked with Affinity Connect to develop McCloud webinars for LGPS members. Affinity Connect deliver pre-retirement courses to employees of many LGPS employers, and McCloud webinars for members of other public service pension schemes.

The webinars are aimed at active and deferred LGPS members who are protected by the McCloud remedy and would like to learn more about how they might be affected. We are particularly keen for deferred members to be informed about the webinars, as they do not have access to pension events or resources offered by their former employer. The webinars will also provide an opportunity for members to gain

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a better understanding of how the LGPS works and the options open to them as Scheme members.

The webinars started in March and will continue on a rolling three-month programme while there is demand.

## Pensions dashboards

### TPR dashboard guidance

In December 2024, the Pensions Regulator (TPR) published [updated dashboards guidance](#). The updates concern:

- **registration codes** - the actions administering authorities need to take regarding registration codes.
- **legislative changes** - incorporates the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) guidance on staged connection. TPR expects schemes to connect in line with DWP's guidance and to consider and mitigate the risk if they delay connection
- **Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) standards** – the draft data standards, reporting standards and Code of Connection
- **industry feedback** - the dedicated industry engagement team for dashboards has consistently provided insight and feedback from providers and schemes, which TPR has reflected in clarifications and updated scenarios
- **data expectations** - clarifications on data for matching purposes and to return accurate and timely data to members
- **ongoing developments** - TPR has highlighted where schemes need to be alert to developments that arise during testing and speak regularly to their providers to ensure they are up to date.

### Dashboards readiness survey

TPR will be sending their second dashboards readiness survey in March 2025. We encourage all administering authorities to complete the survey, so TPR has a good understanding of dashboards implementation progress across the public sector.

## LGPS promotion project

Working with the Communications Working Group, we at the early stages of developing resources to promote the LGPS. These are designed to be used by

Scheme employers and administering authorities to educate employees about the benefits of LGPS membership. The resources will be designed to communicate with:

- **new employees:** aiming to reduce the number of people who opt out of the Scheme before they know what the Scheme offers
- **members who have opted out:** encouraging them to consider opting back into the Scheme
- **members joining under automatic enrolment rules:** to tell them more about the Scheme benefits making it less likely that they will opt out for a second time.

The resources could also be used to educate existing members of the LGPS about the benefits of the Scheme and their options as a member.

We plan to produce:

- a short video
- posters
- social media posts
- e-learning module
- information leaflet
- email footers.

## Head of Pensions

We are pleased to announce that Clair Alcock has been appointed as the new Head of Pensions at the LGA. Clair is currently Head of Police Pensions at the National Police Chiefs' Council. She will join the LGA on 19 May 2025 and will replace Joanne Donnelly who left on 27 February 2025.

Clair will bring an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of those in charge of overseeing, managing and administering locally administered public service pension schemes, having previously established the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Advisory Board and national pension teams for police and fire.

## Contact officer

Name: Rachel Abbey

Job title: Lead Pensions Adviser

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## Paper D: Normal minimum pension age increase

### Background

The normal minimum pension age (NMPA) is increasing to from 55 to 57 from 6 April 2028. The Act provides for protections for certain members; however, it is up to each pension scheme to decide if it will provide for protected pension ages in its scheme rules.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) and the Department for Communities (DfC) all need to amend the LGPS Regulations for the NMPA increase.

### Decisions

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and provide recommendations on whether the LGPS should provide for protected pension ages.

### Summary

#### Background to normal minimum pension age increase

The Finance Act 2004 sets the normal minimum pension age (NMPA). Registered pension schemes, such as the LGPS, must not normally pay any benefits to members until they reach NMPA, except in ill health. Significant tax charges apply to the member and the scheme if benefits are paid before the NMPA on normal health grounds.

The Finance Act 2022 has legislated to increase the NMPA from 55 to 57, effective from 6 April 2028. It also provides transitional protection to certain members through a protected pension age (PPA).

Generally, members qualify for a PPA for their benefits in a pension scheme if they had an unqualified actual or prospective right to any benefit under the scheme before age 57 immediately before 4 November 2021. An unqualified right means the member does not require the consent of anyone, such as the employer or administrator, to receive their benefits.

Members who qualify for a PPA for their benefits in a scheme retain the PPA if they transfer the benefits to a different pension scheme. Other than for bulk transfers, the PPA will only apply to those transferred-in benefits in the new scheme.

LGPS members will generally fall into one of the following three groups:

- **Group 1:** does not qualify for a PPA on their LGPS benefits
- **Group 2:** qualifies for a PPA of age 55 on their LGPS benefits
- **Group 3:** qualifies for a PPA on certain transferred-in benefits only (the PPA could be 55 or any date between 55 and 57).

Qualifying for a PPA does not provide members with an overriding right to take benefits from their PPA; it simply determines whether benefits paid under the pension scheme rules before the NMPA will incur significant tax charges. For example, a group 2 member will only be allowed to receive their LGPS benefits before age 57 after 5 April 2028 if the LGPS regulations allow it (which they may not).

### Decisions for the responsible authorities

MHCLG, SPPA and DfC make the regulations for the LGPS in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively. They need to review and amend the LGPS regulations to align with the NMPA increase in April 2028.

This will involve amending the regulations so that the earliest age LGPS benefits can be received on normal health grounds increases to, at least 57 for members who do not qualify for a PPA on their LGPS benefits.

They will need to decide whether to also increase the earliest age to 57 for members that qualify for a PPA (ie group 2 members and for group 3 members for their transferred-in benefits), or whether they wish to allow for these benefits to be taken before age 57. For group 3 members, it should be noted that it is not currently possible for members to only take payment of transferred-in benefits.

A different approach could be taken for different types of retirement. For example, the earliest age could be 57 for normal health and flexible retirements, but age 55 for redundancy retirements.

### Considerations

When deciding whether, and in what circumstances, members with a PPA can receive benefits before age 57 after 5 April 2028, the following should be considered:

- **Members' preference** – members who qualify for a PPA are likely to prefer retaining the right to receive their LGPS benefits earlier than age 57. The Government has introduced PPAs in overriding legislation to allow for this, so members may expect to have a right under the LGPS. If a member takes voluntary retirement, their pension benefits are actuarially reduced for early payment, so there is no cost to the employer.
- **Cost implications for the employer** – currently if a member age 55 or older is made redundant or terminated on efficiency grounds the LGPS rules provide for their pension benefits to be paid immediately without reduction for early payment. The employer must fund the early payment of benefits, which can be very costly. If the earliest age were to increase to 57 for all members, this would be a cost saving to employers and align with the general increase in retirement ages. The LGPS is an outlier in the public sector by still offering this generous benefit.
- **Member communications** - the LGPS is already a complex scheme, and there are existing challenges in communication and member understanding. The simplest outcome to communicate and for members to understand would be to set the same earliest age for all groups.
- **Administration challenge** – the LGPS is already a very complex to administer. Introducing additional complexity by allowing different earliest retirement ages or members to take only transferred-in benefits will only add to the burden. Administering authorities struggle to recruit and retain staff, partly due to the complexity of the job, and this may exacerbate the issue.
- **Discrimination** – whether there is any risk of unlawful discrimination related to each potential change. For example, if the earliest age depends on PPAs, older members are more likely to have a PPA as they are more likely to have joined the LGPS before 4 November 2021.
- **Two-tier workforce** – where the earliest age depends on a PPA, whether there is a risk of creating a two-tier workforce. For example, an employer will have employees who joined before 4 November 2021 and others who joined on or after that date and do not have a PPA. Employees with a PPA will be able to take payment of their LGPS benefits from age 55, while other colleagues will have to wait to age 57.
- **Workforce planning** – if members who qualify for a PPA are unable to receive their LGPS benefits before age 57 after 5 April 2028, there may be an impact on workforce planning. For example:

- employees aged between 55 and 57 with a PPA may be less likely to take voluntary redundancy
- employees aged between 55 and 57 with a PPA who would have taken flexible retirement may be less likely to take a phased approach to leaving.

Any impacts on workforce planning will naturally occur over time, as fewer employees will qualify for a PPA.

- **Data** – when considering the above, it will be important to understand how many members currently take payment of their benefits between age 55 and 57, and on what grounds. MHCLG may also wish to take account of the impact Local Government Reorganisation may have on those figures in the coming years.

### Sufficient notice

Whatever is decided, members, employers and administrators need sufficient notice before the changes come into effect. For example:

- if an employer is planning a voluntary redundancy scheme for after 5 April 2028, they will need to know as part of the planning stage whether members aged between 55 and 57 with a PPA will be entitled to immediate payment of unreduced benefits
- if a member is considering retirement after 5 April 2028 and will be under age 57, they will need to know whether they will be able to do so; if not, they will need time to reconsider their plans, such as bring forward their retirement to before 6 April 2028.

The current uncertainty regarding how the LGPS regulations might change for the 2028 NMPA increase is already causing complaints from members who cannot make fully informed decisions when deciding to transfer previous pensions to the LGPS and those who feel unable to plan for retirement.

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# Paper E: SAB update England and Wales

## Key points to note

The Board continues to engage with MHCLG on the implementation of the priorities of the new Labour Government on benefits, fairness and adequacy. In addition, the Board continues to develop its own sector support offer – including improving its digital communications and engagement strategy.

## Decisions

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

## Pensions Review

In January the Board submitted its [response](#) to the consultation “[Fit for the Future](#)” as part of the Pensions Review and has since then been engaging with MHCLG officials on the Government’s response. By way of reminder, the consultation proposed:

- Requiring LGPS pools to be FCA regulated entities with the capability to manage assets internally, and to give investment advice to their LGPS partner funds
- LGPS funds will retain responsibility for setting their fund’s strategic asset allocation, but would be required to fully delegate the implementation of their investment strategy to the pool, and to take their principal advice on their investment strategy from the pool
- LGPS funds would be required to transfer legacy assets to the management of the pool
- LGPS funds and pools will be required to work more closely with Combined Mayoral Authorities and will be asked to formulate a plan for more investments in local growth, taking account of local growth plans.

The consultation also proposed to implement the recommendations of the Board’s [Good Governance review](#), including a new biennial governance review process for LGPS funds, which the Scheme Advisory Board Secretariat team at the LGA will be asked to coordinate. Proposals for a peer-support offer which will sit alongside the new governance review are being worked up by the Secretariat.

The consultation also required each of the eight investment pools to submit to the Government, by 1 March 2025, submissions explaining how they intended to achieve the outcomes expected of them in the consultation. Those plans have been confidentially received by MHCLG officials and the Secretariat are exploring with them how we can support the analysis of them and move to practical next steps.

## **Cost Management and Benefit Issues**

### **Fair Deal**

MHCLG officials have confirmed that there will be a two-stage approach to reforming pension rights on transfer from the public sector, to better protect employees affected. Firstly, a consultation is expected very shortly to catch up the LGPS on the previous Government's New Fair Deal policy. The second stage will be looking at whether there should be additional pension protections in the new Two-Tier Code promised in the "new deal for working people" issued by the Labour Party ahead of the general election. The commitment was to "extend and strengthen" the provisions that were in the code made by the last Labour Government but repealed by the coalition government. The Code aimed at providing minimum guarantees for the new hires working alongside the colleagues who enjoyed protection by virtue of their transfer from the public sector.

Proposals which might be included in the Code include widening access to public sector schemes like LGPS, the creation of new schemes or sections for particular workforces (like social care or transport workers) or minimum pension contribution levels by employers beyond the statutory Automatic Enrolment minimum. Of course, each of these would be likely to lead to increases in the price of service delivery contracts.

### **Local Government Reorganisation**

The [Devolution White Paper](#) was published on 16 December 2024. Although it did not specifically mention LGPS administering authorities it is likely to have some significant consequences for funds. It is worth noting that there is no proposal that the new layer of "strategic authorities" should take over the administering authority function and indeed it would arguably not sit well with their other responsibilities.

With the triennial valuation coming up, actuaries will have the added complexity of setting contribution rates for councils that may not exist in a few year's time (and those for new councils will need to be calculated at some point in the cycle).

In terms of the functioning of pension committees, the postponement of May elections in many areas will help with continuity in the short term but we are likely to see significant changes over the longer term. The Local Government Boundary Commission will be responsible for reviewing the numbers of councillors for the new unitary councils, but the Government cites approvingly the example of Cumbria where the number of councillors in that county was reduced by two-thirds by unitarisation.

The reorganisation of functions does, however, provide an opportunity to review governance arrangements for LGPS administering authorities, and give them opportunities to build in best practice, such as creating the role of a single senior LGPS officer.

### **Gender Pensions Gap (GPG)**

Building on the ground-breaking GPG reports that were published last year, the Secretariat have been exploring the establishment of a standard GPG definition and reporting approach (including methodology) for the Local Government Pension Scheme, including both for funds and employers. A draft [paper](#) on this was approved at the Cost Management, Benefit Design and Administration Committee (CMBDA). It was developed with help from the Pensions Equity Group (PEG) and the Board's own Working Group on GPG

The paper proposes that as an initial step GPG reporting could be done via the Actuarial Valuation report which is a statutory document produced by administering authorities during each triennial actuarial valuation. By working with PEG we have attempted to create a methodology that works for and enables comparison between private and public, DB and DC schemes.

There is considerable interest in the concept of the gender pensions gap in all forums in which it is raised. As part of gathering acceptance for 'mainstreaming' this kind of reporting the Secretariat is proposing to arrange a "roundtable" event to bring together the various stakeholders with an interest in this area. That event will bring together representatives of public sector schemes (broadly defined, so including those like Railpen or USS), the actuarial profession, member representatives and representatives of employer groups. MHCLG officials have confirmed that Ministers are very supportive of the work the Board have done in this area and we are hopeful that commitment to GPG reporting will be included in the forthcoming consultation on member benefits, referenced by the Minister at the Governance Conference in January.

## **Monitoring of opt outs**

The Board continues to work with MHCLG officials to put in place an effective system for monitoring the level of opt outs from LGPS and to gain intelligence if there are particular groups that disproportionately do so. A survey of local government and education sector employers was undertaken looking at both GPG and opt out issues as both are linked in themes. The results of that survey were also reported in the [paper](#) on GPG provided to the CMBDA.

The survey found a strong interest among employers in obtaining and understanding their opt-out rates and gender pension gap, with over 72 per cent saying that they would be extremely or very interested in this. Respondents felt that this data could be a useful tool for targeting gaps, monitoring equality, and improving pension awareness among their employees. However, financial constraints and already stretched budgets were identified as a potential barrier.

## **Compliance and Reporting Issues**

### **Audit**

The Board has [responded](#) to the [local audit reform consultation](#) that affirmed the Government's commitment to looking at separation of pension fund accounts from that of the administering authority's main accounts. Given the broad consensus amongst stakeholders that this is long overdue, the Secretariat are confident that the government will effect separation – possibly even in this calendar year.

The Board convened an audit roundtable meeting on 9 December, bringing together local government auditors, LGPS practitioners and regulators to look at ways to improve the functioning of local audit for funds and scheme employers.

The Board also agreed to write to Pensions Minister on issues arising for public sector schemes from the [Virgin Media case](#). The Board is writing to urge that the Government act to bring the clarity needed for the LGPS (and wider public sector schemes) around the impact of this judgment. We believe that DWP can and should use its statutory powers to settle the question retrospectively, in respect of public service pension schemes at least.

## **Funding Strategy Statement Guidance**

The Board has completed its review of the 2016 CIPFA guidance on the creation of funding strategy statements. The review took into consideration feedback from a wider range of perspectives and has been significantly redrafted to address the current funding scenarios faced by funds. The guidance received approval at the

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Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Public Finance Management Board meeting on 7 November 2024 and Scheme Advisory Board on 25 November 2024. The [revised guidance](#) is available from the Board's website.

### **Peer Support Offer**

The Secretariat continue to work on the creation of a draft framework, setting out options for models of a LGPS peer support offer, with the specific focus on governance assurance for LGPS funds. A new member of staff, Sophia Chivandire, has been taken on to lead on this project. She will attend the LGPC meeting and explain the proposed approach. This builds on the [paper](#) that was taken to the Compliance and Reporting Committee last month setting out the Terms of Reference for the project.

In taking forward this project, the Secretariat are mindful of the roles of various other stakeholders in this space – such as MHCLG, the Pensions Regulator and auditors – who have existing roles or interests in governance assurance. The Board wishes to ensure that any proposals which emerge add value to existing arrangements and are consistent with the Board's role (and do not stray into regulatory compliance or intervention territory).

### **Investment Issues**

#### **Fiduciary Duty**

The Board has received [further advice](#) from Nigel Giffin KC on fiduciary duty, updating the earlier advice that was obtained by the Shadow Board in 2014. A summary of this advice will be publishing on the SAB website and a draft of that has been put to the Board for clearance later today.

#### **Climate Risk Reporting**

The Board understand that the previous consultation on implementing a climate risk governance and reporting regime for LGPS will be revisited and we are not expecting a substantive response to that now. At some point next year, we expect the Government will consult on a new set of principles that align with the Labour Party manifesto commitment to require all pension schemes to develop a credible transition plan that aligns with the 1.5°C temperature rise goal of the Paris Agreement.

## **Board Administration and Governance**

### **Website**

The Board will be commissioning a review of its website, with a view to upgrading the look and usability of the site as well as dealing with some of the existing accessibility issues.

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## **Paper F: Regulations Update for Scotland**

### **Exit Credits**

The consultation on changes to provide administering authorities with a discretion to determine the amount of exit credit which should be payable to an employer leaving the LGPS, closed on 30 May 2024.

Scottish Ministers received a number of responses voicing concerns over possible outcomes for employers and the need for guidance to accompany the regulations. These regulations were put on hold until guidance was made available.

SPPA were provided with the Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) Guidance which has been produced by the England and Wales SAB, this has been shared with the Scottish SAB. The Scottish SAB confirmed that they will also adopt this guidance.

The amended regulations were signed on 19 February, with a coming in to force date of 2 April 2025.

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# Paper G: Northern Ireland regulation update

## Key points to note

Public Service pension regulations are a devolved matter for the Northern Ireland Assembly. Regulations for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in Northern Ireland are made by the Department for Communities (the Department).

The key issues affecting the scheme in Northern Ireland are substantially the same as that in England & Wales and Scotland i.e. administering the McCloud regulation changes, Pension Dashboard, the implication of the UK Budget, Investment issues, and Responsible Investment. The implications of the Mansion House speech and the Government UK growth agenda does not directly impact upon the Northern Ireland scheme.

## Decisions

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

## Summary

The Northern Ireland LGPS Scheme Advisory Board met on 15 November 2024.

The Department for Communities consulted on statutory guidance on the administration of the McCloud remedy.

## Governance

### Scheme Advisory Board

The Scheme Advisory Board last met on 15 November 2024. Items discussed included:

- Cost Cap Valuation
- Pension Dashboard
- Departmental McCloud statutory guidance
- Pension Investment Review.

## Regulations

### Statutory Guidance on McCloud

On 11 December 2024 the Department for Communities launched a [consultation](#) on draft statutory guidance on the implementation of the McCloud remedy. The consultation ran until 19 February 2025.

The McCloud remedy introduced changes to the LGPS (NI) statutory underpin protection to remove unlawful discrimination found by the courts in relation to public service pension scheme 'transitional protection' arrangements. Specifically, it removed the condition that required a member to have been within ten years of their normal pension age (NPA) on 1 April 2012 to be eligible for underpin protection. The Department is proposing to issue draft statutory guidance to NILGOSC, as scheme manager. Its purpose is to assist NILGOSC in its task of implementing the McCloud remedy by ensuring the revised underpin works effectively and consistently for all qualifying members. The overarching principle is that members are not in a worsened position because of the transitional protections.

The guidance is equivalent to that produced in England & Wales.

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# Paper H: National Pension Officer Group update

## Background

The National Pension Officer Group (NPOG) is made up of representatives from LGPS administering authorities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Its purpose is to represent the views of LGPS administering authorities in relation to pension administration and government policy.

## Decisions

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

## Update from meeting of 7 February 2025

### Terms of Reference

The Technical Group was disbanded in 2024 and replaced by a new NPOG – a new TOR was approved in the February meeting. The new TOR will help the NPOG focus on a strategic approach to LGPS administration issues along with providing practical advice and guidance to LGPS regional pension officer groups (POGs), administering authorities, local pension boards and pension committees. Differences from the Technical Group's TOR include:

- Term limits (3 years) for Chair and Vice Chair
- Greater Substitution of NPOG attendees so that members from regional POGs with specialist expertise in an agenda item up for discussion can attend NPOG meetings and join NPOG sub-groups
- NPOG meetings have a new format designed for greater opportunities to meet and review industry third parties, for example, AVC or software suppliers.

### Recommendations to SAB

Before it dissolved, the National Technical Group had four outstanding recommendations to the Scheme Advisory board on forfeiture, refunds, AVCs and the grant of probate limit. Full information on each recommendation is available on

the [National LGPS Technical Group Minutes](#) page of [www.lgpsregs.org](http://www.lgpsregs.org) (click on 'recommendations' link).

The National Pension Officer Group decided to ask each regional group to discuss and collectively answer at their next meetings which of the four is the highest priority and whether there are any other high priority changes needed in the LGPS.

### **LGA Update**

LGA provided a verbal update and covered a number of areas including implementation of the McCloud for LGPS members transferring to Club schemes and the project to move Government Actuary Department (GAD) guidance to a central hub.

With regard to the increase in the normal minimum pension age (NMPA) from 55 to 57 from 6 April 2028 - the LGA reminded the meeting that whilst the Pensions Act 2022 provides protection under the primary legislation, it is up to each pension scheme to decide whether it will provide for protected pension ages in its scheme rules. LGA is continuing to encourage MHCLG to provide guidance on this.

### **MHCLG Update**

MHCLG opened by emphasising how important NPOG meetings are for building their understanding of current issues facing LGPS practitioners.

Issuing guidance on the increase to members' normal minimum pension age (NMPA) from 55 to 57 is part of their timetable. In addition, they are considering actions on opt-outs, the Gender Pensions Gap and Fair Deal.

### **Software Provider Update**

NPOG were updated by individual software suppliers on the progress they had made towards meeting statutory requirements.

Members of the NPOG expressed concerns at the speed of implementation of the McCloud remedy into software calculations and, in some cases, preparedness for supplying McCloud underpin data for this year's annual statements. This will be kept under review by the NPOG.

AVCs were discussed and how a consistent method of providing data to pensions dashboards ecosystem could be agreed. A guide ([AVCs and Dashboards administrator guide version 1.0](#)) has been created by the LGA with help from the

former Technical Group's AVC sub-group to establish common approaches on the preparation and provision of AVC view data. NPOG agreed to survey regional POGs to determine how they intended to provide AVC data and then a consistent data specification can be agreed with AVC providers.

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# Paper I: Training and conference update

## Decisions

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

## Fundamentals training

We ran our 2024 Fundamentals training in London, York and online between October and December 2024. We sold 286 places in total. Online training was most popular. Feedback was positive.

Fundamentals is a three-day training course aimed at elected members and others who attend pension committees and local pension boards.

During 2023 and 2024 we experienced a drop in numbers booked for the northern Fundamentals venue. It is no longer financially viable to offer a northern venue. Fundamentals 2025 will run in London and online only.

We have confirmed the locations and dates for the 2025 training:

Table 1: Fundamentals training 2025

Day	Date	Location or online
Day 1	8 October	London
Day 1	14 & 21 October	Online
Day 2	5 November	London
Day 2	13 & 20 November	Online
Day 3	3 December	London
Day 3	9 & 16 December	Online

The Fundamentals training for 2025 will be available to book in the summer.

## Annual governance conference

The LGA's LGPS Governance Conference 2025 took place in Bournemouth on 30 and 31 January 2025. The conference sold out for in person places by early December. Final bookings were 147 in person and 50 online.

The conference brought together LGPS professionals for two days of insightful discussions, expert analysis and valuable networking. The event covered key topics shaping the future of the LGPS, including administration challenges, governance, funding and investment policy reform.

The conference received excellent feedback. Next year's conference will be held at the Cardiff Marriott Hotel on 29 and 30 January 2026. We hope to be able to increase in person capacity slightly from previous years as both the 2024 and 2025 events sold out of in person places.

### **Employer and administrator training**

The [2025 training programme](#) is selling well. More than half of the courses available have sold out.

During 2024 we trialled an increased course capacity on our Employer Role course. The capacity was increased from 15 to 18 delegates. Feedback from both delegates and the Training Focus Group has been positive and as a result the capacity of all practitioner training has been increased to 18 delegates for 2025.

The Insight course is an introduction to the LGPS for new administrators. It runs over multiple days. We are running this course four times in 2025, with two sessions in person and two online. Demand remains strong, with a wait list for online courses. We hope to add an additional Insight course for late 2025 and will also run additional courses on other topics if resource allows.

A number of funds have organised commissioned training. We have agreed to run an additional 20 days of commissioned training for 2025 so far, covering retirements, transfers, aggregations, survivor benefits and Insight.

### **Pensions qualifications**

The Award in Pensions Essentials (APE) is a generic level 2 pensions qualification which Barnet Waddingham are running. The second cohort of students began studying towards the APE in December. The third cohort will begin in April. We already have sufficient interest to fill a fourth and fifth cohort. These will be staggered over the coming months.

The Certificate in LGPS Administration is an LGPS specific level 3 pensions qualification which is being created and run by the LGA. It is awarded by the Pensions Management Institute (PMI).

The pilot of the Certificate in LGPS Administration will begin in April 2025. The first examination will be in June 2025. There are 36 students from 13 different administering authorities taking part in the pilot. Numbers were capped at a maximum of four students per administering authority initially in the interests of fairness.

We plan to have a second intake in September 2025 and have 16 administering authorities already registered to take part.

### **Training team staff changes**

Jennifer Rice joined the LGA as a LGPS Training and Development adviser on 10 February. Jennifer will help to ensure the team is able to meet the demand for practitioner training and will also assist in the provision of the Certificate in LGPS Administration.

Karl White will retire from the LGA on 31 May 2025. The team are in the process of recruiting his replacement.

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