LGPC MEETING – 24 November 2025

Meeting agenda

Item		Timings
1	Welcome to new members, apologies for absence and declarations of interest	11:30
2	Minutes of meeting held on 21 July 2025 – Paper A	11:40
3	LGPS Access and Protection consultation – Paper B	11:45
4	Regulations update for England and Wales – Paper C	12:00
5	SAB update for England and Wales – Paper D	12:10
6	Regulations update for Scotland – Paper E	12:25
7	Regulations update for Northern Ireland – Paper F	12:30
8	National POG update – Paper G	12:35
9	Training, conference and qualification update – Paper H	12:45
10	Any other business – Valuations and climate data	12:50
11	Dates of future meetings 23 March 2026, 20 July 2026, 23 November 2026	13:00

Paper A: Minutes of meeting held on 21 July 2025 - Hybrid

PRESENT

Cllr Nathan Yeowell	Chair, LGA
Cllr John Fuller	LGA (partial attendance)
Cllr Keith House	LGA
Cllr Doug McMurdo	LGA
Cllr Martin Bailey	LGA
Cllr Mark Durham	LGA
Cllr Eddie Reeves	LGA
Cllr Jayne Dunn	LGA
Ben Lavelle	MHCLG
George Graham	SAB representative
Eva Sobek	SPPA
Martin Doyle	National POG representative

Secretariat

Lorraine Bennett	LGPC
Lisa Clarkson	LGPC
Holly De-Buriatte	LGPC
Clair Alcock	Scheme Advisory Board (SAB)

Non attendees

Cllr Joyce Welsh	LGA (apologies)
David Murphy	NILGOSC (apologies)
Alan Wilkinson	SPPA (apologies)
Linda Welsh	SPLG (apologies)

1. INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair, Cllr Nathan Yeowell [NY], welcomed everybody to the hybrid meeting.

NY noted this was the final meeting of the current cycle and announced that the new cycle would start in autumn 2025 with guaranteed changes to membership due to Reform qualifying as a new political group at the LGA. This will entitle them to at least one member on the Committee. Nominations from group offices would be received in August 2025, with new membership to be agreed by September 2025.

NY expressed gratitude to all members for their contributions during the year, particularly acknowledging those for whom this might be their final meeting.

George Graham [GG] confirmed that this would be his penultimate committee meeting. NY indicated there would make special recognition of GG’s service closer to Christmas.

NY welcomed Clair Alcock [CA] to the meeting as the new Head of Pensions at the LGA and Secretary of the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB). Whilst CA had attended the previous meeting, this was her first meeting in post.

NY thanked Cllr John Fuller [JF] for chairing the previous meeting.

NY requested that SAB pay reference to the Committee's availability when setting future meeting dates over the summer.

NY apologised for chairing the meeting online, explaining that he had other commitments preventing him from attending in person.

NY identified agenda item 3, the response to the LGPS Access and Fairness Consultation, as the main item for active discussion.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Joyce Welsh [JW], David Murphy [DM], Alan Wilkinson [AW] and Linda Welsh [LW].

JF gave apologies for leaving the committee meeting at 12:25pm due to a prior commitment.

NY noted that as DM was unable to attend, the Northern Ireland report at agenda item 7 would be noted with any questions forwarded to DM for response between meetings. Committee members were advised to send any questions to Lorraine Bennett [LB].

NY enquired whether, as the sole Welsh member and a member of the LGPS, he was required to declare this as an interest. LB confirmed that such declaration was not required.

No other declarations of interest were made.

3. MINUTES

JF noted that on page 14, paragraph 6, the primary focus of the four summarised bullet point recommendations was about not creating perverse incentives when the normal minimum pension age (NMPA) increases to 57 from 2028. If a member's employment is terminated on redundancy or efficiency grounds a pension strain payment is crystallised if they are above NMPA, and this outcome should be avoided. JF further noted that the financial implications of this risk could be substantial, making it an issue of significant materiality and therefore worthy of formal record.

Subject to this clarification, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 March 2025 were agreed as a true and correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Budget update

LB provided a budget update, confirming that although a deficit had been forecast for 2024/25, the final reconciliation showed a positive outturn. This was primarily due to a delay in implementing the new administrator and employer website.

LB advised that the LGA finance team has requested a reduction in the total surplus and has asked that the Committee consider reducing subscriptions for the following year.

NY enquired whether this was a reasonable request from the LGA; LB responded that the LGPC secretariat operates as a ring-fenced budget within LGA and is funded by voluntary subscriptions and training/qualification income. Given the substantial changes occurring in the sector and the voluntary nature of subscriptions, there remains a small risk of the service no longer being required. If this were the case, redundancy costs would need to be covered from reserves. LB noted that several team members were approaching the normal minimum pension age of 55, soon to be 57, suggesting that whilst a small reduction might be possible, a substantial reserve should be maintained for these reasons.

5. LGPS ACCESS AND FAIRNESS CONSULTATION

LB introduced the Committee's LGPS Access and Fairness Consultation draft response asking that the LGPC approve the response during this meeting.

LB advised the consultation was issued by MHCLG on 15 May 2025, with a closing date of 7 August 2025. LB confirmed that the draft response had been circulated to the Committee by email and that the main proposals covered in the consultation were summarised in Paper B for those who did not want to read the full consultation document.

Survivor benefits

LB explained that the Government is proposing to equalise survivor benefits to address current inequities. LB noted that male survivors of female members currently receive lower survivor benefits than same-sex survivors of female members or female survivors of male members. The Government is seeking to remove this discrimination based on sexual orientation, which the draft consultation response supports.

LB advised that the proposal would require backdating some survivor pensions over a 20-year period, representing extensive work. The Government is also taking the opportunity to equalise all survivor benefits, addressing various anomalies that have developed due to regulatory complexities over the years, resulting in one uniform level of survivor benefit.

LB noted that the group most impacted would be male survivors of female members. Given that the LGPS is comprised of 74% female members, this change would have a larger impact than previous survivor benefit amendments.

LB reported that whilst the draft response is supportive of the proposals in the consultation response, it requests:

- Statutory guidance for implementation
- Government clarification on exactly what calculations will need to be revisited and its expectation on tracing potential beneficiaries.

LB emphasised that statutory guidance is needed to ensure all funds work to the same framework and understand the Government's expectations.

Cllr Martin Bailey [MB] raised a query regarding Lambeth's response to the consultation. MB noted that Lambeth has a high LGBT population and sought to understand whether there would be a disproportionate impact above the national average, particularly for those who may not have previously met the criteria for survivor benefits but would now qualify.

LB clarified that authorities with higher proportions of the LGBT community would likely have less work to undertake, as survivor benefits for this group had been equalised in 2018 following the Walker v Innospec case in the private sector. LB explained that this group already received the most generous survivor benefits, and the current proposals aimed to bring other survivor benefits up to that level. However, LB noted that across the LGPS generally, more backdating work was expected than in previous cases where survivor benefits had been changed.

George Graham [GG] highlighted concerns about the degree of work required to trace members where events had occurred up to 20 years previously. GG emphasised that clear guidance was desperately needed to avoid a non-uniform approach to implementation and enquired whether there had been any indications from MHCLG regarding their view on this matter.

BL advised that the consultation document had not included specific details about guidance because MHCLG recognised a need for further clarity on how all proposals could be implemented across the LGPS. The consultation therefore sought views on broader implementation questions, including whether staggering proposals would be beneficial and what priorities different groups might have for implementation timing.

BL explained that the internal position aimed to reflect a pragmatic view across the landscape, considering various priorities. If the proposals were to proceed, it would not make sense to do so without clarity on achievability within the LGPS landscape. This would likely require comprehensive guidance detailing actions for different situations, including historic cases where data retrieval might be challenging.

BL noted that this needed to be balanced against the practical amount of work the consultation would require from funds and appropriate timing. BL confirmed that if the collective consultation response indicated guidance was needed, there was a good chance such guidance would be provided. However, the specific content of any guidance was not currently under consideration, as the consultation focused on the proposals themselves and policy direction. Implementation and workability would be considered as part of the Government's response through further stakeholder engagement with groups including pension officer groups and committees such as LGPC.

NY reiterated the need for 'muscular' guidance and queried whether it would be beneficial for all 86 LGPS administering authorities to collectively request guidance in their consultation responses, suggesting this might carry more weight.

BL confirmed that responses were expected from all parties and that clear questions about staggering and implementation were included in the consultation. BL confirmed a collective view would be strongly heard. BL noted that post-consultation engagement through forums such as LGPC aimed to determine prioritisation and collective views on where complexity would lie, as administrators and employers would better identify these issues than MHCLG. BL requested that as much detail as possible be included in consultation responses.

Cohabiting partner pensions

LB explained that proposed change to cohabiting partner pensions, which involve formalising the removal of the nomination requirement. LB advised that previous regulations had required members to nominate a person to receive cohabiting partner pensions, but this had been found unlawful by various court cases and was subsequently removed. The associated backdating work should have already been completed in 2021 following the Elmes v Essex case.

LB noted that MHCLG was simply formalising this change by removing the requirement from regulations for consistency. The Committee supported this proposal as it was important that regulations reflected the correct legal position and no additional work was anticipated.

Death grants

LB outlined the proposal to remove the age 75 limit on death grants. The draft response endorses this amendment, noting that the existing restriction is likely to be unlawful due to age discrimination concerns.

The Government is also proposing to remove the two-year time limit for an authority to use its discretion when paying death grants. Currently, if death grants are not paid within two years (from date of death or when the scheme could reasonably have known about the death), they have to be paid to personal representatives under LGPS regulations, resulting in 45 per cent taxation. However, overriding legislation changed in 2015 to allow payments to beneficiaries at their marginal tax rate, but LGPS regulations have not been updated accordingly.

LB explained the proposal to remove the age 75 cap is intended to be retrospective to 1 April 2014. However, the draft response suggests this should be backdated to 2011 when overriding tax legislation first allowed death grants above age 75. This is being suggested to avoid the risk of a legal challenge due to unlawful age discrimination. LB acknowledged this would create more work but noted that previous experience showed incomplete equalisation often resulted in legal challenges.

JF noted his agreement with the suggestion.

In response to NY asking whether anyone disagreed with the suggestion, MB raised that he did not disagree but raised concerns about delivery complexity, noting that 2011 was considerably historical and would involve reopening estates.

LB acknowledged the complexity and noted this had been outlined in the consultation response. LB explained that whilst there would be additional complexity with the extra three years (beyond the proposed 2014 date), these cases would be easier to identify than survivor benefits as the affected individuals would be recorded on pension systems. Pensions software would be able to run reports to identify those who died over age 75. LB maintained that whilst more complex than the Government's proposal, partial backdating could leave the scheme vulnerable to further legal challenge.

NY asked whether members were content with this approach; agreement was indicated and NY requested LB proceed to the next consultation item.

Gender pensions pay gap

Measures

LB advised that the gender pensions gap formed a considerable part of the consultation. Proposals include:

- Making unpaid leave under 30 days automatically pensionable (consultation response suggested reducing to 14 days)
- Aligning buyback costs with normal contribution rates for leave over 30 days
- Extending the buyback election period from 30 days to one year (with the draft response suggesting "earlier of one year or date person leaves employer")
- Making full 12 months of child-related leave automatically pensionable.

LB explained that upon return from authorised unpaid leave of less than 30 days, both employee and employer pension contributions would be automatically deducted from salary, removing the requirement for individuals to elect to buy back these periods. This will target short breaks commonly taken by school staff (1-3 days) and is designed to address the gender pensions gap, as such staff often did not buy back service due to the cumbersome process requiring them to approach employers for lost pay calculations, use the website calculator, and formally request buyback.

Making short breaks automatically pensionable would prevent pension build-up losses, particularly affecting female members with caring responsibilities.

LB reported that the draft response questions whether the period should be 14 days rather than 30 days. With 30-day periods, individuals taking a full month's leave might have insufficient pay in that month for pension contribution deductions, potentially facing double contributions upon return the following month. This could increase opt-out rates due to affordability concerns.

The fourth main recommendation involved making child-related leave automatically pensionable for the full 12 months, with costs covered where no pay was received, eliminating member contribution requirements; LB confirmed the draft response supports this proposal.

NY asked Committee members if they were broadly sympathetic to these suggestions, inviting any specific points or negative concerns, or whether the Committee was broadly content.

Cllr Doug McMurdo [DcM] enquired whether cost analysis had been undertaken for all these proposals, particularly given the long retrospective periods involved.

BL confirmed that internal costings had been completed but had not been published alongside the consultation. The intention was to consult on policy rationale first, with costings and impact proposals to be included in the subsequent government response.

Reporting

LB outlined the draft response's position on proposals for gender pensions gap reporting. The key recommendations the response suggests are:

- The reporting threshold should be based on pension scheme membership, set at 250 members, rather than the proposed 100 employees
- Reporting should be included in triennial valuation reports
- Mandatory reporting is supported but will a staggered implementation
- Reporting on the difference in pension savings built up over a one year period is supported; however, reporting on the difference over a typical working life is considered impractical.

No objections were raised to this section and NY announced the Committee's agreement.

Opt-out data collection

LB reported the draft response is supportive of opt out data collection whilst noting various challenges in obtaining meaningful data. Key positions:

- Support for reporting opt-out data via annual reports or SF3 data
- Regulatory changes needed to require employer data submission
- Complex definitional issues around genuine opt-outs
- Timeline concerns for implementation.

The response states that on balance using annual reports is an appropriate method of reporting data; however, it would be useful to have a national picture using SF3 data (collected by MHCLG). This is likely to provide a quicker route to capturing the national picture than the SAB's current process of analysing individual fund annual reports for the scheme annual report.

The draft response questions whether the consultation timeline allows sufficient implementation time, noting that payroll software providers required time to add markers to payroll records for reporting purposes.

GG supported LB's comments on complexity, describing this as practically much more difficult than other consultation proposals. Whilst applauding the Government's desire for understanding opt out rates, GG considered this an enormous piece of work requiring significantly more time and thought to produce meaningful results.

NY queried if MHCLG had registered GG’s and LB’s concerns, BL confirmed he had heard the comments.

LB provided additional clarification, distinguishing between:

- Collection of opt-out rates (employers reporting to administering authorities)
- Collection of characteristics data about those opting out (proposed second part of opt-out form capturing demographic information including sex, earnings, religion, etc.).

The draft response supports the characteristics data being collected anonymously and sent directly to MHCLG, rather than to LGPS administering authorities who would have no lawful basis for collecting and processing such data.

Forfeiture

LB outlined proposals to remove the requirement for someone to have left employment because of an offence for an employer to be able apply for pension forfeiture. The draft response supports this recommendation.

Key positions:

- Support for removing employment termination requirement
- Support for removing three-month application limit
- Support for waiting until sentencing before application
- Need for clear guidance and consistent application
- Concerns about interim period protections.

LB emphasised the need for clear guidance to ensure consistent application across the scheme. LB noted that the Government proposed removing Regulation 92, which currently allows interim payments to members where employers had applied for forfeiture certificates that had not yet been issued, or where certificates had been issued but employer directions to forfeit had not yet been made.

The draft response identifies a potential gap where members might seek to take pensions or transfer out during the interim period between employer application and decision. The draft response suggested that regulatory provisions or statutory guidance should clarify the approach administering authorities should take in such circumstances.

DcM asked whether similar provisions existed in police pensions. LB confirmed that forfeiture provisions did exist and were used in police pensions.

NY confirmed the Committee's satisfaction with the section.

McCloud remedy

LB reported that this section contains mostly technical recommendations addressing matters missed in the first regulation changes for McCloud.

Key position:

- pension debit recalculations should be limited to cases where the pension is not yet in payment.

The consultation proposes recalculating pension debits (arising from pension sharing orders in divorce proceedings) and backdating increases to debits retrospectively.

LB highlighted the complexity this would create including significant complications around reducing pensions in payment and tax implications. The Committee agreed that pension debit recalculation should be limited to cases where no pension was in payment.

Lifetime allowance and other technical changes

LB reported on lifetime allowance changes, explaining that these involved updating LGPS regulations following the removal of the lifetime allowance and establishing procedures where someone exceeded the new lump sum allowances.

The draft response supports the proposed procedures but recommends clear transitional rules to avoid confusion and a staggered six-month implementation period.

Additional changes

- Removing five-year limits on refunds (requested by previous technical group)
- Allowing equal treatment of AVCs for pre- and post-2014 members.

The Committee expressed support for all the additional amendments.

NY asked whether everyone was content to endorse the consultation response on behalf of the Committee. The Committee endorsed the response. NY thanked those involved for the comprehensive piece of work.

6. REGULATIONS UPDATE ENGLAND AND WALES

LB presented the key points from Paper B.

Fit for future consultation response

LB reported that on 29 May 2025, the Government published its response to the Fit for the Future consultation alongside the Pensions Investment Review Final report. Many of the changes would be legislated for in the Pension Schemes Bill currently progressing through Parliament.

Key developments:

- LGPS proposals would mostly be taken forward, including on investment pooling
- No plans to reduce pools below six (currently eight pools exist)
- Government is taking strong powers including to direct authorities to participate in specific pools as last resort
- Good governance reforms being implemented as originally proposed.

LB highlighted that the Government was granting itself power to enforce compulsory pension fund mergers. Under good governance proposals, funds would undertake internal governance reviews every three years, with the Government able to request independent reviews at any point. Whilst local implementation of resulting recommendations is expected, serious cases could result in referral to the Pensions Regulator or, in the most serious cases, government intervention through compulsory merger.

Pension schemes bill progress

LB reported that the Pension Schemes Bill was introduced to Parliament on 5 June 2025, had its second reading on 7 July 2025, and was now with a public bill committee, expected to report back on 23 October 2025.

Chapter 1 of Part 1 set out proposed LGPS changes regarding asset pool companies, fund management, independent governance reviews and mergers. Another clause addressed a 2023 court ruling that the Pensions Ombudsman was not a competent court for enforcing monetary obligations, which the government planned to correct to ease LGPS administration.

JF provided detailed commentary on the Bill, noting that it is expected to reach the House of Lords in November 2025. He also raised concerns about the potential for unintended consequences. He pointed out a contradiction in recent ministerial messaging, noting that whilst ministers had commended international pension schemes, such as the OMERS (Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System), this praise came immediately following a reported near £1 billion loss on the scheme’s investment in Thames Water.

JF highlighted the structural challenge faced by large pension schemes; the difficulty of allocating relatively small-scale investments – typically between £10 and £50 million - to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This limitation may hinder growth investment in UK businesses, despite such funding often being crucial for enabling SMEs to scale into 'unicorns' – companies valued at over £1 billion.

JF expressed a willingness to engage constructively with the legislative process and indicated that he may propose targeted amendments to the Bill, representing the interests of the pension sector and seeking to mitigate the risks he had identified.

NY acknowledged JF's comments and suggested picking up this discussion in September.

7. SAB UPDATE [E&W]

CA presented that paper C reported the Scheme Advisory Board's focus on fit for the future outcomes, their implementation through the Pensions Bill and correlations with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and devolution.

Fit for future implementation

CA outlined three main consultation directions:

Pooling arrangements

The reduction from eight to six pools has left 21 funds requiring new pool arrangements by April 2026 (with a decision in principle required by September 2025). This affects not only orphaned funds but all existing pools, as new fund admissions will impact future pool structures. Increased powers for pools under the Bill around investments would introduce significant change for pension committees.

The Scheme Advisory Board took legal advice on fiduciary duty implications, with ongoing conversations about required guidance. Clarity on pool arrangements, their look and shape, was expected by end of August/beginning of September 2025.

Local investment focus

The Pensions Bill grants powers to LGPS funds to work with strategic authorities on identifying local growth, with reciprocal powers in the devolution bill. However, practical mechanisms and implementation required further discussion.

Governance requirements

Significant new requirements include independent governance reviews every three years and appointing an LGPS senior officers at each pension fund. Smaller funds will face challenges regarding budgetary resources and available knowledgeable personnel.

The Scheme Advisory Board is working with MHCLG on developing guidance between now and the financial year end.

Local government reorganisation (LGR) impact

CA noted the significance of LGR for councils subject to it, noting that it applies to several of the 21 funds looking for a new investment pool. Where county council administering authorities would cease to exist, new host organisations will be required. Single unitary outcomes would involve power transfers, whilst multiple unitary structures raised questions about host authority selection or shared service arrangements.

The Board supports opportunities for establishing single purpose authorities, with the devolution bill supporting separation of LGPS operating accounts from host authorities.

Cllr Mark Durham [MD] noted that Essex County Council is impacted by all the changes mentioned, including transitioning to a strategic authority from May 2026. He asked when the realignment of the administering authority would take place, highlighting uncertainty around whether there will be three, four, or five shadow unitary authorities following the 2027 elections, and when a decision on the administering authority would be required.

CA acknowledged that timelines remained unclear, and she would need to provide accurate information subsequently. CA noted her understanding was that there were different timelines for different affected funds, noting that Essex would be among the relatively few impacted authorities.

NY commented on the challenging timelines for these reforms, asking BL to note that flexibility and clarity on these issues would be helpful, given that some authorities faced substantial work and multiple reforms over the following nine months. He noted that recent election results in some authorities had created additional complications.

BL acknowledged the comment.

NY made several points:

- regarding discretionary powers, NY emphasised the need for clarity from MHCLG about the discretionary nature of powers Government is granting itself

- NY stressed the importance of defending rights as sovereign bodies for investment strategy and ensuring pools retained decision-making responsibility for investments

- NY highlighted concerns about mechanisms for dealing with strategic authorities or corporate joint committees (CJCs), emphasising that metro mayors or Welsh CJCs should not have dominance over pension fund decisions; any mechanisms should create joint decision-making processes.

NY raised a technical question about Clause 5 in the Bill concerning variations to public sector procurement policy, noting this had arisen in Wales Pension Partnership discussions due to additional Welsh Government procurement policies. NY asked BL whether there was clarity about Clause 5's nature or whether input could still be provided to the Bill.

BL apologised, explaining he did not work closely with the investment side and could not provide detailed information about Clause 5. BL offered to take the question away and provide a written response if NY could send the query via email to them.

CA stated that the Scheme Advisory Board had not yet seen clarity regarding what the regulations would look like following the taking of those powers and assured that information would be shared as soon as it became available.

LGPS valuations

CA reported this was a valuation year for LGPS, with the Scheme Advisory Board working with the four fund actuaries and GAD on guidance. Despite discussions about LGPS surplus positions, the Board urged caution, noting that some funds and employers would be in different positions. Outcomes remain unknown, with usual additional work for GAD including section 13 reports and cost control mechanisms following valuations.

Scheme advisory board work programme

CA outlined ongoing work including website development for improved communication and the first annual assembly for pension committees and pension board chairs in October 2025.

CA noted collaboration with the LGA Public Affairs team on seeking clarifications regarding wide powers in the Bill, particularly concerning government powers to direct specific investments and associated guardrails for long-term sustainability.

Cllr Jayne Dunn [JD] enquired whether there was anything available regarding strengthening and helping pension committees with responsible investment, noting that matters frequently get bounced back and forward and querying whether there was anything to assist local authorities.

CA responded that the Scheme Advisory Board, through its investment committee, is examining guidance around investment and fiduciary duty matters and is also seeking guidance regarding conflicts of interest. CA stated they are working with pools concerning responsible investment policies and high-level strategies and confirmed that whilst nothing was available yet, this was included in the work plan to provide such guidance for funds.

JD raised a follow-up question regarding local investment, referencing recent national news coverage about the possibility of forced pooling. JD asked how fairness could be ensured when some authorities lack devolution powers whilst others possess them, noting only some authorities have a mayor, and how the playing field could be levelled to ensure equal treatment for all.

CA confirmed it formed part of the Investment Committee's work regarding guidance. CA explained that such questions were informing their consultations on conflicts of interest guidance and referenced that the Bill defines local investment as "in relation to a scheme manager, means investments in or for the benefit of persons living or working in either the scheme manager's area or the areas of the other scheme managers participating in the same asset pool company as a scheme manager." CA confirmed the Scheme Advisory Board is working through the practical implications of this definition as part of the investment strategies at a high level guidance.

DcM asked what takes precedence - fiduciary duty or what CA had just read from the Bill.

CA responded that arguably legislation will always take priority, but this must be done in line with legal advice. CA stated they are continuing to explore this using Nigel Giffin KC’s legal advice and that it forms part of the ongoing work that the Scheme Advisory Board is undertaking to understand fiduciary duty in line with the powers of the Bill.

CA explained that in seeking clarity regarding the Bill as it is taken through the House, questions will be asked regarding the Bill's wide powers and seeing what the regulations say will help determine what guidance is provided and assist the Scheme Advisory board, with the help of KC's legal advice, to provide guidance.

DcM stated there is other legislation that exists that does not seem to align with LGPS regulations. DcM cited company law as an example and stated that there is a strong need to get it right, as getting it wrong could result in spending time in the law courts.

NY agreed it was a fair point.

8. REGULATION UPDATE SCOTLAND

Eva Sobek [ES] presented the key points from Paper D.

ES reported that they had received consent from their Minister to proceed with a consultation which aligns with MHCLG's Access and Fairness consultation, though it would not be quite as vast as they had already implemented some changes regarding survivor benefits and forfeiture.

ES stated they would also be consulting, with approval from the Scottish Scheme Advisory Board, regarding some primary legislation changes: adding neo-natal care leave to the definition of parental and consulting on normal minimum pension age and the protected pension ages therein.

ES explained that whilst they thought they were ready to proceed, they now needed to pause and consider the LGPC consultation response, as they believed there was relevant information requiring them to update their consultation accordingly.

ES reported they were also reviewing the Section 13 valuation from GAD, with Scottish funds all in a very positive position, and noted there would be particular focus in the report on surpluses and consistency across the funds

9. REGULATIONS UPDATE NORTHERN IRELAND

NY noted that as DM had given his apologies any questions regarding Paper E are to be emailed directly to LB, who would pass them onto DM as necessary.

10. NATIONAL POG (NPOG) UPDATE

Martin Doyle [MD] presented the key points from Paper F.

MD stated that the main item discussed at NPOG was the LGPS Access and Fairness Consultation, with MHCLG joining to present. MD reported all of NPOG's funds have been invited to send copies of their responses so a joint response could be collated and expressed confidence that the LGPC response would be very useful and supportive.

MD highlighted several key points from the view of administrators, including the workload from back-dating and the importance of getting statutory guidance done in a pragmatic way, noting that many funds were still onboarding the McCloud remedy into the next year, as well as dashboards, which would generate significant administrative time.

MD emphasised the need for pragmatism from government in their statutory guidance and mentioned the responsibility on employers to provide opt out information for annual reports, expressing hope that the legislation would set out what information employers must provide.

MD concluded that the Government was introducing many of the changes that the technical group and NPOG had been requesting and NPOG have requested funds to produce any other recommendations for change to feed back to MHCLG.

11. TRAINING, CONFERENCE AND QUALIFICATION UPDATE

Lisa Clarkson [LC] presented the key points from Paper G.

Qualifications update

LC provided an update on the LGPC secretariat's work in the qualification space.

Award in pensions essentials

LC reported the team support the award in pensions essentials (APE), offering it across the LGPS, and it is run by Barnett Waddingham.

LC stated this had been very successful with over 89 students either enrolled or having completed the course over five separate cohorts at various stages of their training, with quite a few students having finished the qualification completely.

LC explained they were collecting feedback from these students to share with Barnett Waddingham to help make changes to make the qualification more suitable for the students' needs in the future.

LGPS certificate in LGPS administration

LC outlined the LGPS specific qualification which is run entirely in-house by the LGPC secretariat team.

LC reported the pilot started in April 2025 with 36 students having their first exams in June 2025. The first run of the exams had gone well.

LC reported the second cohort is due to start studying in September 2025 with increased capacity for 54 students representing 19 different administering authorities, all different from those in the pilot.

LC stated the team has already started taking interest for cohort 3 which kicks off in April 2026 with another 54 students. This means there will be around 150 students on the qualification at one time across three cohorts. LC noted 12 funds had already registered for the third cohort and it was filling fast with minimal advertising. There is a limit of four students per administering authority to ensure all administering authorities can participate if they wish.

Training programme updates and webinar

A webinar was held in June to publicise the team's work, attracting 170 attendees. The session covered qualifications and day-to-day training for administrators, employers, pension committee and board members.

There was a strong demand from attendees for further development of the training offer, with requests for more qualifications and expanded training. It was explained the main limitation was resource as the training team is a very small team of three, soon to be four.

LC stated the day-to-day training for administrators and employers had sold well with most dates selling out completely, leading to an extra 12 dates being put on before the financial year-end to clear waiting lists.

Fundamentals training for committee and board members

Fundamentals training is a three-day course for pension committee and board members. It runs in October, November, December annually, covering various topics with expert speakers.

LC stated most speakers were now confirmed and it would be available to book by the end of the month, with LGPC councillors receiving free places.

Staffing update

LC reported that Karl White, a long-standing member of staff, had retired at the end of May. He will be replaced by Gareth Wookey who joins the team on 18 August 2025.

MB asked whether the fundamentals training was only for councillor members of the committee or whether member representatives could attend.

LC confirmed that member representatives could attend but would have to pay, as it was only complimentary for LGPC councillors, and stated it would be publicised in the bulletin when available to book.

NY congratulated LC on the uptake numbers and asked whether they would be capping the internal qualification at 54 students per cohort for the foreseeable future. LC confirmed this to be the case.

NY asked whether the APE run by Barnett Waddingham with 89 people had exceeded expectations or was roughly where they thought it would be.

LC responded that it had exceeded expectations because it was not LGPS specific but a generic pensions qualification covering all UK pension legislation. LC explained they were unsure how popular it would be and stated they would wait to see whether demand continued after the first year. LC noted that Barnett Waddingham could take on new cohorts whenever they had sufficient numbers, with new cohorts beginning every time they had 18 people ready to start on a rolling basis.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LB mentioned that the Government had launched a pensions commission that day, which was believed to be phase two of the pensions review.

LB stated this was restarting the Turner Commission and explained that the Turner review had introduced automatic enrolment. The restarted commission will look at barriers to pension saving and review automatic enrolment. LB noted the final report was not expected until 2027 with recommendations following thereafter.

MB confirmed the Turner Commission was from 2006.

NY asked BL whether this was the second part of the review looking at adequacy questions, with the first part looking at investment. BL apologised and stated he could not comment as he had not been involved in the pension review, noting there would be more information online but he could not add anything further.

13. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

NY announced the next meeting would be on 24 November 2025.

NY explained that meetings after that had yet to be arranged as they fell within the purview of the SAB and stated he would discuss the future dates with CA to ensure they worked for the Chair of the committee as well as for the SAB.

NY thanked everyone for their contributions during the year.

Paper B: LGPS Access and Protections consultation

Decisions

The Committee is asked to discuss the proposals included in MHCLG's consultation on changes to the LGPS and make recommendations about how to respond.

Key points

On 13 October 2025, MHCLG launched a consultation on changes to the LGPS in England and Wales. The proposals relate to access to the Scheme and its benefits and cover four main areas:

- normal minimum pension age (NMPA)
- pension access for mayors and councillors
- academies in the LGPS
- new Fair Deal.

The Government published draft regulations for comment covering new Fair Deal and pension access for mayors and councillors alongside the consultation.

Draft regulations covering NMPA and academies will be published for consultation later in 2025.

The LGPC secretariat will prepare a response on behalf of the Committee and the LGA.

The consultation closes on 22 December 2025.

Summary of the key proposals

Normal minimum pension age

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). The PPA rules do not give members an overriding right to take benefits from their PPA, they simply determine whether benefits paid under the pension scheme rules before the NMPA are authorised. Members can only take benefits from their PPA if the pension scheme rules allow it.

The Government is proposing changes that will allow certain members to continue to access their LGPS benefits before age 57 after the NMPA rises in April 2028. Our understanding of the four categories of members is:

- **Category 1**: LGPS members immediately before 4 November 2021. These members have a protected pension age (PPA) and will continue to be able to take LGPS benefits from age 55.
- **Category 2**: members who joined the LGPS after 3 November 2021 and transferred in benefits with a PPA from a different scheme. These members do not have a PPA in respect of their LGPS pension and will not be able to access their transferred in pension from age 55. From April 2028, the earliest a Category 2 member will be able to access their LGPS pension, other than on ill health grounds, will be age 57. The transferred in benefits retain a PPA. If the member transfers out of the LGPS, the transfer value of their pension with a PPA must be identified separately.
- **Category 3**: members who join the LGPS after 3 November 2021 do not have a PPA in the LGPS. Their NMPA will increase to 57 in April 2028.
- **Category 4**: members with a PPA below age 55. No change – members who are already able to take benefits between age 50 and 55 will continue to be able to do so.

Question 1: Does the Committee agree that members who joined the LGPS before 4 November 2021 should be able to continue to take their benefits from age 55?

Note: see pages 9 to 14 of the minutes from the 24 March 2025 LGPC meeting for details of a previous discussion on this issue. The Committee's view at that time was that the LGPS should not provide for PPAs in the LGPS.

Access for councillors and mayors

The Government is of the view that councillors and mayors offer a vital public service and should receive appropriate remuneration and not suffer financial disadvantage for their service. It therefore intends to re-instate access to the LGPS for councillors and to offer access to mayors – as set out below:

- mayors and deputy mayors of combined authorities and combined county authorities, and mayors of single authorities (in their capacity as councillors) will have access to the LGPS
- councillors of county councils, district councils, London Boroughs, the Common Council of the City of London and the Council of the Isles of Scilly will have access to the LGPS
- the Mayor of London, deputy mayors and London Assembly Members will have access to the LGPS
- mayors and councillors will be able to opt in to the 2014 Scheme, membership will not be automatic
- not all Scheme rules will apply to elected members in the same way that they apply to employees. There will be changes to the rules covering aggregation, redundancy, flexible retirement, shared cost additional contributions and awarding additional pension
- these proposals do not affect councillors in Wales. They will continue to have access to the Scheme under the LGPS Regulations 1997.

It is our understanding that a unitary council, depending on its structure, is either a county or district council. This means councillors of unitary councils will have access to the LGPS.

Cost

The Government Actuary's Department has estimated the potential increase in employer contributions at between £40-45 million per year, across England. This estimate relies on assumptions about the structure of local government, how many councillors and mayors will choose to join the scheme, the demographics of those in office, and the level of allowances paid locally. As changes to local government are made through reorganisation, the number of councillors will decrease.

The Government will not provide funding for employer contributions for the proposal. There is no funding for pension access for councillors in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales. The Government states the proposal should be seen in the context of the 2025 valuation, where actuarial assessments suggest that there may be reductions in employer contribution rates.

Question 2: Does the Committee agree with the proposal to allow councillors and mayors to join the LGPS?

Question 3: Does the Committee agree that councillors and mayors should have to opt in the LGPS, rather than being enrolled automatically at the start of their service?

Question 4: Does the Committee have any specific comments it would like to raise on the implementation of the policy?

Academies

Over half of schools in England are now academies, and the vast majority of those academies are in Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), with individual academy schools spread across the country. Because the LGPS regulations state that the appropriate administering authority for an academy is the administering authority in the geographical area where the academy is located, MATs often have academies spread across multiple administering authorities. Being spread like this can be inefficient and cause unnecessary administrative costs for employers.

Employers can apply for a direction from the Secretary of State to substitute a different administering authority as the appropriate authority. Such directions, when granted, can also allow employers to consolidate their LGPS members into a single administering authority, and can include requirements on adjustments between funds, the transfer of assets and liabilities, and any other consequential matters. Most applications for directions to date have been from academies, and so whilst the proposals focus on academies, any employer can make an application.

The Government is proposing changes to the rules covering applications by academies for a direction to substitute a different administering authority:

- removing the requirement for Secretary of State (SoS) consent where criteria set out in regulations are met
- those criteria will include:
    - a value for money assessment in favour of the application
    - a pre-existing relationship between the multi academy trust and the administering authority it wishes to consolidate into
    - all administering authorities and employers involved agree to the change
    - the receiving authority is able to administer the transfer effectively

- applications to the Secretary of State will still be required if the criteria are not met.

The Government also proposes introducing a process that allows dissatisfied parties to request a review of a local decision made without SoS consent. For instance, if a direction is issued under this new arrangement—without SoS approval—but it later emerges that not all parties agreed, an application to the SoS would still be required. The Government anticipates such cases will be very rare – it plans to issue guidance on when and how this new power should be exercised.

Question 5: Does the Committee agree with the removal of the requirement to seek Secretary of State consent for standard direction order applications?

Question 6: Does the Committee have any views on how contribution rate shopping can be discouraged?

New Fair Deal

Following consultations in 2016 and 2019, the Government is committed to extending protections set out in 2013 Fair Deal guidance to LGPS members and individuals eligible for LGPS membership who are transferred to a new employer when a local government contract is outsourced. The proposals are summarised below and would apply to all LGPS employers except admission bodies and higher education corporations:

- the removal of the option to offer transferred employees membership of a broadly comparable scheme, but allowing existing schemes to continue in exceptional circumstances
- on re-tender, staff who were outsourced under existing rules and are in a broadly comparable scheme will rejoin the LGPS. Transfers of benefits from the broadly comparable scheme to the LGPS for this group will operate under preferential terms
- the option to give access to the LGPS to staff hired after the initial outsourcing
- the removal of the admission body option when a contract is outsourced, replacing it with the deemed employer route
- the organisation that has outsourced the service would be the 'deemed employer' and have continued pension responsibilities relating to the transferred staff
- the service provider or 'relevant contractor' would have some responsibilities as an LGPS Scheme employer, such as dealing with applications to join or

leave the Scheme, automatic enrolment duties, ill health retirement decisions and payment of any strain cost related to early retirements or award of additional pension

- employer contribution rates would be based on the primary contribution rate of the deemed employer. This would either be fixed for the term of the contract or subject to change in line when the rate changes following the triennial valuation
- protection for members with an ongoing shared cost additional pension contribution or shared cost additional voluntary contribution contract when they are compulsorily transferred to a new employer
- a six-month transitional period during which contracts could be agreed under the existing rules rather than the new ones.

Question 7: Does the Committee agree with the proposals on deemed employer status and the removal of admission body option for service providers who deliver local government contracts?

Question 8: Does the Committee agree with the proposal that all staff (including those joining a contract after first outsourcing) would be eligible for protected transferee status, providing all relevant parties agree?

Contact officer

Name: Lorraine Bennett
Job title: Principal Pensions Adviser
Phone no: 07766 252847
E-mail: lorraine.bennett@local.gov.uk

Paper C: Regulations update England and Wales

Decisions

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

LGPS Statistics for 2024/25 published

On 22 October 2025, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published the LGPS statistics for England and Wales 2024 to 2025.

Highlights in the report include:

- total expenditure of £19.1 billion, an increase of 11.7 per cent on 2023/24
- total income of £21.7 billion, an increase of 5.2 per cent on 2023/24
- employer contributions of £10.1 billion, a decrease of 3.9 per cent on 2023/24
- employee contributions of £3.2 billion, an increase of 5.8 per cent on 2023/24
- the market value of LGPS funds on 31 March 2025 was £402.3 billion, a 2.7 per cent increase compared to 31 March 2024
- 110,678 retirements in 2024/25, an increase of 11.2 per cent on the number of retirements in 2023/24.

The reduction in employer contributions is a result of some employers making advance payments during the first year of the three-year contributions period which started in April 2023.

Consultation on TPR's enforcement strategy

We submitted a response on behalf of the Committee and the LGA to the Pensions Regulator's (TPR) consultation on its new enforcement strategy. TPR is looking to modernise how it protects savers and regulates workplace pensions. It wants to act earlier, intervene smarter, and deliver better outcomes for savers.

The response is broadly supportive of the strategy, but raises concerns about transparency, particularly the lack of feedback on reported breaches and whistleblowing cases. It calls for greater clarity on how enforcement decisions will be measured and prioritised and recommends that administration quality and data integrity be explicitly included in risk assessments. The response also highlights risks around reliance on self-reported data and TPR's understanding of the LGPS.

September 2025 CPI rate announced

On 22 October 2025, the Office for National Statistics announced the annual rate of increase in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for September as 3.8 per cent. The Government usually uses this figure to set increases for LGPS pensions in payment and for revaluing active and deferred pension accounts. The increases are applied from the following April.

Pensions dashboards

Key milestone

October marked a key milestone for the pensions dashboard project with 31 October 2025 being the scheduled 'connect by' date for public service pension schemes. There are now less than 12 months until the legal deadline for pension providers and schemes to connect to the pensions dashboards ecosystem.

The number of workplace and personal pension records connected is now more than 60 million, alongside tens of millions more State Pension records. This represents three-quarters of the records in scope.

We took the opportunity to remind LGPS administering authorities of TPR's pensions dashboards guidance and the resources available from the LGA:

- Pensions dashboards connection guide
- Pensions dashboards AVCs guide.

The LGA guides are available on Administrator guides and documents (England and Wales)

Template Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) - AVCs

We recently published a template MoU along with explanatory notes for LGPS administering authorities to use with their AVC providers. The MoU aims to clearly define the respective responsibilities and obligations related to meeting pensions dashboards requirements for AVC data.

LGPS administering authorities are ultimately accountable for ensuring that AVC data is included on pensions dashboards and that it complies with legal requirements. However, many legacy AVC arrangements lack formal contractual agreements, making it difficult to establish clear responsibilities. The MoU is intended to bridge this gap by outlining roles and duties, and to support the development of formal contractual arrangements that may occur in the future. The MoU covers key areas including:

- provision and format of AVC data
- data matching and reporting obligations
- data protection requirements
- service level expectations and escalation procedures

Inheritance tax consultation response

On 21 July 2025, HM Treasury (HMT) published its response to the consultation on inheritance tax (IHT) changes.

At the Autumn Budget 2024, the Government announced that for deaths after 5 April 2027:

- most unused pension funds and death benefits will be included in the value of a person's estate for IHT purposes
- pension scheme administrators (PSA) will be responsible for reporting and paying any IHT due on pensions to HMRC.

Following significant concerns raised by this Committee and the pensions industry, HMT has amended its proposals. The key changes are:

- all death-in-service benefits from registered pension schemes will be excluded from the value of an individual's estate for IHT purposes, regardless of whether the scheme is discretionary or non-discretionary – currently non-discretionary death-in-service benefits are included in the value of an individual's estate for IHT purposes
- personal representatives (PRs), and not PSAs, will be responsible for reporting and paying any IHT due on pension benefits
- PSAs will have new duties to support PRs in paying IHT on pension benefits
- to support PRs and beneficiaries who may struggle to pay IHT on pensions, the Government will offer multiple payment options. These include allowing pension beneficiaries to instruct PSAs to pay IHT in respect of pensions on their behalf – though the pension beneficiaries remain liable for the IHT.

The Government intends to publish tools and guidance to support PRs, PSAs and beneficiaries ahead of implementation in April 2027. We are attending meetings HMRC is holding with the pensions industry on implementing the policy.

Contact officer

Name: Lorraine Bennett
Job title: Principal Pensions Adviser
Phone no: 0766 252847
E-mail: lorraine.bennett@local.gov.uk

Paper D: SAB update for England and Wales

Key points to note

The Board remains actively engaged with MHCLG on the Government's priorities around the investment framework, benefits, fairness, and adequacy. Alongside this, the Board is enhancing its own sector support offer by strengthening digital communications and engagement strategies and introducing a peer support offer.

Decisions

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

Pensions Review

Much of the SAB's attention has been drawn to supporting stakeholders understand and debate the changes to LGPS following the Fit for the future consultation response and the Pension Schemes Bill, in order to plan for implementation and operational change.

The Board's committees and associated working groups have been asked to engage with MHCLG on strengthened governance requirements, particularly the LGPS senior officer, the independent person on the committee and the requirement for an independent governance review every three years.

Secondary regulations and guidance

The required changes to legislation and guidance will be changes to the LGPS 2013 Regulations and the 2016 LGPS Investment Regulations, it is expected that these will be informally consulted on towards the end of 2025.

The amended regulations will be supported by statutory guidance, with draft guidance expected to be available in early 2026. SAB is facilitating MHCLG led roundtables with pools and funds on draft guidance during November 2025.

Pensions Bill

The Pension Schemes Bill, introduced in June 2025, gives the Secretary of State broad powers to direct LGPS funds and asset pools. Following evidence from Councillor Roger Phillips at committee stage on 2 September 2025, the Board welcomed amendments published on 18 September 2025 that improved the bill.

Key Provisions (Clauses 1–6):

- **Clause 1 – Asset Pools:** Authority to direct funds to specific pools, advise pools, and influence investment decisions.
- **Clause 2 – Asset Management:** Mandatory pooling of all assets; pools implement strategy set by scheme managers; defines local investment.
- **Clause 3 – Scheme Manager Powers:** Aligns powers for non-local authority administering authorities.
- **Clause 4 – Procurement:** Exempts investment management activities of pool companies from standard procurement rules.
- **Clause 5 – Governance:** Introduces statutory independent governance reviews every three years.
- **Clause 6 – Mergers:** Enables fund mergers.

Responsible Investment

Fiduciary duty remains the cornerstone of LGPS investment decisions, but the boundaries between ethics, law, and politics are increasingly blurred. Recent controversies have reignited debate around fiduciary duty and ethical investment in the LGPS.

Key areas of activity for SAB on matters relating to fiduciary duty with regards to responsible investment have been:

- **24 October 2024** - Nigel Giffin KC (Counsel) opinion commissioned by SAB on the Local Government Pension Scheme and implications of the current events in Gaza.
- **15 January 2025** - Nigel Giffin KC (Counsel) updated opinion on the fiduciary duty in the context of the LGPS entitled "Local Government Pension Scheme: Investments and Non-Financial Considerations"

- **27 August 2025** - Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) letter and position paper to LGPS administering authorities, calling for divestment from companies allegedly complicit in violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
- **29 August 2025** - SAB initial statement to funds on PSC position paper.
- **18 September 2025** - SAB further update on PSC position paper.
- **13 October 2025** - SAB letter to Local Government Minister Alison McGovern MP, requesting that if in the view of the UK government a specific legal liability arises that they inform administering authorities, stating that these matters of international law are more appropriately addressed by central government not the SAB.

This issue underscores the importance of fiduciary duty and the need for consistent, legally sound approaches across administering authorities.

It is not the role of the SAB to make investment decisions, either on investment or disinvestment, however the SAB can and does facilitate discussion and obtain legal views where necessary and will continue to consider responsible investment issues with the SAB subgroup, Responsible Investment Advisory Group (RIAG).

LGPS Valuation as at 31 March 2025

All 86 LGPS administering authorities in England and Wales are completing their triennial valuations as at 31 March 2025. These will produce updated Funding Strategy Statements and employer contribution schedules for 2026–2029.

Most funds are expected to show improved funding positions compared to 2022, driven (mostly) by higher gilt yields reducing liabilities rather than asset growth. While this is broadly positive, volatility means results should be interpreted cautiously. Funding levels vary significantly between authorities and employers, creating challenges for fair and sustainable contribution setting.

Overall LGPS contribution rates are likely to fall, particularly for large scheduled employers, contrasting with rising rates in other public sector schemes. However, some funds may set very low or zero rates or put in a surplus 'buffer'. MHCLG may also consult on changes to Regulation 64A as indicated in their letter to funds in March 2025

Indicative rates will be shared shortly, with final rates due by March 2026, followed by GAD's Section 13 review.

Committees work

Cost management, benefit design and administration (CMBDA)

The Committee is progressing several initiatives aligned with MHCLG priorities on member benefit reforms and administration. Key areas include, opt out data, NMPA, Gender Pensions Policy, review of local fund valuations and scheme cost assessment (cost control) and heard from LGPC on administrative challenges relating to McCloud and pension dashboard connection.

Current Actions:

- Development of proposals to prevent employer's offering incentives for LGPS members to opt-out.
- Drafting a mandatory administration strategy (scope and timeline under discussion).
- Continued work on GPG initiatives, opt-out data collection, research and responses to MHCLG consultations on member benefits.
- Preparations for Normal Minimum Pension Age changes in 2028 and review of local fund valuations and exit credit policies.
- Progressing Cost Control Mechanism and Scheme Cost Assessment with GAD.

Compliance and reporting committee

The Committee is focused on governance and reporting reforms under the Fit for the Future proposals. MHCLG shared confidential updates on drafting governance regulations and guidance.

Key Developments:

- Engagement with MHCLG on governance regulations and accompanying guidance on the LGPS Senior Officer role, and Independent Governance Review, Independent Person and Knowledge and Understanding requirements.
- Feedback provided on audit timetable and feasibility of decoupling pension fund accounts from local authority accounts (target 2026/27).
- Development of an interactive Scheme Annual Report dashboard for post-2025 publication.
- Preparations for updates to annual report guidance once MHCLG confirms new reporting duties.

- Development of a LGPS peer support offer
- Updating preparing the fund annual report guidance

Investment committee

The Committee received an update from MHCLG on forthcoming Investment Regulations and guidance, noting concerns about local investment requirements under the Pension Schemes Bill and Fit for the Future reforms.

Key Actions:

- Development of the Code of Transparency (CoT) framework, with launch scheduled for April 2026.
- Revision of Pooling Steering Group proposals for Board decision.
- Approval of updated CoT Code and FAQs (pending Board approval for publication).
- Identification of support areas for funds ahead of Fit for the Future consultation in early 2026.Fiduciary duty advice
- RIAG tasked with developing practical guidance and reporting proposals on responsible investment.

Board workplan update

Website
The refreshed SAB website remains on budget, with minor delays due to content review. Launch is expected in early 2026.

Annual Assembly
The inaugural SAB Annual Assembly (held on 22 October 2025) was well attended, featuring sessions on governance changes, training initiatives, and peer support. Feedback was highly positive.

Peer Support
A new peer support project for administering authorities is in development, mirroring the LGA model for councils. A pilot session is planned for next year.

Scheme annual report
Work has begun on the scheme annual report which aggregates data in fund annual reports. Annual reports are required to be published by 1 December and many funds have already done this.

Contact officer

Name: Clair Alcock
Job title: Head of Pensions and Board Secretary
Phone no: 07464 532613
E-mail: clair.alcock@local.gov.uk

Paper E: Regulations update for Scotland

Key points to note

Amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018: on 2 September 2025, the SPPA launched a 12-week consultation, which ends on 25 November 2025.

Normal Minimum Pension Age (NMPA): the SPPA has decided to postpone its planned consultation on proposed changes to the Normal Minimum Pension Age (NMPA) until 2026.

Decisions

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

Amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018

The purpose of this consultation is to align the Scottish LGPS regulations with some of the proposed changes in the MHCLG's Access and Fairness consultation that were not previously addressed by Scottish Ministers.

This consultation includes regulations which are intended to:

- align the Scottish LGPS with primary legislation on Neonatal Care Leave
- address gender pension gap issues
- make further technical amendments to ensure the McCloud Remedy regulations work as intended
- remove the age 75 cut off for death grant payments, to align with the Finance Act 2011.

Although the consultation remains ongoing, no significant concerns have yet been raised regarding the proposed changes. Feedback received to date has been broadly supportive.

Normal Minimum Pension Age (NMPA)

The SPPA has decided to postpone its planned consultation on proposed changes to the Normal Minimum Pension Age (NMPA). This decision was taken primarily to support alignment of policy and implementation across the four nations.

The SPPA now intends to consult on these changes, following the Scottish Parliament election in May 2026.

In parallel, SPPA has sought legal advice regarding the treatment of protected pension ages, with a particular focus on the implications for the transfer of pensions with a protected NMPA from other schemes.

Next steps

- continue engagement with counterparts across the UK to support coordinated policy development
- review legal advice and assess potential impacts on scheme members and administration.

Contact officer

Name: Kimberly Linge or Eva Sobek
Job title: LGPS Policy Manager
Phone no: 01896893229
E-mail: Kimberly.Linge@gov.scot or Eva.Sobek@gov.scot

Paper F: 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).

Decisions

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

Summary

The Northern Ireland LGPS Scheme Advisory Board last met on 22 September 2025.

The Department for Communities has consulted on statutory guidance on the administration of the McCloud remedy. The Guidance has yet to be issued.

MHCLG's consultation entitled *Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales: Access and fairness* does not apply directly to the Northern Ireland LGPS but some elements may be considered by the Department for Communities for replication locally.

MHCLG's consultation entitled *Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales: Scheme improvements (access and protections)* does not apply directly to the Northern Ireland LGPS but the Normal Minimum Pension Age and Fair Deal elements may be considered by the Department for Communities for replication locally.

Governance

Scheme Advisory Board

The Scheme Advisory Board last met on 22 September 2025. Items discussed included:

- Cost Cap Valuation
- Section 13 Report
- Departmental McCloud statutory guidance
- MHCLG Access and Fairness
- MHCLG Fit for the Future

- DWP State Pension Age Review
- New Minimum Pension Age.

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 Guidance has yet to be issued.

Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales: Access and fairness

Many of the proposals in MHCLG's Access and Fairness consultation have already been implemented into the Northern Ireland LGPS some years ago. However, the Department for Communities has commenced work on equivalent draft regulations for Northern Ireland.

Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales: Scheme improvements (access and protections)

On 13 October 2025, MHCLG launched a consultation on changes to the LGPS in England and Wales. The proposals relate to access to the Scheme and its benefits and cover four main areas:

- normal minimum pension age (NMPA)
- pension access for mayors and councillors
- academies in the LGPS
- new Fair Deal.

Of specific interest to NI LGPS are the proposals for changes to the NMPA and new Fair Deal. The Northern Ireland scheme needs to be amended to reflect the new NMPA before 2028 and therefore we expect the Department to make similar NI regulations. Whilst there is no requirement to do so we would expect the Department also to consider the new Fair deal proposals. Mayors and Councillors already have access to the NI LGPS, and Northern Ireland does not have academies therefore these two elements of the consultation are not relevant to Northern Ireland.

Contact officer

Name: David Murphy
Job Title: CEO, NILGOSC
Phone no: 0345 319 7320
E-mail: david.murphy@nilgosc.org.uk
Twitter: @DMurphy_NILGOSC

Paper G – 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 19 September 2025

Recommendations to SAB

With a view to taking forward agreed recommendations to SAB, the National Pension Officer Group asks each regional group to discuss at their meetings whether there are any high priority changes needed in the LGPS.

In advance of the September meeting, the regional groups were asked whether they supported the following LGPS changes:

- Under LGPS Regulations 2013 Regulation 3(7)(e), a member is vests "if the member has paid National Insurance contributions whilst an active member and ceases active membership after the end of the tax year preceding that in which the member attains pensionable age;" should reference to National Insurance be removed as the LGPS is no longer contracted out?; and
- Remove requirement that deferred members must make a written election to defer beyond their normal retirement date / normal pension age ((32(2) of LGPS Regulations 2013 and 50(2) of Administration Regulations 2008 or "elects to defer" see reg 93(2) of the LGPS Regulations 1997). There is anecdotal evidence that members are not taking their benefits at their normal pension age due to their belief that payment of their LGPS benefits would lead to a loss of state benefits or result in extra taxation but then LGPS benefits have to be subsequently backdated to NRD with interest as there has been no written election to defer.

There were mixed views from the regional groups on removing National Insurance reference; not seen as a priority.

There was strong support for removing the written election requirement for deferred benefits and therefore NPOG decided to give this recommendation priority when passing to SAB.

AVC Providers

Members of NPOG reported delays in AVC contributions showing on AVC providers' online member portals and in disinvestment, despite formal complaints. The group considers that this may impact the Pensions Dashboard implementation of AVC data.

The NPOG Chair will set up separate formal meetings with both Prudential and Scottish Widows representatives and NPOG members to discuss service issues.

LGA Update

LGA updated the NPOG that it would like volunteers to appraise their new website. The LGA will be holding three workshops at the upcoming Pensions Managers' Conference, covering the mandatory Pensions Administration Strategy requirement, pension qualifications and new Fair Deal.

MHCLG Update

MHCLG confirmed new appointments: Steve Reed (Secretary of State) and Alison McGovern (Minister responsible for the LGPS).

Analysis of replies to the recent consultation is complete and response drafted for Minister (there have been many requests for a phased implementation of the changes).

The Pension Schemes Bill has passed committee stage. The investment consultation is planned by year-end, the changes are expected to be effective from 1 April 2026.

Software Provider Update

Representatives from software suppliers, Heywood, Civica and Equiniti, gave updates focussed on McCloud implementation, Pensions Dashboards and progress on providing electronic template for provision of interfund data.

LGPS England & Wales SAB update

SAB reported that: the current workplan includes ‘Fit for Future’ and the Pensions Schemes Bill. There have been some key Bill amendments, these include the requirement for consultation with the relevant stakeholders before the responsible authority issues directions to Scheme Managers to join or leave a pool. Discussions on the definition of local investment continue.

SAB is also monitoring Local Government reorganisation and the potential impact of new service delivery models.

Contact officer

Name: Martin Doyle
Job title: Assistant Director of Pensions Shared Service (an administration shared service for the Pension Funds of Camden, Merton, Waltham Forest and Wandsworth Councils)
E-mail: martin.doyle@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

Paper H: Training, Conference and Qualification update

Decisions

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

Summary

Fundamentals training

Fundamentals is a bespoke three-day training course predominantly aimed at councillors and others who attend pension committees/panels and local pension boards. Day one and day two of the 2025 course have now taken place. Over 100 attendees took part in both day one and day two, with a further 110 booked to attend day three. Feedback so far has been positive and those who attended have found the training engaging and insightful. Bookings have increased slightly when compared to 2024.

Day three of Fundamentals takes place in London on 3 December and online on 9 and 16 December. Topics include fiduciary duty, Dashboards, cyber security, and AI, plus updates from MHCLG and The Pensions Regulator.

If you are a LGPC Councillor and would like to attend day three of Fundamentals, please email training.lgps@local.gov.uk.

Annual governance conference

The venue for the 2026 conference is the Cardiff Marriott on 29 and 30 January 2026. The agenda has been set and the majority of speakers are confirmed. The conference bookings are open and to date there are 125 people booked to attend in person and 23 virtually. There are only 8 in person places remaining. The adventurer and entrepreneur Amar Latif has been booked as the after-dinner speaker.

The team has already secured the venue for the 2027 conference. This will take place at the Cedar Court Hotel Harrogate on 28 and 29 January 2027.

Employer and administrator training

Courses continue to sell well. The majority of our online courses for 2025 and early 2026 are fully booked.

The programme for 2026 has been agreed and will be published with the November bulletin. This covers the period from April to December 2026. There are 71 days of training planned. Course booking will open mid-December. The costs for provision have been reviewed and changed for both advertised and commissioned courses.

We have two new courses available in 2026:

- Additional contributions – a half day online course for LGPS England and Wales covering additional pension contributions (APCs) and additional voluntary contributions (AVCs)
- Understanding tax allowances in the LGPS – a full day course available online and in person covering annual allowance, lump sum allowances and inheritance tax. This course covers UK pensions law and will therefore be suitable for LGPS Scotland.

There will be the opportunity for funds to commission training, and we will also consider putting on additional courses if there is strong demand.

We expect that many of our training courses will require significant updates for 2026 following the LGPS Access and Fairness and LGPS Access and Protections consultations.

The Award in Pensions Essentials

The Award in Pensions Essentials (APE) is a generic level 2 UK pensions qualification run by Barnett Waddingham and accredited by the Pensions Management Institute (PMI). Cohort six, made up of 16 students, will begin their studies in November.

44 students have now successfully completed the APE. 26 different funds have used the APE so far, including some in Scotland. We will continue to publicise and collate interest in the qualification.

The Certificate in LGPS Administration

The Certificate in LGPS Administration is an LGPS specific level 3 pensions qualification which is run by the LGA and accredited by PMI. It is suitable for LGPS administrators in England and Wales.

The pilot group of 36 students began in April 2025. The majority of these students are now studying towards unit three with their next exam in December.

The second cohort of 54 students began studying in September 2025. They have attended their first tutorial and have their first exam on 25 November.

The third cohort of 50 students will begin studying in April 2026. Based on funds pre-registering their interest, cohort three is now full.

Subsequent cohorts of 50 students will begin studying every September and April, subject to demand. We have retained a cap of four students per fund per cohort in the interest of fairness. 38 different funds are represented over the first three cohorts.

Contact officer

Name: Lisa Clarkson
Job title: Senior LGPS Training and Development Adviser
Phone no: 07464532596
E-mail: lisa.clarkson@local.gov.uk