

LGPC MEETING – 23 March 2026

Meeting agenda

Item		Timings
1	Welcome, apologies for absence and declarations of interest	11:30
2	Minutes of meeting held on 24 November 2025 – Paper A	11:40
3	LGPC Budget – Paper B (Confidential)	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	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 24 November 2025 - Hybrid

PRESENT

Cllr Nathan Yeowell	Chair, LGA
Cllr John Fuller	LGA
Cllr Keith House	LGA (partial attendance)
Cllr Martin Bailey	LGA
Cllr Georgia Taylor	LGA
Cllr Jordan Meade	LGA
Cllr Jayne Dunn	LGA
Cllr Rishi Madlani	LGA
Ben Lavelle	MHCLG
Will King	MHCLG
George Graham	SAB representative
Martin Doyle	National POG representative
David Murphy	NILGOSC
Kimberly Linge	SPPA
Linda Welsh	SPLG

Secretariat

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

Non attendees

Cllr Mark Jeffery	LGA
Cllr Mark Shooter	LGA
Eva Sobek	SPPA (apologies)
Alan Wilkinson	SPPA (apologies)

1. Actions Register

Action	Responsible	Deadline
Issue draft Access and Protection consultation response to Committee for approval	Lorraine Bennett	1 week before 22 Dec 2025
Continue strong representations on inheritance tax complexities	All Committee members	Ongoing
Provide brief pensions dashboard readiness update at next meeting	Martin Doyle (NPOG)	Next meeting (23 March 2026)
Note Scottish interest in Level 3 qualification rollout	Lisa Clarkson and Lorraine Bennett	Ongoing
Consider Levels 4-5 qualification development	Lisa Clarkson	Medium-term (3+ years)
Circulate climate data podcast to Committee	Holly De-Buriette and Lorraine Bennett	After meeting
Post-valuation review - refer climate data/risk analysis concerns to SAB for consideration	Clair Alcock	Post-valuation round (2026)
Consider building 10-15 minutes into future agendas for policy discussions	Chair and Lorraine Bennett	From March 2026 meeting

2. INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair, Cllr Nathan Yeowell [NY], welcomed everybody to the first hybrid meeting of the 2025-2026 cycle. NY noted the presence of both returning and new members and emphasised the importance of making proceedings inclusive and accessible to those new to the subject area. NY encouraged members to ask questions if anything was unclear.

Cllr John Fuller [JF] explained the distinction between the LGPC (employer-side only forum) and the Scheme Advisory Board [SAB] (which includes both employer and employee representatives).

David Murphy [DM] noted to the new members that the Committee includes Northern Ireland and Scottish representatives as some of the issues discussed effect all the home nations.

NY recommended that, once nominated, all substitutes should attend all Committee meetings to ensure they are kept to speed with Committee affairs.

NY noted this would be George Graham's [GG] last meeting of both the LGPC and the SAB. On behalf of the Committee and previous members, NY thanked GG for his commitment and contribution over the years, noting his generosity in providing advice and guidance at various LGPS events.

The Committee formally minutes its thanks to GG for his contribution to the Committee and the wider LGPS and wished him well for his retirement.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Alan Wilkinson [AW] and Eva Sobek [ES]; Kimberly Linge [KL] attended in substitute.

4. MINUTES

The minutes from the 21 July 2025 meeting were agreed.

5. LGPS ACCESS AND PROTECTION CONSULTATION

Background

Lorraine Bennett [LB] introduced the consultation, which was launched in October 2025 with a closing date of 22 December 2025. This is the second member benefit consultation of the year, following the earlier Access and Fairness consultation.

LB sought the Committee's view on certain points in the consultation which will be fed into a draft response for subsequent review.

Normal Minimum Pension Age [NMPA]

LB informed the Committee that full detail about the increase to the NMPA is available in [Paper D from the 24 March 2025](#) Committee meeting and summarised the current position to give background:

- Normal Minimum Pension Age is currently 55
- Legislated to increase to 57 from 6 April 2028 (Finance Act 2022)
- NMPA is the earliest age benefits can be paid across all registered pension schemes in the UK (except ill health benefits)
- If benefits are paid before NMPA, there are tax charges to both member and scheme.

The Finance Act 2022, which is overriding legislation to the LGPS, provided for transitional protections for members who, on 4 November 2021, the policy announcement date, had an unqualified right to take pension benefits and therefore would not be considered as an authorised payment. However, this transitional protection does not automatically give the member rights as the rules within the pension scheme must also allow it.

MHCLG is consulting on implementing this transitional protection in the LGPS regulations by providing protected ages. LB talked through how the proposed protection would impact the four categories of members set out in Paper B.

LB noted that at the 24 March 2025 meeting the Committee's view was there should be no transitional protection for members, with all required to take benefits at a minimum age of 57.

The following points were discussed:

- the strength and robustness of the legal advice obtained by the Government on whether introducing protections for certain members would constitute unlawful discrimination.
- the sector continues to implement the McCloud remedy, arising from previous protections that were found to be unlawful on age discrimination grounds.
- introducing protections would add significant complexity for scheme administrators.
- the number of members who take payment of their pension between ages 55 and 57 is currently unknown, although substantial early-retirement reductions act as a deterrent for some members.

- the potential creation of a two-tier workforce, whereby only some members would be able to access an unreduced pension immediately if made redundant between ages 55 and 57.
- while current redundancy numbers are low, these are expected to increase significantly as a result of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Introducing protections would therefore lead to substantially higher employer costs, as protected members would be able to access their pension from age 55 on redundancy.

Committee Position

The Committee unanimously agreed to maintain the position that protections should not be provided. All members should have a minimum pension age of 57 from 6 April 2028. The Government should legislate for this outcome as soon as possible.

Pension Access for Mayors and Councillors

LB summarised Paper B, setting out the Government's proposal to allow councillors (excluding town and parish councillors) and mayors, including deputy and other mayoral roles, to opt into the LGPS. Membership would be optional, with individuals required to elect to join rather than being automatically enrolled.

It was noted that councillors in England are currently the only UK councillors excluded from the LGPS, having been removed in 2014. In contrast, Welsh councillors remain in the 1997 scheme and Scottish councillors have access to the Scottish 2015 CARE scheme. Under the proposal, English councillors would join the 2014 CARE scheme. There are no plans to move Welsh councillors to the 2014 CARE scheme. It was also clarified that any service accrued by English councillors rejoining the LGPS would be held in separate tranches within a different scheme.

The consultation estimates an annual cost of £40–£45 million across England, based on assumptions about local government structures, take-up rates, demographics and allowance levels. No additional Government funding is proposed, on the basis that similar arrangements in other UK regions are unfunded.

Take-up rates in Wales were noted to be significantly higher than those previously seen in England and Wales when membership was subject to remuneration panel approval.

The Committee was invited to consider whether it supported the proposal, the opt-in approach, and whether it had any specific comments on implementation.

Clarification on Backdating

The Committee discussed rumours that the policy might be introduced retrospectively to allow councillors to backdate LGPS membership to 2014. Will King [WK] clarified that the proposal would apply on a prospective basis only, with no backdating of membership.

Concerns were raised that any suggestion of backdating could expose the sector to legal challenge, particularly given the policy rationale of avoiding “financial disadvantage” arising from public service. It was noted that this justification appears to conflict with the rationale for removing councillors from the scheme in 2014, potentially increasing the risk of claims from councillors who have served since that time.

JM requested the Government provide a categorical assurance that if backdating liabilities do occur the responsibility, they will not be pushed down onto local Councils. He emphasised that there needs to be national funding to cover such eventualities.

NY agreed this was a valid point about the problematic language.

Committee Position

The Committee unanimously agreed to support the proposal to allow Councillors and Mayors to join the LGPS.

Opt-In versus Auto-Enrolment

The Committee considered whether LGPS membership for Councillors and Mayors should be offered on an opt-in or automatic enrolment basis, noting a divergence of views.

Arguments in favour of automatic enrolment focused on alignment with national pension policy, maximising participation, and supporting protected groups, including addressing the gender pensions gap and barriers linked to lower financial literacy.

Arguments supporting an opt-in approach emphasised the distinct status of councillors and mayors as office holders rather than employees, the wide variation in roles, time commitments, age profiles and existing pension provision, and the difficulty of defining full-time versus part-time roles. Consideration was also given to respecting political choice and the associated legal and cost implications.

Arrangements in devolved administrations were noted, with automatic enrolment in Scotland and an opt-in approach in Wales.

Committee Position

Given the differing views, the Committee agreed that its response should reflect both majority and minority perspectives.

Majority view

- preference for an opt-in model, supported by proactive communication and encouragement to join
- recognition of the distinction between allowances and employment
- respect for political choice
- a pragmatic approach reflecting councillor demographics and existing pension arrangements
- maintaining the distinction between accountability to the electorate and employment relationships.

Minority view

- preference for automatic enrolment
- consistency with national pension policy
- benefits for protected groups and increased participation.

Additional consideration

The need for parity across home nations to avoid multiple and inconsistent regulatory frameworks.

Implementation issues

The Committee highlighted several key implementation issues.

It was emphasised that policy language should clearly avoid any reference to “reinstatement”, as this could imply retrospective rights and increase the risk of legal challenge. Communications should make clear that the proposal represents a new scheme with prospective application only.

The need for legal clarity was stressed, including publication of assurance that retrospective claims cannot arise and confirmation that any liabilities from legal challenge would not fall on local authorities, supported by national funding where required.

Concerns were raised about the proposed implementation date of 1 April, which does not align with election cycles and could result in short-term membership. It was suggested that commencement should align with the start of a new council term.

Finally, the importance of consistency across the UK was noted, to avoid multiple regulatory frameworks and to draw on experience from existing arrangements in devolved administrations.

Academies and Administration Authority Consolidation

The Committee discussed the Government's proposal to simplify the consolidation of academies within a single LGPS administering authority. Currently, academies are allocated based on geography, meaning Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) are often spread across multiple funds, creating administrative complexity, multiple contribution rates and inconsistent processes. MATs have expressed a desire to consolidate into one administering authority to improve control and efficiency.

Under current arrangements, consolidation requires a direction from the Secretary of State. The consultation proposes removing this requirement where specified criteria are met, including value-for-money assessments, a pre-existing relationship with the chosen administering authority, agreement from all parties, administrative capability, and safeguards against contribution-rate shopping. An appeals process would be introduced to address issues arising post-transfer.

While the proposal was supported in principle, significant concerns were raised about unintended consequences. These included the potential cash-flow impact on funds losing academies, given that MATs typically have younger, active memberships and positive cash flow. The cumulative effect of consolidation could destabilise funds that become net losers, particularly if they are required to sell assets to replace lost contribution income. It was also noted that academies may move between MATs over time, increasing volatility.

The Committee highlighted the risk of contribution-rate shopping and noted that variations in employer contribution rates across funds may be a key driver. Reference was made to earlier sector work on academies, with a view that this should be revisited to assess whether underlying issues remain and what has changed.

Committee Position

Removal of Secretary of State consent

The Committee agreed in principle to the removal of the Secretary of State consent requirement, subject to significant caveats. Further work is required to assess cash-flow impacts, scheme stability risks, and the need for appropriate mitigation measures.

Discouraging contribution-rate shopping

The Committee agreed that further collaboration is needed to:

- review previous sector analysis on academies
- examine the ongoing relevance of employer contribution rate variation
- continue dialogue with MHCLG and the SAB to address root causes and promote greater consistency across funds.

New Fair Deal

LB provided an overview of the New Fair Deal proposals, which aim to extend existing central government arrangements into the LGPS, ensuring that staff who are compulsorily transferred or outsourced remain in a public service pension scheme.

Under current LGPS arrangements, contractors may offer either LGPS membership or a broadly comparable scheme. The proposals would remove the broadly comparable option and require outsourced staff to have access to the LGPS only. In this model, the outsourcing body would retain certain responsibilities as the deemed employer, while the contractor would pay the primary contribution rate set for the outsourcing body.

Key features noted included the removal of pension pricing risk from contracts, flexibility for contribution rates to be fixed or updated at each valuation, and the retention of certain regulatory responsibilities by the outsourcing authority. A six-month transitional period is proposed to allow existing outsourcing arrangements to continue temporarily while organisations adjust.

Committee Position

The Committee agreed in principle that the proposals are helpful and broadly supported their objectives, while noting that the detail of the regulations will be critical. It was agreed that the Committee's response should reflect this support, alongside the need for careful consideration of the detailed proposals once published.

6. REGULATIONS UPDATE ENGLAND AND WALES

Paper C was presented by LB.

Enforcement Strategy Consultation

LB confirmed that she had submitted a response to The Pensions Regulator's (TPR) Enforcement Strategy Consultation on behalf of the Committee. The response had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. LB reported that there were

no critical or contentious issues arising from the response, and no concerns had been raised by Committee members.

LGPS Statistics

NY welcomed the latest LGPS statistics and noted the encouraging figures regarding the overall size of the Scheme. Members expressed satisfaction with the positive trajectory demonstrated by the data.

Inheritance Tax Changes

JF raised concerns regarding proposed inheritance tax changes and their impact on scheme administration. LB explained that the Government's original proposal would have placed responsibility on pension scheme administrators to account for and pay inheritance tax to HMRC, creating a significant administrative burden. She noted that the Government has since revised its position.

Under the revised proposals, responsibility for inheritance tax has been returned to personal representatives rather than pension scheme administrators, representing a substantial improvement. In addition, death in service death grants have been removed from scope, significantly reducing complexity.

LB advised that the revised proposals continue to apply to deferred member and pensioner death grants, which presents ongoing challenges. MD highlighted that while pension funds currently have up to two years to pay death grants, the new inheritance tax framework requires information to be provided within six months to avoid interest charges, creating a material timing issue.

MD further noted the risk of disputes with personal representatives, who face a six-month deadline for probate and HMRC reporting, potentially before pension funds can provide all required information. This misalignment could result in personal representatives incurring interest charges through no fault of their own.

NY emphasised the importance of the Committee continuing to raise concerns and maintain pressure regarding the practical and operational difficulties arising from the inheritance tax changes.

7. SAB UPDATE [E&W]

Paper D was presented by Clair Alcock [CA].

CA reported that a technical consultation on LGPS governance and investment regulations had been published the previous week, marking a key milestone in

proposed reforms to governance structures and investment arrangements. Members were advised that careful review of the technical detail would be required.

Pension Schemes Bill

CA noted that she and Councillor Roger Phillips (RP) had been invited to meet Baroness Sherlock to discuss the Pension Schemes Bill ahead of its Parliamentary consideration, providing an opportunity to represent LGPS views. She also advised that regulators' guidance is expected early in the New Year, requiring funds to prepare promptly for implementation.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign letter

In response to a query from GT, CA explained that the SAB had sought clarification from Government on divestment issues raised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign letter. CA stressed that the SAB is not the appropriate body to take a position on matters of international law – this is a matter for government, which has the means to obtain proper legal advice and access to information that the SAB does not have.

NY added that the Government has declined to provide the clear steer that the sector was hoping for. This leaves the LGPS without clear direction on this sensitive matter.

NY suggested that this might be an issue worth raising with Committee chairs across the country. It could be useful to assess whether there are widespread concerns about this issue post-current valuation round, to see if there is collective pressure that could be brought to bear.

8. REGULATION UPDATE SCOTLAND

Paper E was presented by Kimberly Linge [KL].

Current Consultation

KL advised that the Scottish Government currently has a consultation open proposing regulatory changes, primarily focused on aligning pension provisions with new neonatal care leave entitlements and ensuring pension accrual continues appropriately during such leave. The consultation also addresses aspects of the gender pensions gap, with proposals aimed at reducing inequalities through regulatory change. KL noted that the consultation was due to close on 25 November 2025 and that seven responses had been received to date. While this was a relatively small number, initial reviews indicated general support for the proposals, with no fundamental objections, although some technical details will require further consideration.

KL further explained that, although the Scottish Government had originally intended to include consultation on the NMPA, this was not possible due to the timing of the change in government and the parliamentary recess. As a result, the NMPA will be consulted on at a later stage, likely once a new Scottish Government is in place following the elections, ensuring appropriate political oversight.

9. REGULATIONS UPDATE NORTHERN IRELAND

Paper F was presented by David Murphy(DM)

DM confirmed that there are currently no live consultations in Northern Ireland. However, developments in England and Wales continue to be monitored closely, as these often influence policy direction in Northern Ireland. DM noted that most of the proposals arising from the Access and Fairness consultation in England and Wales had already been implemented in Northern Ireland several years ago, meaning no further action was required in those areas. He did, however, expect some further work to be needed in relation to gender pensions gap issues.

In relation to the more recent Access and Protections consultation, DM highlighted that two issues were relevant for Northern Ireland: Normal Minimum Pension Age and New Fair Deal. DM indicated that Northern Ireland was likely to mirror the approach taken by MHCLG, aiming for consistency and avoiding unexpected changes. He emphasised that alignment across jurisdictions supports smoother implementation and helps prevent unnecessary divergence in pension provision across the UK.

10. NATIONAL POG [NPOG] UPDATE

Paper G was presented by Martin Doyle [MD].

MD reported that funds are experiencing a nationwide deterioration in service levels across several AVC providers. This is having a significant knock-on impact on the pensions dashboards programme, which depends on accurate and timely data from all providers, including AVC arrangements. MD warned that continued poor performance by AVC providers could jeopardise dashboard delivery, particularly with statutory deadlines approaching. In response, NPOG is arranging meetings with the two main AVC providers to address service level agreements and performance issues collaboratively before they escalate further.

JF queried whether pension software suppliers are adequately prepared for dashboard connectivity. It was noted that one supplier had faced issues due to a misunderstanding of requirements, but this is now being resolved and connections

are being established. JF expressed concern about potential reputational damage to employers if members are unable to access pension information at launch and stressed the need for assurance that the sector is on track. NY acknowledged these concerns and agreed that a progress update should be provided at the next meeting.

11. TRAINING, CONFERENCE AND QUALIFICATION UPDATE

Paper H was presented by Lisa Clarkson [LC].

LC reported that the LGPS Annual Governance Conference in January 2026 is sold out, with 175 in-person and 31 online attendees, and five additional in-person places secured. Strong demand was noted, and LGPC councillors were reminded they could attend by contacting the training team.

LC also outlined an expanded 2026 training programme, with 71 days of training planned and high demand for commissioned courses, creating a significant workload for the team. The Certificate in LGPS Administration continues to be well received, with Cohort 3 (starting April 2026) already full.

NY gave congratulations to the team for their qualification work and filling Cohort 3.

GG offered congratulations to the team on their work developing and delivering the qualification. He characterised the qualification as a "significant game changer" in the way the sector can now provide development opportunities to the LGPS workforce.

Linda Welsh [LW] noted strong demand from Scottish funds for a Scottish LGPS qualification and asked when a rollout might become feasible, given previous advice that this was not possible due to LGA resource constraints.

GG asked whether Level 4 and 5 LGPS qualifications could be developed in future, stressing their importance for developing the next generation of senior LGPS officers and managers.

LB and LC acknowledged the strong interest in higher-level (Level 4 and 5) and Scottish-specific qualifications; however, the team is currently focused on embedding the Level 3 qualification before expanding further, to ensure sustainability and quality.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Climate data and valuations

NY proposed setting aside time in future meetings for topical issues, following a request from GT to raise concerns about climate data used in pension valuations. GT stated that actuarial climate assumptions remain overly optimistic and rely on outdated data, despite some improvement since the last valuation round, and suggested more rigorous, expert-led approaches in future.

The Committee noted the concerns but agreed it was not within its remit to direct actuaries. Members highlighted existing oversight through GAD and SAB, and existing guidance requiring funds to assess climate risk. It was agreed that GT's concerns would be passed to SAB, and relevant materials shared for information.

NY thanked all attendees for their participation and contributions.

13. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

23 March 2026, 20 July 2026 and 23 November 2026.

Paper C: Regulations update England and Wales

Key points to note

- significant member benefit changes will take effect from April 2026
- councillors and mayors in England will be eligible to join the LGPS from 11 May 2026
- work on pensions dashboards continues
- new tools to help promote the LGPS will be published soon.

Decisions

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

Member benefit changes – Access and Fairness

MHCLG has responded to the Access and Fairness consultation. It has confirmed it will introduce the changes proposed in the consultation in two stages. The first phase of changes will come into force on 1 April 2026. These are:

Death grants and survivor benefits

- equalisation of survivor benefits
- removal of the upper age limit of 75 to qualify for a death grant
- removal of the requirement to pay a death grant to personal representatives if the administering authority has not paid it using their discretion within the 'two year period'.
- removal of the requirement to have nominated a cohabiting partner for deaths between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2014

Gender pension gap – buying back lost pension

- introduction of Qualifying Additional Pension Arrangements (QAPAs) which align the cost of buying back pension 'lost' during a period of authorised unpaid absence of more than 14 days with the member and employer's normal contribution rates

- the time limit to apply for a QAPA will be one year after returning to work. This is an increase from the current limit of 30 days, but will only be possible while the member is an active member in the same employment
- the pension bought through a QAPA will mirror normal pension built up: it will count towards the calculation of survivor pensions, and will not be reduced if the member retires on redundancy or efficiency grounds
- these new rules will only apply to a continuous period of authorised unpaid absence that started **after** 31 March 2026

Gender pensions gap – absences of less than 15 days

- compulsory pension contributions during authorised unpaid absences of 14 days or less, with contributions based on 'lost' pay and the member and employer's normal contribution rates. This applies to authorised absences that start after 31 March 2026.

Gender pensions gap – child related leave

- all adoption, maternity and shared parental leave will be pensionable whether is paid or unpaid. The employer will be required to pay contributions on the 'assumed pensionable pay' the member would have received had they been at work. The member will pay contributions on any pay they receive.
- currently members have the option of buying back lost pension in respect of any unpaid additional maternity and adoption leave or unpaid shared parental leave if they return to work.
- the new rules will apply if the unpaid period starts after 31 March 2026.

Abolition of the lifetime allowance

- introducing the long-term approach to the maximum pension commencement excess lump sum (PCELS). A PCELS is paid when a member has used up all of the lump sum allowance set by HMRC. The new maximum will be 25% of the capital value of the benefits being crystallised, subject to the contracting-out limits.
- the new PCELS limit will apply to all PCELS paid after 31 March 2026.

Other changes

- various changes related to the McCloud remedy
- allowing a small pot payment to be paid to members who left before 1 April 2008.

Next steps

Legislation to enact these changes was laid on 6 March 2026. It will take effect from 1 April 2026.

The Government plans to implement the remaining proposals from the Access and Fairness consultation later in 2026. This includes removing the requirement to pay refunds automatically at the end of five years, the collection and publication of opt out data and forfeiture changes.

LGPC support

We will publish a special bulletin setting out detailed information about the changes, including any transitional arrangements and the implications of backdating some of the regulation changes as soon as possible after the SI is published. We also expect MHCLG to issue statutory guidance and new actuarial guidance in response to the changes. We will also update the national member website and template member communications.

Councillors and Mayors

MHCLG confirmed in its partial response to the Access and Protections consultation that it will proceed with plans to extend the LGPS to councillors and mayors in England. This change will give access to the LGPS to:

- all mayors and deputy mayors in England
- all councillors at principal authorities in England, and
- all London Assembly members.

We understand the effective date will be 11 May 2026, the first Monday after the local elections.

Elected members who wish to join will be required to opt in to the Scheme under regulation 3(6) of the LGPS Regulations 2013.

We are continuing to work with MHCLG to consider and resolve any technical queries on the regulations. In addition, we are preparing a special bulletin, planned for April, that will set out the key differences between elected and non-elected member participation in the LGPS and outline the actions administering authorities will need to take. We will also update the member website and produce a brief guide for councillors and mayors in England.

The Government confirmed it will provide a response on the other policy areas covered in the Access and Protections consultation later this year. These are New Fair Deal, increases to the normal minimum pension age (NMPA) and the consolidation of academies in the LGPS.

Pensions Dashboards

Aligning illustration dates for LGPS benefits

There has been ongoing discussion in the pensions industry about aligning illustration dates for members who hold both defined benefits (DB) and defined contributions (DC) within the same pension scheme. In the LGPS, this specifically impacts members with Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs).

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has now confirmed its policy intent: illustration dates should align at a **benefit level**. DWP is currently considering whether this requires amendments to the Pensions Dashboards Regulations 2022.

Consumer testing – second phase

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) has begun the second phase of consumer testing for the MoneyHelper Pensions Dashboard, starting on 2 March 2026. They are inviting adults aged 18 or over who have not started drawing all their pensions to participate. MaPS is particularly keen to involve people who may have access needs or lower confidence with literacy, numeracy, digital skills or technology.

A toolkit has been provided to help organisations, including LGPS administering authorities, share the opportunity with their audiences. Slides from a recent briefing webinar are also available, outlining the aims of the research and how organisations can support the development of the dashboard.

We are encouraging LGPS administering authorities to contact PDP Support if they have questions and to inform them when they plan to issue invitations and how many people they will contact.

PDP consulting on industry involvement to deliver private sector dashboards

The Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) is consulting on how to work with industry to deliver Private Sector Dashboards (PSDs). The aim of these dashboards is to operate alongside the MoneyHelper dashboard, giving savers more choice and flexibility in accessing their pension information.

PDP will set up a working group made up of members who are actively planning to operate a dashboard. A separate group is planned for strategic input and information sharing.

Promotion project

We have worked the Communications Working Group to develop 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. We are close to finalising the short video and information leaflet. Other resources will follow including:

- posters
- social media tools
- e-learning module
- email footers.

Contact officer

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Paper D: SAB update for England and Wales

Key points to note

This paper provides an update on the activity of the [Scheme Advisory Board](#) (SAB) for England and Wales, including progress on Fit for the Future, engagement with MHCLG, and the work of SAB committees.

The SAB has the twin statutory roles to provide advice to the Secretary of State on the desirability of making changes to the scheme and providing advice to administering authorities and local pension boards in relation to the effective and efficient administration and management of the scheme.

The Board does this through the main board and its three committees and their associated working groups. The individual committee pages can be found below.

- [Compliance and Reporting Committee](#)
- [Cost Management, Benefit Design and Administration Committee](#)
- [Investment Committee](#)

Decisions

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

Summary

The Board remains actively engaged with MHCLG on the Government's priorities for Fit for the Future, as well as its policy to strengthen benefits, fairness, and adequacy. Alongside this, the Board continues to innovate by strengthening digital communications, engagement strategies and introducing a peer support offer.

Fit for the future

The Board's focus continues to be on supporting stakeholders to understand and debate the Fit for the Future changes to the LGPS, enabling them to plan effectively 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.

Fit for the future – Primary Powers, Secondary regulations and Statutory guidance

The [Pension Schemes Bill](#) (The Bill) provides the primary legislative powers for the reforms and is currently in the House of Lords committee stage, with Report Stage scheduled from 16 March 2026, before going back to the Commons. Royal Assent is now not expected until after the Easter recess, which will delay the timetable for final statutory guidance and the laying of secondary regulations.

This short delay is not expected to affect the Government's position on pooling. Government still intends to proceed with tighter constraints on pooling; and most pools and funds will meet these, albeit with varying levels of challenge.

While in committee stage, discussions about the bill have looked at the extent of government powers and scrutinised valuation measures.

Amendments introduced at the House of Commons committee stage include:

- extending key provisions (asset pool companies, governance reviews, asset management rules) to LGPS Scotland following a Scottish Government request
- removal of the earlier proposal allowing government to intervene in specific investment management decisions, clarifying the intention not to micro-manage investment choices.

MHCLG's [technical consultation](#) on governance and new pooling, management and investment regulations closed on 2 January 2026. The [SAB response](#) raised concerns including:

- insufficient clarity around Secretary of State direction powers
- potentially unrealistic implementation timelines
- risk of rushed or inconsistent regulatory transition.

The draft statutory guidance (closed consultation, closed 12 January 2026) drew further [SAB concerns](#) regarding sequencing of reforms, policy clarity, and cumulative impact alongside McCloud, dashboards and wider LGPS change programmes.

The delay to the Bill getting Royal Assent will affect the publication of final guidance and laying of regulations.

During the consultation, a number of conversations have centred around local and responsible investment, holding pools to account, as well as changes to fund governance.

Fit for the future – Local Investment

The Bill defines “local investment” [[draft clause 2, sub para 5](#)] and requires Administering Authorities (AAs) to co-operate with the Strategic Authority (SA) to identify and develop appropriate investment opportunities. [Draft regulations](#) [11(1f)] require AAs to set a target range (not a minimum) for local investment within their investment strategy.

'Local Investment' is determined to mean “investments in, or for the benefit of persons living or working in (a) the scheme manager’s area, or (b) the areas of the other scheme managers participating in the same asset pool company as the scheme manager.”

SAB feedback emphasises:

- AAs must retain decision-making responsibility for balancing financial and non-financial considerations
- pools should provide evidence rather than setting policy
- guidance currently lacks clarity on what cooperation with strategic authorities practically entails.

The [2024 Annual Report](#) confirmed that **17 per cent of LGPS assets** were invested in the UK across listed equities, gilts, infrastructure, and private equity.

Responsible Investment

[Draft secondary regulations](#) require AAs to set out priorities and preferences on responsible investment. SAB has called for clearer guidance, particularly on:

- How pools should approach RI where they consider aspects “impracticable”
- How conflicts between AA policy and pool implementation should be resolved

[Counsel opinion](#) commissioned by SAB (Nigel Giffin KC) reinforces that the fiduciary balance between financial and non-financial factors must remain with the AA, and pool feedback on practicability should inform AA decision-making rather than override it.

SAB projects

In addition to responding to the consultations, key SAB projects have included

- building peer support pilot
- considering SAB governance structure to work with Pools
- communications project.

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. The Committee is also responding to valuation outcomes from the 31 March 2025 valuation.

Current Actions:

- monitoring valuation outcomes
- Funding Strategy Statement Review.
- employer exits survey.
- gender pension gap further research.

Compliance and reporting committee

The Committee is focused on governance and reporting reforms under the Fit for the Future proposals.

Recent working group meetings have helped refine the key issues and questions that must be addressed in the final guidance. Since the draft documents were published, the Board has continued to engage with administering authorities (AAs), pools, and MHCLG to review consultation feedback and identify areas requiring clarification. It is clear that any resulting amendments need to be shared with AAs as quickly as possible.

Once final guidance is issued, the Board will work collaboratively with stakeholders to support smooth implementation, monitor how the new arrangements operate, and develop a longer-term LGPS roadmap. Supplementary guidance will be produced where AAs need more detailed support.

The secretariat has highlighted several areas likely to need further work, including:

- support for developing Governance Strategies, Training Strategies, and Conflicts of Interest policies
- additional knowledge and understanding materials
- guidance on reporting scheme-specific breaches to TPR
- further support for Local Pension Boards.
- clarification on how the Independent Governance Review aligns with peer support
- monitoring implementation of the independent person and Senior LGPS Officer roles, including challenges, best practice, and communication channels

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.
- the Responsible Investment Advisory Group (RIAG) has been tasked with developing practical guidance and reporting tools to support consistent RI implementation across funds.

Board workplan update

Website

The refreshed SAB website was launched in January 2026. It features an improved navigation structure and clearer content pathways to support users in locating information quickly.

Committee and Board Chair Engagement

Following the inaugural SAB Annual Assembly (held on 22 October 2025), the SAB committed to regular online events. The first online event of 2026 will be held on 17 March for Pension Committee chairs.

Scheme annual report

Work is underway in earnest to collect and aggregate the data in fund annual reports into the [LGPS annual report](#), and this is expected to be published in May 2026.

Annual reports are required to be published by 1 December. As at March 2026, 79 of the 87 fund annual reports (including the closed Environment Agency fund) have been published, and of those 75 were published by the statutory deadline.

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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 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.

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 but is with the Northern Ireland Assembly's scrutiny committee for consideration.

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.

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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 5 December 2025

Feedback from Regional Pension Officer Groups (POGs)

AVC Providers

- Members of NPOG reported ongoing issues with AVC providers including lack of a member online portal, annual benefit statement issues and delays in allocating contributions. Working groups will continue engagement with providers to improve processes.
- The NPOG Chair will set up separate formal meetings for January/February 2026 with both Prudential and Scottish Widows representatives and NPOG members to discuss service issues and improvements.

LGA Update

LGA updated the NPOG on the Government's implementation of its Access and fairness measures: phased implementation with some measures, for example, forfeiture introduced in phase two. Budget update: salary sacrifice changes will impact shared-cost salary sacrifice AVC arrangements. The current arrangements are cost savings for employers.

On the inheritance tax changes previously announced by the Government 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 but all death-in-service benefits will be excluded. Personal representatives (PRs) - not pension scheme administrators

(PSAs) - will become responsible for reporting and paying any IHT due on pension benefits. Personal representatives will be able to direct pension administrators to withhold up to 50 per cent of taxable benefits for up to 15 months from the date of death, where they expect inheritance tax to be due. Guidance will be issued on this and HMRC will be holding workshops and creating calculators for personal representatives.

MHCLG Update

MHCLG have presented at the regional POGs on the Access and Protections consultation - four key areas: Normal Minimum Pension Age (NMPA), LGPS access for councillors and mayors, academy consolidation and Fair Deal.

On mayor and councillor access, broad approval from POGs although the NPOG Chair noted there had been feedback on the proposed 1 April start date including concern raised on system readiness for April 2026. NPOG, by majority, prefer opt-in rather than auto-enrolment.

Update on NMPA changes: policy intention supported by POGs but technical clarification required.

On academy consolidation, MHCLG acknowledged concerns that this could lead to 'contribution rate shopping'. They advised that guidance will be published and that this will be clear that the value for money assessment will need to consider actuarial costs and other costs of moving funds.

With regard to Fair Deal, there had been significant feedback on this proposal both at regional POGs and the Pensions Managers' conference in Torquay.

The Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA)

SPPA confirmed that consultation on neonatal care, Gender Pensions Gap, and McCloud corrections was now closed and a review of responses is underway.

NMPA consultation deferred until after May 2026 Scottish elections.

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. All confirmed that Councillor-related system updates will be challenging to meet by April 2026.

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LGPS England and Wales SAB update

SAB reported that activities have been focussed on responding to consultations and on the provision of guidance relating to the proposed changes.

SAB has now received the majority of fund annual reports and the SAB annual report will include an interactive dashboard which will allow funds to run reports and compare data.

A refreshed SAB website is expected to launch early in 2026. This will strengthen communication and make it easier for all stakeholders to view current work.

The recent annual assembly which was attended by chairs of local pension boards and committees was very successful. This will be repeated next year.

Next year's workplan will include peer support for Councils and funds. A pilot session has been approved and will commence next year.

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Paper H: Training, Conference and Qualification update

Decisions

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

Fundamentals training

We ran our 2025 Fundamentals training in London and online between October and December 2025. We sold 298 places in total. Online training was most popular. Feedback was very positive with comments reflecting on the knowledgeable and engaging speakers and the relevant and useful topics covered.

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

We have confirmed the locations and dates for the 2026 training:

Table 1: Fundamentals training 2026

Day	Date	Location or online
Day 1	7 October	London
Day 1	21 & 28 October	Online
Day 2	5 November	London
Day 2	20 & 27 November	Online
Day 3	3 December	London
Day 3	9 & 16 December	Online

The Fundamentals training for 2026 will be available to book in the summer.

Annual governance conference

The LGA's LGPS Governance Conference 2026 took place in Cardiff on 29 and 30 January. The conference sold out of in-person places. Final bookings were 146 in person and 66 online.

The conference brought together LGPS professionals for two days of insightful discussions, expert analysis and valuable networking. This year's conference

delivered a rich and varied programme, with expert speakers offering practical guidance, regulatory updates and strategic perspectives.

The conference received excellent feedback, with 100% of those completing the feedback survey (54 responses) saying that they would recommend the conference to others.

Next year's conference will be held at Cedar Court Hotel, Harrogate on 28 and 29 January 2027. Bookings will open in autumn 2026.

Employer and administrator training

The [2026 training programme](#) has been published and is selling well. More than 20 of the courses available have sold out.

The new Understanding tax allowances in the LGPS course has sold out for all dates, and additional dates released due to high demand have also sold out. We continue to keep a waiting list and will consider running additional sessions if demand remains high.

The Insight course is an introduction to the LGPS for new administrators. It runs over multiple days. We are running this course five times in 2026, with two sessions in person and three online. We are also investigating the possibility of a third in person location to ensure the in person courses provide good geographical coverage.

A number of funds have organised commissioned training. We have agreed to run an additional 15 days of commissioned training for 2026 so far, covering tax, aggregations, survivor benefits and Insight.

The LGPS Access and Fairness and LGPS Access and Protections consultations have meant that many of our training course materials require significant updates for 2026.

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 seven, made up of 17 students from seven different funds, will begin their studies in April 2026.

64 students have now successfully completed the APE. 27 different funds have used the APE so far, including some Scottish funds. 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 four with their next exam in March.

The second cohort of 54 students began studying in September 2025. We have had some dropouts and deferrals on this cohort so currently have 46 students actively studying. The majority of these students are now studying towards unit three with their next exam in May.

The third cohort of 52 students will begin studying in April 2026.

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. 39 different funds are represented over the first three cohorts.

We have made some minor changes in response to early feedback, such as providing a full, timed mock exam paper for every unit of the qualification.

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