

National LGPS Technical Group meeting documents

For meeting held on 7 June 2024

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1) Meeting agenda item 5: Technical Group Minutes of 8 March 2024

1. Meeting documents

The documents for this meeting are contained in a [single PDF](#).

No further hyperlinks to any documents are contained elsewhere in the agenda.

2. Date and time of meeting

The meeting started at 11.00am and finished at 1pm on the 8 March 2024.

3. Venue

The meeting was hybrid. For those attending in person it was held at Hymans, 1 London Wall, Barbican, London EC2Y 5EA.

4. Attendees and apologies for absence

Attendees

- Kevin Gerard (Chairman) - Welsh Pension Officer Group
- Joanne Griffiths - Welsh Pension Officer Group
- Ian Howe (Deputy Chairman) - East Midlands Pension Officer Group
- Phil Drury - East Midlands Pension Officer Group
- Heather Chambers – Northeast Pension Officer Forum
- Emma Sanders - Southwest Area Pension Officer Group
- Karen Gibson - Southwest Area Pension Officer Group
- Sandy Armstrong - Southern Area Pension Officer Group
- David Kellond- Southern Area Pension Officer Group
- Louise Savage - Southeast Counties Superannuation Officer Group
- Matt Mott - Southeast Counties Superannuation Officer Group
- Richard Smythe - London Pension Officer Group
- Martin Doyle - London Pension Officer Group
- Vicky Jenks - Shrewsbury Pension Officer Group
- Helen Tomkins – Shrewsbury Pension Officer Group
- Erin Savage - Scottish Pensions Liaison Group
- Zena Kee - Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee
- Alan Wareham – Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Kimberly Linge - Scottish Public Pension Agency

Prepared by Jayne Wiberg – National LGPS Technical Group Secretariat

- William Dobbin - Department for Communities (Northern Ireland)
- Jayne Wiberg - Local Government Association
- Lorraine Bennett - Local Government Association
- Joanne Donnelly – Local Government Association
- Steven Moseley (Scotland) – Local Government Association
- Claire Hey – Heywood Pension Technologies
- Lissa Evans - Civica
- Dave Friend – Equiniti
- Eve Harvey - Capita Experience Pension Solutions
- Gavin Paul - Barnett Waddingham
- Ian ColvinActuarial - Hymans Robertson
- Justine Davies - Price Waterhouse Coopers
- Catherine Pearce - Aon
- Jonathan Perera – Mercer
- Kelly Scotford – Secretariat.

Apologies for absence – with replacements

- Joel Ellner - Southeast Counties Superannuation Officer Group replaced by Matt Mott
- Melanie Durrant - Barnett Waddingham replaced by Gavin Paul
- Martin Slaughter - Capita Experience Pension Solutions replaced by Eve Harvey

5. Minutes of the last meeting

Item 1 in the meeting documents – highlighted in grey for ease of reading within the meeting documents.

The minutes were agreed in full with a minor typo on page 9 to be corrected – it should read June 2024 not June 2023.

6. Matters arising from previous minutes

- At the meeting of 10 March 2023 the group agreed that Jayne Wiberg would draft the transfer out process where the member holds more than one deferred benefit. Jayne distributed the draft process to standing members of the group on 25 April 2023 who provided comments. The new process and deferred member transfer pack has been created though it is still waiting for its final check. The delay has been caused due to a strain on resources because LGA team are working on the McCloud remedy.

7. Local Government Association (LGA)

Jayne Wiberg took questions on bulletins 245, 246, 247, published since the last meeting. All bulletins can be found in the Bulletin pages of www.lgpsregs.org and www.scotlgpsregs.org.

8. DLUHC update (standing agenda item)

Alan Wareham provided a verbal update at the meeting under Chatham house rules.

Following on from a question raised by the group, Alan confirmed the new key performance indicators will be contained in the new annual report guidance. It has not been decided at this stage as to whether the indicators will be a should or a must.

9. DLUHC update on recommendations and queries raised by the group (standing agenda item)

Alan Wareham provided a verbal update at the meeting under Chatham house rules.

Group action

- Group members to consult their POGs to decide which [recommendations](#) they wish to keep and pursue a change to the regulations. Standing members will vote on those they wish to keep at the next meeting in June 2024.

10. SPPA update (standing agenda item)

Kimberley Linge provided an update and took questions from the group - item 4 in the meeting documents, on behalf of the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA).

11. LGPS England & Wales SAB update (standing agenda item)

Jo Donnelly provided an update and took questions from the group – item 5 in the meeting documents, on behalf of the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) in England & Wales.

12. Pensions Dashboards (standing agenda item)

Survey

The Pensions Regulator (TPR) has confirmed they will be commencing a nudge campaign to administering authorities around 15 months ahead of public sector pension schemes staging date. We expect the staging date for public sector pension

schemes to be by 30 September 2025. As part of the nudge campaign TPR will be issuing a survey in September 2024 to all administering authorities. Therefore, there will no longer be any need for the National LGPS Technical Group to issue a survey on pension dashboards. The group agreed to this approach.

National engagement

The LGA are working closely with the Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP), the Pensions Administration Standards Association (PASA) and TPR to help administering authorities implement dashboards. They are participating in PDP webinars and integrated software supplier webinars.

Connection guides

The LGA published their LGPS connection guide in November 2023. This will be updated once PDP have published the final version of the standards and the staging guidance. A further guide covering AVCs and Dashboards will also be published. Both of these guides are expected to be published in April/May 2024.

Quarterly feedback from software suppliers

Updates - item 6 in the meeting documents, are provided from software providers detailing where they are in their development and support of pensions dashboards.

AVCs and dashboards sub-group

Ian Howe provided an update as to the progress of the AVCs and Dashboards group. The key message is that administering authorities should reconcile their main scheme members with their AVC members.

13. McCloud remedy (standing agenda item)

Survey

There was no survey issued this quarter.

Group discussion

- Do standing members want to continue with the McCloud survey to obtain the latest administering authority position? In deciding this answer the group were asked to consider if the survey results are useful, what the results are used for and what should be its content.

Group agreement

- The group agreed that the 'old survey was no longer appropriate and should not be issued.

Group action

- The group agreed if group members wanted a new survey for them to get together and devise a new survey – taking into account what the results are used for and what should be its content. Update to be supplied by those members who wish to continue with a McCloud survey at the June 2024 meeting. Standing members will vote on whether they wish to issue a new McCloud survey to administering authorities that meeting.

Club transfers calculations

Lorraine Bennett confirmed the LGA had published a non-club transfer spreadsheet for McCloud and they will not be producing a club spreadsheet for McCloud.

The LGA has had conversations with DLUHC about the provision of a club transfer spreadsheet. DLUHC's view is that GAD would need to provide this and it will be expensive.

Heywoods confirmed they can input a club transfer calculation to the administration system and they are waiting for the Class Management Group to confirm if they would like them to proceed. Cost and timings, as yet not known.

Civica confirmed they are currently working through the Club memorandum and have not approached their clients yet.

Equiniti are in discussions with their clients.

After discussion the majority of the group confirmed that club transfers are on hold because they are waiting for software changes.

A group member asked if the other club schemes could relax the 12 month club transfer rule.

Group action

- Lorraine to contact DLUHC to ask them to contact the other public sector pension scheme departments to ask if they would relax the 12 month club transfer rule.

Update from the LGA

Lorraine Bennett provided an update and answered questions with regards to the latest position on regulations, GAD guidance, statutory guidance, resources and implementation.

14. Scottish Widows

Six LGPS administering authorities are experiencing administration difficulties with Scottish Widows (SW) which appear to stem from an update to the online service in 2022. A letter of complaint, on behalf of the six authorities, was sent to SW in December 2023 outlining the issues. A breach has been raised with TPR by at least one of the six. Briefly, the issues are:

- lack of communication, including inadequate telephone support, calls not followed up, unanswered email correspondence, complaints not followed up
- lack of employer administrator access and payments returned
- failure to allocate payments, with payments being returned
- incorrect documentation sent to authority and member, members advised policies paid up when this is not the case
- annual benefit statements not issued since 2020
- failure to act on instructions, such as transfer requests
- incorrect processing of payments

The six authorities have asked if the group could pick up the mantle, in the same way they did with Prudential, and take this forward by setting up a sub-group to work with Scottish Widows to resolve administration issues.

The group discussed the matter in detail and agreed a member of the group would chair a group to take forward the issue. Heather Chambers volunteered to chair the Scottish Widows group. The Chair thanked Heather for her support.

Group agreement

- The group agreed to support this request with Heather Chambers chairing the Scottish Widows group. Other group members will be made up of representatives from administering authorities affected by the issue.

15. Transfer out - Conga audit trail

On 3 November 2023, Jayne Wiberg emailed standing members with an example 'Conga audit trail' for use in the completion of transfer out declaration forms by a private sector transfer company. Member were asked to supply comments agreeing

Prepared by Jayne Wiberg – National LGPS Technical Group Secretariat

or disagreeing with its use for discussion at this meeting. The group agreed to go back to their POGs and request each administering authority raise specific queries that can be put to Pensions Bee addressing any concerns that, in their view, prevents the use of the conga audit trail.

Update

Since the last meeting the LGA received communication from a POG thanking them for their engagement in this area. Though acknowledging there appears to be no easy solution that will satisfy all administering authorities. The group confirmed they would not support the use of the Conga trail as a means to replace existing procedures.

The LGA had an initial conversation with Pensions Bee and informed them of this feedback. They expressed their view that it is possible there may not be a way forward, though they would confirm if there was any feedback contrary to this after this Technical Group meeting.

Group agreement

- The group agreed to discuss the matter at their regional POGs and report back at the next meeting in June 2024.

16. Terms of reference discussion

The Terms of Reference were last approved in March 2019.

Advance notice

- Standing members of the group will be asked to vote on new terms of reference at the June 2024 meeting.

Group agreement

- Following receipt of a Terms of Reference report around the beginning of May 2024, standing members agreed to discuss the options at their regional POGs to be able to vote of the new terms of reference at the meeting in June 2024.

17. LGA technical queries (standing agenda item)

All [LGA technical queries](#) with DLUHC can be found on the 'technical group minutes' page of www.lgpsregs.org. The latest version is dated 21 March 2023.

All [LGA technical queries](#) with SPPA can be found on the ‘technical group minutes’ page of www.scotlgpsregs.org. The latest version is dated 4 May 2022.

To note.

18. LGA GAD queries (standing agenda item)

All LGA GAD queries for England & Wales can be found on the Actuarial guidance page of www.lgpsregs.org. The latest version is dated 6 April 2022.

All LGA GAD queries for Scotland can be found on the Actuarial guidance page of www.scotlgpsregs.org. The latest version is dated 6 April 2022.

To note.

19. Historical decisions (standing agenda item)

All [recommendations / agreements / outcome of decisions](#) made by the National LGPS Technical Group from 1 April 2014 to date can be found on the ‘technical group minutes’ page of www.lgpsregs.org and www.scotlgps.org.

To note.

20. Recommendations - SAB England and Wales (standing agenda item)

[Recommendations](#) made to the SAB England and Wales from April 2014 to date can be found on the ‘technical group minutes’ page of www.lgpsregs.org and www.scotlgps.org.

See update from DLUHC [agenda item 9](#) for further information.

To note.

21. Group membership (standing agenda item)

The current list of [group membership](#) can be found on the ‘technical group minutes’ page of www.lgpsregs.org and www.scotlgps.org.

- Suzanne Firth confirmed as the NEPOF representative.

22. Any other business (standing agenda item)

None.

2) Meeting agenda item 9: Recommendations and queries raised by the group with DLUHC

Full details of all the [recommendations](#) can be found on Technical Group page of www.lgpsregs.org.

Removing the five year limit on the payment of 2014 refunds

On 12 March 2019, the National LGPS Technical Group recommended to the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) in England & Wales, that the five year limit on 2014 refunds be removed. On 27 September 2019 SAB wrote to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Luke Hall MP) recommending the changes be considered by the Department. SAB confirmed on 18 November 2019 that MHCLG (now DLUHC) would be happy to take forward this recommendation for change.

Over three years since the initial recommendation, nothing has moved and at the meeting of 10 March 2023 the group request DLUHC provide a definitive timescale by when a change can be expected.

On 9 June 2023 DLUHC confirmed they are currently looking into this matter from a policy perspective and are considering a timeline for any potential change, subject to the priority of other work and Ministerial approval. In order to determine how many members are materially affected by the changes requested to refunds, DLUHC request administering authorities to provide the following information:

- number of 2014 refunds that where the member left active membership of the scheme before 1 June 2019 – the reason for look at cases that are more than 4 years old is to account for the time it might take to amend the regulations.

On 29 September 2023, Alan confirmed DLUHC are deciding whether to take this request for change forward and thank everyone who provided data and comments as requested at the last technical group meeting. DLUHC received data from 35 administering authorities indicating in aggregate they hold around 60,000 deferred refunds. If this data is an indication of the average held across the scheme, this would mean that there are around 150,000 deferred refunds. If the change is approved it will be included in the amending statutory instrument covering survivor benefits.

On 8 December 2023, Alan confirmed they are currently looking into this item (as one of the items on the SAB technical query list) and thank everyone who provided data and comments as requested at the last technical group meeting.

Forfeiture policy change

On 26 November 2018, the National LGPS Technical Group recommended to the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) in England & Wales to change the policy behind the forfeiture regulations. Currently, the wording does not address historical events coming to light, which are now more frequent in today's society. On 27 September 2019 SAB wrote to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Luke Hall MP) recommending the changes be considered by the Department. SAB confirmed on 18 November 2019 that MHCLG (now DLUHC) would be happy to take forward this recommendation for change.

Over three years since the initial recommendation, nothing has moved and the group request DLUHC to provide a definitive timescale by when a change can be expected.

On 9 September 2023 DLUHC confirmed they are currently developing a consultation document for survivor benefit reforms (application of the Goodwin case and removal of nomination requirement), with the associated checks and processes to follow before publishing the consultation. This consultation will also feature proposed reforms to the rules on forfeiture within the LGPS, which we plan to launch later this year:

- to extend the time limit from three to six months for a scheme employer to submit a forfeiture application, with the timer to begin at sentencing rather than conviction
- to remove the requirement that to be eligible for forfeiture the convicted person must have left their employment because of the offence they committed
- remove regulation 92 (interim payments directions) to due incorrect drafting.

On 29 September 2023, Alan confirmed they are currently developing a consultation for survivor benefit reforms (application of the Goodwin case and removal of nomination requirement), with the associated checks and processes to follow before publishing the consultation. This consultation will also feature proposed reforms to the rules on forfeiture within the LGPS.

On 8 December 2023, Alan confirmed they are currently developing a consultation for survivor benefit reforms (application of the Goodwin case and removal of nomination requirement), with the associated checks and processes to follow before publishing the consultation. This consultation will also feature proposed reforms to the rules on forfeiture within the LGPS. Discussion with HMT and GAD on implementation.

Aggregation and concurrency

On 12 March 2019, the National LGPS Technical Group recommended to the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) in England & Wales, to change the regulations concerning aggregation and concurrency to reflect the position prior to 1 April 2014 (i.e. upon leaving active membership in a concurrent employment, and upon aggregation with the continuing employment, administrators are required to apply an adjustment to the pre 1-April 2014 final salary membership).

On 27 September 2019 SAB wrote to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Luke Hall MP) recommending the changes be considered by the Department. SAB confirmed on 18 November 2019 that MHCLG (now DLUHC) would be happy to take forward this recommendation for change.

Over three years since the initial recommendation, nothing has moved and the group request DLUHC to provide a definitive timescale by when a change can be expected.

On 29 September 2023, Alan confirmed when DLUHC have available resources this matter will be looked at.

On 8 March 2024, the group agreed this recommendation should be removed from the 'to do' list because administrators are applying the current regulations.

AVCs used to purchase additional pension

On 13 December 2019, the National LGPS Technical Group recommended to the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) in England & Wales, to change the policy behind the regulations that restrict a deferred member who left the Scheme before 1 April 2014, from using their AVC pot to purchase additional pension in the Scheme. Currently, only members who left the Scheme after 31 March 2014 are able to make use of this provision. On 16 December 2019 the SAB Secretariat proposed the change to MHCLG (now DLUHC).

Over three years since the initial recommendation, nothing has moved and the group request DLUHC to provide a definitive timescale by when a change can be expected.

On 29 September 2023, Alan confirmed when DLUHC have available resources this matter will be looked at.

QROPS transfer in

The LGPS regulations prescribe that a transfer in can only be accepted from a registered pension scheme or a European pensions institution. When defining a European pensions institution we need to look at the Pensions Act (PA) 2004. The

wording in section 293(8) of the PA 2004 that previously referred to an EU directive, have been removed post UK withdrawal from the EU on 31 December 2020. This means that until / if the LGPS regulations are updated, overseas transfers cannot be accepted. The matter was raised with DLUHC following the National LGPS Technical Group meeting on 17 June 2022.

At the last meeting on 10 March 2023 DLUHC confirmed this issue is included with the wider EU law issue. This covers areas of the scheme that have been impacted due to the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Alan confirmed he had a meeting on the afternoon of 10 March 2023 covering this matter and agreed to contact the group with an update before the next meeting on 9 June 2023.

On 9 June 2023 DLUHC confirmed they are working with HMT and DWP on work related to Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill to establish a full and current position on QROPS transfers in but have not committed to making any changes to regulations. Following recent advice, we understand that the LGPS is not affected by the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, however there are some changes that may be required in due course to correct references that no longer work now that we have left the EU. We are currently working with HMT and DWP on some of these potential changes, but we have not yet identified a timeframe for implementation. In order to determine how many members are materially affected by the changes requested to QROPS transfers in, DLUHC request administering authorities to provide the following information:

- number of QROPS transfers in that have been declined / placed on hold until the regulations are amended.

On 29 September 2023, Alan confirmed DLUHC are deciding whether to take this request for change forward and thank everyone who provided data and comments as requested at the last technical group meeting. DLUHC received data indicating one administering authority has one case outstanding.

3) Meeting agenda item 10: SPPA update

Provided by Kimberley Linge on 20 May 2024.

Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2024

The Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018 provided that pensions risks were to be shared more fairly between employers and administering

authorities. Previously scheme employers were responsible for any estimated shortfall against their liabilities at the point of exit but could not receive any surplus.

Changes were subsequently made to the regulations in England and Wales in 2020, to provide that administering authorities have a discretion to determine the amount of exit credit which should be payable to an employer leaving the Local Government Pension Scheme (the LGPS).

We have been approached by administering authorities and asked to make similar amendments to the regulations in Scotland to those made in England and Wales. These Regulations will amend the LGPS (Scotland) Regulations 2018 to create a discretion for administering authorities to determine the amount of exit credit which should be payable to an employer leaving the LGPS.

[The Local Government Pension Scheme \(Scotland\) \(Amendment\) \(No.2\)](#)

[Regulations 2024](#) replicate those changes made in England and Wales in 2020.

SPPA are conducting a short technical consultation in order to lay these regulations before summer recess. This consultation will run for three weeks from 10 May 2024 to 30 May 2024. These changes will apply retrospectively from 1 June 2018.

[Government Actuary's Department - Early and Late Retirement Guidance](#)

If a member chooses to retire before their Normal Pension Age (NPA), their benefits will be reduced, as they are being paid out for longer. Conversely, if a member chooses to retire after their NPA, their benefits are enhanced. The benefits are either reduced or enhanced using factors provided by the Government Actuary Department (GAD).

Following the exercise to update factors due to changes in the SCAPE discount rate last year, the SPPA asked GAD in its capacity as Scheme Actuary, to recommend actuarial guidance to be used along with the new Early and Late Retirement factors which were implemented in September 2023.

GAD consulted with SPPA and the Local Government Association and SPPA have now signed off the completed the guidance which has now been issued to funds.

[Updated Ill-health Guidance](#)

The purpose of the SPPA Guide to Ill Health Retirement and Early Payment of Deferred Benefits is to provide guidance to employing & administering authorities about ill health retirement, and is of particular relevance to Line Managers, HR Staff and Appointed Persons reviewing appeals at Stage 1 of the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure.

As a result of our collaboration with stakeholders and based on their comments and Pensions Ombudsman guidance, changes have been made to clarify the requirements for employers and administrators. The updated Ill-health guidance was completed and sent out to administering authorities via [Circular 2024/03](#) and is available on the [SPPA website](#).

Contact: Kimberly.linge@gov.scot or Craig.finlay@gov.scot

4) Meeting agenda item 11: SAB England & Wales update

Provided by Jeremy Hughes on 22 May 2024.

Annual report guidance

Revised annual reporting guidance is now available. It is intended a brief review of the content will be undertaken towards the end of the calendar year to obtain feedback from funds as to how easy it was to implement. There is also a meeting between LGA and DLUHC to review proposals to amend the SF3 return so that it asks for a similar table of data on investments.

Opt-out survey

On 20 May 2024, SAB issued a short survey to local government employers aimed at improving our understanding of the membership of the LGPS and why some people choose to opt out. SAB are interested in what data employers hold, their experience of staff opting out and the value placed on offering a high-quality defined-benefit scheme like the LGPS in recruitment and retention by those organisations. Responses will provide data SAB can use to review aspects of scheme design and the information that is provided to eligible staff about the LGPS. The survey closes on 9 June 2024.

The Secretariat is also interested in views from Technical Group colleagues whether any other information is requested when employees opt out of the LGPS above and beyond the template opt-out form available on the LGPS regulations website. Other information such as the reason for opting out, employment and/or other equality information.

Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) guidance

The current FSS guidance was last updated in 2016. A working group has begun the review and is drafting revised content to:

- deal more fully with the setting up of academies on conversion

- cover the 'new' employer flexibilities and Deferred Debt Arrangements
- develop guidance on consulting with employers and other relevant parties
- address recent employer representations around asset strategies and 'partial terminations'
- give pointers on policies needed for considering exit debts and credits.

Key aims are to make the guidance shorter, sharper and more accessible to draft the FSS for all stakeholders – such as scheme employers. The ambition is to get a revised draft approved through SAB, CIPFA and DLUHC channels before the end of the calendar year.

Cost control mechanism

The Government Actuary's Department has [published the final outcome](#) of the HM Treasury 2020 valuation of LGPS England and Wales. The methodology by which it is undertaken was revised last year, which widened the cost corridor (the amount by which the scheme costs could vary from the target cost before action was taken to address it) from two per cent to three per cent. The process was also revised to include consideration of the wider economic situation through a new "economic check" that was introduced alongside the previously established core cost control mechanism.

The valuation has found that the core 'cost cap cost' of the scheme lies outside the three per cent cost control mechanism corridor (3.2 per cent below target cost). The new 'economic cost cap cost' of the scheme also lies outside the three per cent corridor, but in the other direction (7.3 per cent above target cost). As a result, the mechanism as a whole is not breached and the Government is not proposing to make any changes to scheme benefits.

The Board will publish the final results of its own scheme cost assessment process, as set out in revised regulation 116 of the LGPS Regulations 2013 and which runs in parallel with the HMT process, very shortly. However, when the Board discussed the draft results, it was agreed that no recommendations would be made to change scheme benefits.

Consolidation of LGPS administering authorities

The Local Government Minister, Simon Hoare MP, has written to all LGPS administering authority chief executives in England asking them for an update on pooling of investments. At the same time he has asked them to consider whether they could make "long-term efficiency savings and efficiencies if your LGPS fund became part of a larger fund through merger or creation of a larger pensions

authority". The Minister has asked for 'plans' to be returned by 19 July 2024 and has held roundtable events to discuss the plans.

In response to this and ongoing discussion within the LGPS community on structures, the Board is also arranging two roundtables, one for officers and one for pension committee chairs, in person on 27 June 2024 at the LGA offices, and one online on 25 June.

Good governance

We expect the long-awaited consultation on DLUHC's response to the good governance recommendations to go live in early summer. That will include draft amendments to regulations and guidance to implement most of the recommendations made. The main regulations to be changed are regulations 55 (Governance Compliance Statements) and 59 (Pension Administration Strategy).

The Local Government Minister also allowed budget in year 24/25 for SAB to take on another member of staff, with initial thinking being this person will scope out the good governance recommendation to establish a peer support offer for LGPS funds.

The Pensions Regulator's (TPR) new general code

In February 2024, shortly after the new code was published, SAB held an online focus group for funds to gather initial feedback on the code and understand what support and interpretation is needed to assist funds with code compliance. The Secretariat has since met separately with the main governance advisers to ensure there are not mixed messages being sent out to funds. We have also hosted a [webinar](#) that focussed on the code and provided an opportunity to discuss the requirements and challenges it presents for the LGPS.

Given the clear overlaps with the upcoming consultation on implementation of the good governance recommendations (as well as the Compliance and Reporting Committee's Knowledge and Skills workstream) the Secretariat believes we need to see what changes they bring before SAB offers advice on what funds need to do next. In doing so, we hope that implementation of the good governance recommendations will remove some of the ambiguity in the code as to what funds ought to be doing.

SAB also met with TPR to discuss the review of the public sector toolkit. TPR have said this is being revised but would not commit to it remaining a standalone product for the public sector, and said it might be incorporated into a new series of thematic toolkits they were producing.

Gender Pensions Gap (GPG)

The working group established by SAB continues to explore four key areas:

1. Investigate feasibility of changes to regulations to extend the deadline for scheme members to elect for shared cost additional pension contributions.
2. Plan specific communications needed for employers to raise awareness of the specific issues which impact the GPG within the LGPS regulations, particularly during scheme member life events.
3. Work with LGA workforce team on increasing awareness of GPG and identify the policy solutions which could have a positive impact.
4. Continue the discussions with DLUHC on the progress of New Fair Deal and impact of outsourcing on the GPG.

In terms of actions since the last National LGPS Technical Group meeting:

- a frequently asked questions document to support funds and employers in ensuring that members can make well informed choices about their pensions throughout their working career, particularly, eg during periods of unpaid leave, is being developed
- a webinar for local government HR professionals was hosted on 9 May 2024, alongside the LGA's workforce team. The aim was to improve awareness of the gender pensions gap for HR practitioners and encourage them to review the information and pension communications provided for their staff at key life points
- the [Board has written](#) to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury asking for the government to take a consistent and active approach to tackling the gender pensions gap across public sector pension schemes. An update on the work of the Gender Pensions Gap Working Group will be provided to the Cost Management, Benefit Design and Administration Committee when it next meets on 1 July 2024.

SAB is also considering partnering with the Pensions Policy Institute to further explore the data and research on this topic, particularly in relation to intersectionality with other protected characteristics (eg ethnicity, disability and working pattern). A number of scheme employers and one LGPS fund have offered to work with SAB to explore their policies and data. More volunteers are welcome and funds should contact the Board Secretariat, if interested. However, there are still significant funding and data protection issues to be overcome in progressing this work.

LGPS fund audit

The Board along with the Institute for Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) is publishing a guide to explain the timeline and information flow for triennial valuation and accounting/audit purposes. The guide should be published by the date of the meeting and its aims are:

- to aid mutual understanding, explaining some of the background and respective constraints
- signposting the different parties to where they should be requesting the information that they need
- to provide visual maps showing the flow of information between employers, actuaries, funds, custodians and auditors
- provide a model questionnaire with key questions for actuaries to complete each year and provide to scheme employer auditors.

The intended audience are auditors, fund practitioners and employers. Once published, funds will be asked to share the guide with employers.

5) Meeting agenda item 12: Dashboards updates software suppliers

Heywood Pension Technologies update

Provided by John Dale on 21 May 2024.

Draft standards

- Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) have provided the latest draft data, technical and code of connection standards
- we have reviewed the standards and are currently assessing the changes required to our ISP software, file validation, documentation etc.

Sales and implementation update

- sales activity remains high and further significant wins have been made
- implementation planning in progress.

Customer and industry engagement update

- further participation in PDP user research
- we have added a connection date checker to our website, you can check your connection date [here](#)

- we continue to work with other members of the National LGPS Technical Group sub-group – AVCs and dashboards, to assist LGA with AVC guidance.

Development update

- our ISP scrum team are developing to the latest draft data and technical standards, in preparation for re-connection to the test central digital architecture in August 2024
- ISP user interface development in progress.

Civica update

Provided by Lissa Evans on 22 May 2024.

Civica have been working closely with MaPS to make sure they are on track with on-boarding to the dashboard ecosystem:

- a client re-engagement session was held on 10 April 2024, with Chris Curry from MaPs as the keynote speaker.
- a Public Sector dashboard webinar was hosted on 22 May 2024 where Jayne Wiberg presented to Civica customers
- there will be other monthly sessions arranged from June 2024 when the session will concentrate on workflows for dashboard, followed by a technical/security session in July, and a compliance and connection session in August
- Civica have also been participating in user experience testing of the tools used to connect to the dashboard.

6) Meeting agenda item 13: Possible new McCloud survey

Supplied by Vicky Jenks, Jo Griffiths and Karen Gibson on 13 May 2024.

For discussion at the next technical meeting. Vicky Jenks, Jo Griffiths and Karen Gibson have put together some questions for the McCloud Survey, they think are useful in order to see the progress of Funds, and the areas that are creating barriers for them to progress. From that the Technical Group may or may not be able to support with removing barriers. They have kept the survey short so it does not take too much time to complete.

McCloud Questions

Q1 Do you hold the working hours and service break data for the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2022 for your scheme membership?

Q2 Have you loaded the hours and breaks data to your pensions administration system for the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2022 for your scheme membership?

Q3 Have you cleansed and verified the hours and breaks data loaded to your pensions administration system for the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2022 for your scheme membership?

Q4 Are you able to process business as usual tasks involved with McCloud?

Q4a if no what are the barriers? (ie system, resource, outstanding guidance)

Q4b what are the specific types of work you cannot process?

Q5 Have you started the rectification work?

Q5a if YES how much of the rectification project have you completed? - express as a percentage

Q5b If NO what are the barriers?

Q6 Do you feel you have adequate resources to complete the McCloud project? If no what are the barriers?

Q7 Have you created any workarounds that could help other Funds - that you would be willing to share?

Q8 Please add any further information to issues you are facing to deliver this project?