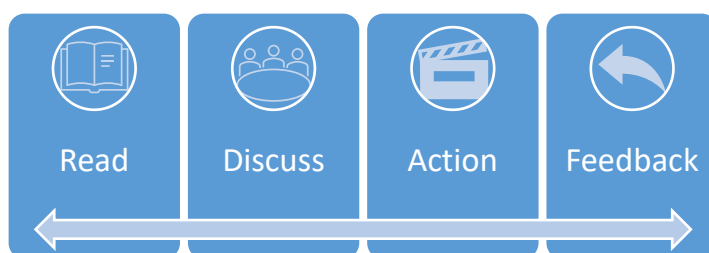


FPS Bulletin May – 2026

Welcome to issue 105 of the Firefighters' Pensions Schemes bulletin.

We would encourage you to read this bulletin, taking note of and carrying out any relevant actions. This may entail escalating items, alerting colleagues where necessary, and circulating and discussing this bulletin in other forums including but not limited to others within your FRAs i.e. HR or Finance colleagues, Local Pension Boards and third-party administrators/payroll providers.



If you are looking for information on a certain topic, issue and content indexes are held on the [main bulletin page](#) of the website and are updated following each new issue.

If you have any comments on this bulletin, suggested items for future issues, or a job you would like to advertise, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

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Calendar of events

Please see below a calendar of upcoming events relevant to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. Only those events which are hyperlinked are currently available to book. If you have any events you would like to be included in a future bulletin, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

Table 1: Calendar of events

Event	Date
FPS Coffee Morning	10 June 2026
FPS Technical Working Group	18 August 2026
SAB	17 June 2026
FPS Communications Working Group	21 July 2026
Local Pension Board training	2026 dates and booking
LPB Chair Forum	15 July 2026
Administrator Forum	19 June 2026
LGA FRA drop-in session	23 June 2026
IDRP Training	2026 dates and booking
Induction Training	2026 dates and booking
Ill Health Retirement Training	2026 dates and booking
Scheme Manager Training	2026 dates and booking
Fire Pensions Conference	6 and 7 October 2026 – save the date! Details to be shared once confirmed

Actions arising

Scheme Managers

[Contingent Decision Guidance Update](#): identify affected cases and, where members are nearing retirement consider how cases will be handled.

[GAD Manual Cases Update](#):

- ensure all manual cases are referred to GAD for processing prior to 31 July 2026. This should include all relevant additional information, as specified within the Manual Cases Process Note
- ensure staff processing Matthews cases are familiar with the manual cases note, and that appropriate checks against it are completed for each case processed.

[GAD Calculator V2.9.1 - Error with future interest rate](#): FRAs to update the Matthews 2 Calculator (v2.9.1) with the May interest file to correct the April 2026 future interest rate and review any cases with April 2026 calculation dates where periodic contributions apply.

[Change to SCAPE discount rate and Actuarial Factor Review](#): Scheme Managers should familiarise themselves and ensure that the actions listed in article [FPS 1992 Commutation Factors](#) are carried out in a timely manner.

[New Cash Equivalent Transfer Value \(CETV\) and divorce factors effective from 19 May 2026](#): Scheme Managers should ensure that the new factors are implemented from 19 May 2026.

[Next Factor Updates](#): Scheme Managers should liaise with administrators on how estimates and future retirements will be dealt with to ensure members are made aware that figures provided may be subject to change.

[Training and Development](#): are encouraged to:

- allow their employees to attend the relevant training on offer, where it will help with their role and ongoing development.
- inform us of any specific areas of pensions training that they would like to see.

Administrators

[Contingent Decision Guidance Update](#): Administrators should ensure they familiarise themselves with the updated guidance, in particular the information about how records for affected members should be handled.

[Contacts for Club Transfer information between public service pension schemes](#): Administrators to advise LGA of their named contact or specific inbox for incoming queries about club transfers affected by the remedy from other public service

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pension schemes by **12th June 2026**.

[Change to SCAPE discount rate and actuarial factor review](#): Administrators should work with Scheme Managers to implement these actions and liaise with software suppliers to ensure the new factors are installed into systems as soon as possible.

[New Cash Equivalent Transfer Value \(CETV\) and divorce factors effective from 19 May 2026](#): ensure new factors are implemented from 19 May 2026.

[Next Factor Updates](#): Agree a process with Scheme Managers for how estimates and future retirements will be dealt with pending further factor updates.

Local Pension Boards

Local Pension Board members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Bulletin each month and seek assurance through Local Pension Board meetings that actions for Scheme Managers and administrators have been completed.

[Local Pension Board Training Sessions](#): are encouraged to book onto the relevant session for them

Age Discrimination Remedy updates

Contingent Decision Guidance Update

In [FPS Bulletin 103 – March 2026](#) we updated readers on the publication of the [Written Ministerial Statement](#) relating to certain FPS 1992 members who opted-out of pensionable service due to the 2015 reforms and were unable to reinstate their remediable service in the FPS 1992.

The Government confirmed its intention to address this through use of the Act's special case powers. This will be done through regulations. This will enable eligible members who opted out due to discrimination to elect to reinstate and treat opted out service during the remedy period as pensionable in their last accrued legacy scheme.

In the [coffee morning](#) held on 12 May, an update was provided to the sector on the legal advice obtained by the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) which outlines that FRAs can act in advance of legislation and that the risks of doing so are low.

There have been two cohorts of FPS 1992 members on hold pending the government decision on how remedy can be applied to these members:

1. Those who opted out of the on or after 1 April 2015 and re-joined before the end of the remedy period
2. Those who opted out on or before 31 March 2015.

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Members are only able to reinstate opted out service for the remedy period. Therefore, for those in the second group who opted out before 31 March 2015, there will be a break in pensionable service between when they opted out and 1 April 2015. They will not be able to reinstate this period; however, their continuity of service will be maintained.

For these cases, administrators should ensure the member's record is updated as follows if a member elects to go ahead with a contingent decision:

- The deferred record should be cancelled
- The member's FPS 1992 record should be reactivated and linked to the ongoing 2015 record
- A break in pensionable service should be inserted on the member's record for the opted-out period prior to 1 April 2015.

This period should be treated as non-qualifying and non-reckonable service for pension purposes. This would therefore mean that the opt out period prior to 1 April 2015 would not count towards any service calculations i.e. age 50 plus with 25 years' service or 30 years' service.

- To support clarity and consistency on pension service history views it was agreed by the FTWG that the sector introduces a new reason code in systems for this type of break: 'Contingent Decision Opt-Out Break'.

This will allow the break to be distinguished from other types of breaks, support accurate reporting and assist future case reviews.

The [Scheme Manager Contingent Decision Guidance](#) and [Member Contingent Decision guidance](#) documents have now been updated to reflect the current position.

ACTION: FRAs should identify affected cases and, where members are nearing retirement consider how cases will be handled.

ACTION: Administrators should ensure they familiarise themselves with the updated guidance.

Contacts for Club Transfer information between Public Service Pension Schemes

The GAD McCloud working group, comprising representatives from across the public service pensions sector, has produced a contacts list for administrators to use where they need to liaise with other schemes to obtain or chase up club transfer information in order to complete a member's record before an RSS can be produced.

This contacts list is available in the Member Area of the FPS Regulations and

Guidance website in the [Age Discrimination Remedy – Useful Information](#) section.

To assist other public service pension schemes, we would also like to be able to provide direct contacts for each FPS administrator – whether that be a named contact or a dedicated remedy or transfers inbox.

If you have a named contact or a specific inbox that you would like other public service schemes to use when querying transfer information, please email the details to bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk by **12 June 2026**.

ACTION: Administrators to advise LGA of their named contact or specific inbox for incoming queries about club transfers affected by the remedy from other public service pension schemes by **12th June 2026**.

Matthews exercise updates

GAD Manual Cases Update

GAD has updated the Manual Cases Process Note and this is now available within the [Special Members of FPS 2006 - GAD Calculator](#) section of the FPS Regulations and Guidance website.

The updated process note contains further detail on what data should be shared with GAD for each specific manual case type. A number of new manual case types have also been added to reflect the amended regulations.

An updated proforma for retrospective ill-health cases has also been provided (version 2). The calculations are the same as version 1 of the proforma and Annex C, but the new version improves the presentation of the results.

ACTION: To be able to process by the end of 2026, GAD require all manual cases to be referred to them for processing **prior to 31 July 2026**. This includes all relevant additional information, as specified within the Manual Cases Process Note.

ACTION: Scheme managers must ensure staff processing Matthews cases are familiar with the manual cases note, and that appropriate checks against it are completed for each case processed

GAD Calculator V2.9.1 - Error with future interest rate

GAD has advised that they have uncovered an error with the future interest rate included in versions 2.9 and 2.9.1 of the Matthews 2 Calculator.

The error affects the calculation of periodic contribution amounts when using a calculation date in April 2026. This can be corrected by updating the calculator with the May interest file, as this file contains the correct future interest rate for April 2026.

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They have advised Fire & Rescue Authorities to update the version 2.9.1 calculator with the May interest file and consider:

- rerunning calculations cases run with April 2026 calculation dates (where periodic contributions are required).
- reissuing affected member statements.
- revising collection of affected periodic contributions.

The incorrect April 2026 future interest rate was lower than it should have been (4.51% AER versus 4.90% AER). Recalculations will result in higher periodic payment amounts if input data are consistent.

Other outputs and calculations for calculations dates outside of April 2026 are unaffected.

GAD apologises that this error has occurred and are sorry for any disruption caused. They will be reviewing the monthly interest file production process and reinforcing where necessary ahead of sharing forthcoming interest rate files.

ACTION: FRAs should update the Matthews 2 Calculator (v2.9.1) with the May interest file to correct the April 2026 future interest rate and review any cases with April 2026 calculation dates where periodic contributions apply.

FPS

Change to SCAPE discount rate and actuarial review

On 19 May, the LGA [advised](#) Scheme Managers that HM Treasury had confirmed through a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) that the SCAPE discount rate was to increase with effect from 19 May 2026.

This change triggered a review of the actuarial factors used within the scheme. This includes, but is not limited to, commutation for the FPS 1992, early retirement, transfers in and out of the scheme, pension debits and added pension.

Updated FPS 1992 Commutation Factors

On 21 May, GAD published the revised [FPS 1992 commutation factors](#) along with a helpful [Q&A document](#) to support the factor tables. The revised factors took **immediate effect** for any retirements **on or after 21 May 2026**.

As a result of the increase to the SCAPE discount rate, commutation factors have **reduced**. In some cases, the reduction in the lump sum could be up to 5% but this will vary depending on personal circumstances.

To support clear and consistent messaging for members, the LGA provided a

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) document along with template member communications for use on intranet sites and a targeted letter for members. These templates are available in the [Scheme Valuations – Restricted](#) section in the Member Area of the FPS Regulations and Guidance website.

Scheme Managers should now take the following actions:

- **Familiarise yourself with the FAQs** to ensure a clear understanding of the changes and to support a consistent approach to messaging across the sector.
- **Communicate with members** on the changes and signpost to the FAQs, using the provided templates.
- **Ensure the correct factors are applied** to all retirements on or after 21 May 2026.
- **Recall payments where possible** – any retirement payments already processed should be immediately recalled through the BACS system where feasible.
- **Manage overpayments** – where recall is not possible and an overpayment has occurred, members must be informed as soon as possible and an appropriate recovery plan agreed.
- **Review commutation decisions** – members affected by the change who have already made a commutation election should be given the opportunity to revisit their options. This applies to:
 - Cases crystallised on or after 21 May 2026; and
 - Pipeline cases due to retire imminently.
- **Agree communications ownership** – confirm whether the Fire and Rescue Authority (as Scheme Manager) or the administrator will lead on member communications.
- **Review estimate cases** – agree a process with the administrator for revisiting previously issued estimates impacted by the change

ACTION: Scheme Managers should implement the actions listed above for affected members in a timely manner.

ACTION: Administrators should work with Scheme Managers to implement these actions and liaise with software suppliers to ensure the new factors are installed into systems as soon as possible.

New Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) and related divorce factors effective from 19 May 2026

As part of the actuarial factor review, valuation of non-Club transfers in, CETVs and pensioner cash equivalents (including the calculation of these figures for divorce /dissolution proceedings) were temporarily suspended. This is because HM Treasury issued their CETV guidance note with immediate effect on the 19 May 2026.

On 21 May, GAD confirmed that the first batch of updated factors had been provided. This updated the following factor tables:

- Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETVs) for non-club transfer-out – (Tables x-201 to x-215)
- Pensioner cash equivalents for divorces – (Tables x-301 to x-312)
- Pension credits (divorce) – (Tables x-313 to x-317)
- Pension debits (divorce) – (Tables x-318 to x-328)

These factors take effect **from 19 May 2026**.

Calculations of non-Club transfers into the scheme are still suspended.

The updated consolidated factor workbook has been published on the relevant [GAD guidance](#) pages of the FPS Regulations and Guidance website. GAD has also published the revised consolidated factor workbook, alongside any associated guidance notes, on their own [Factor Hub](#).

ACTION: FRAs and administrators to ensure they are using the updated factors from 19 May 2026.

Removal of Factors

The following factor tables have now been removed from the consolidated factor workbook:

- Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) factors for pensioner members aged under 73
- Scheme Pays (LTA) factors

Next Factor Updates

It is expected that the next batch of factors will be available before the end of June and will include:

- Early retirement factors
- Late retirement factors
- Non-club transfer-ins

Following this, the remaining factors will be issued between July and November 2026. Note that the review may be affected by further changes to one or more underlying factors (such as longevity) while it is in progress. Any such change may impact on both the timelines above, and the new factors which emerge from the

review. So neither the timeline, nor the estimated impact of the change in factors can be predicted with certainty at this point.

- Trivial commutation
- Added pension
- Tax charges for Scheme Pays (AA)
- Club transfers

We understand that the current factors can continue to be used. However, FRAs and administrators should be mindful when providing any retirement figures or estimates for future dates as these factors are subject to change.

Whether or not a factor review is currently ongoing, when members are provided with retirement figures or estimates that rely on actuarial factors, they should be informed that the factors are subject to review from time to time, which may impact benefits payable. Any such retirement figures or estimates are therefore subject to change.

ACTION: FRAs to liaise with administrators on how estimates and future retirements will be dealt with to ensure members are made aware that figures provided may be subject to change.

ACTION: Administrators to agree a process with Scheme Managers for how estimates and future retirements will be dealt with pending further factor updates.

General technical query log

The [current log of queries and responses](#) can be accessed by practitioners in the member-restricted area of the FPS Regulations and Guidance website. The queries have been anonymised and divided into topics. The log is updated monthly in line with the bulletin release dates. Queries have been answered this month in the following categories:

- Modified Member – Injury Award

Matthews and Age discrimination remedy Query logs

We have three query logs:

- Age Discrimination remedy technical query log
- Matthews technical query log
- Matthews GAD calculator query log

The technical query logs can be accessed by practitioners in the restricted area of the FPS regulations and guidance website under the sections '[Age Discrimination remedy technical queries](#)' and '[Special members of the FPS 2006 technical queries](#)'. The Matthews GAD calculator query log can be accessed through the tab 'Calculator query log' in the Special members of [FPS 2006 - GAD calculator](#) section of the FPS Regulations and Guidance website.

The logs are updated monthly in line with the bulletin release dates.

As a reminder if you have a query relating to either the [Age Discrimination remedy](#) or [Matthews](#) GAD calculators you can email GAD using their dedicated inboxes FirePoliceMcCloudTaxInterest@gad.gov.uk or Firematthewscalculator@gad.gov.uk

Training and Development

Training and Development

Details of our training sessions are included on the [Training and Development](#) section of the [FPS regulations and guidance](#) website. The section sets out the training topics, dates that are available and how to book.

If there are any specific areas of training that you would like to see, please let us know via bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk or be part of our training working group.

ACTION:

Scheme managers are encouraged to:

- allow their employees to attend the relevant training on offer, where it will help with their role and ongoing development.
- inform us of any specific areas of pensions training that they would like to see.

Local Pension Board (LPB) Training Sessions

Details of the LPB training sessions are included on the [‘Training and Development’](#) section of the [FPS Board](#) website. The section sets out the dates that are available and how to book.

ACTION: Readers are asked to make their LPB members aware of the training sessions and encourage them to book onto a session.

Events

FPS coffee mornings

Our MS Teams coffee mornings are continuing in June 2026. The informal sessions lasting up to an hour allow practitioners to catch up with colleagues and hear a brief update on FPS issues from the LGA Bluelight team.

We are pleased to include the presentations from recent sessions below:

12 May 2026 – [Sargeant, WMS: Reinstatement of Opted Out Service, and TPO update.](#)

If you do not already receive the meeting invitations and would like to join us, please email bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk. Please note that attendance at the coffee mornings is generally restricted to FPS practitioners and managers.

FPS England Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) updates

SAB website

You can use the links below to find out about the latest updates on the work of the SAB and its committees on the SAB website:

- [SAB membership](#)
- [SAB meeting and agenda papers](#)
- [Committee meetings and agenda papers](#)

Other News and Updates

Pensions Commission interim report

The Pension Commission has published its interim report on the state of retirement saving in the UK.

The interim report:

- highlights key challenges in retirement saving across the UK, with 15 million people currently under saving for retirement
- sets the direction for further work to improve retirement outcomes ahead of final recommendations in 2027.

You can find out more in the [GOV.uk press release about the Pension Commission interim report](#) or read the [Pension Commission interim report](#).

AI and pensions – roundtable event

On 24 June 2026, Burges Salmon will be hosting an in-person event with Quietroom in London on AI and pensions. They will be exploring the risks of AI search tools giving members inaccurate information about their pension scheme, and what pension schemes should be doing about this.

[Find out more about the AI and pensions event](#) and book your place. The limited number of spaces will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Pensions Dashboards Programme



Dashboard Programme – Publications

PDP publish regular [publications](#) about the Pensions Dashboards and the Programme which you can find on their [website](#).

TPR blog – dashboard next steps

The Pensions Regulator (TPR) has published a [blog – Pensions dashboards: are schemes ready for the next step?](#)

In the blog, TPR:

- urges pension schemes to focus on value data and learn from user testing
- summaries the finding from the [market oversight report on data preparations](#) by large occupational schemes.

TPR dashboards summer webinar

On 8 July 2026, [TPR is holding its summer webinar](#). This will be its last webinar before the connection deadline of 31 October 2026. The webinar will cover:

- the latest insights from user testing
- practical learnings from industry
- an overview of TPR latest resources
- live Q&A with a panel of experts

Pension Dashboard Programme (PDP) testing

PDP continues to look for users to help in testing the MoneyHelper pensions dashboard. See the [Help test pensions dashboards](#) page of the PDP website to find out more about how to support testing and recruit testers.

Pension dashboards – new checklists

TPR has provided new practical checklists for pre- and post-connection at [Before and after connection: checklists](#)

Pension dashboards – Definition of ‘relevant members’

There is ongoing industry concern about the definition of “relevant members” and the potential cost of system changes needed to accurately return only the appropriate benefits, particularly where members hold multiple entitlements. While the policy intent of dashboards is to improve member awareness and reconnect individuals with their pensions, these cost implications are being considered with government

partners. In the meantime, schemes are not expected to make any immediate or significant system changes, with further guidance anticipated shortly.

Pension dashboards – news in brief

- [PDP blog on how dashboards will complement wider pension support](#)
- PDP has shared [recent findings from pensions dashboard testing](#)
- MaPS CEO expects the MoneyHelper dashboard to be available to the public in the 2027/28 financial year. PDP will provide an update on launch plans around the time of the 31 October 2026 connection deadline.
- The Pensions Regulator (TPR) has launched a [regulatory initiative](#) (RI) targeting defined benefit (DB) and hybrid pension schemes to assess how they are preparing their data ahead of connecting to dashboards

The Pensions Regulator (TPR)



TPR expectations on the use of AI

The Pensions Regulator (TPR) has published information on its expectations about governance of artificial intelligence (AI) use in pension administration. You can read more in the:

- [TPR AI plan](#)
- [TPR press release about the publication of the AI plan.](#)

The plan:

- Outlines TPR's role and approach to supporting the use of AI in pensions
- Clarifies TPR's expectations of administrators and scheme managers
- Sets out the steps TPR will take to enable safe AI adoption and innovation in the pension sector
- Covers how TPR will use AI technologies to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

TPR plans to publish more detailed guidance later in 2026 following industry engagement over the summer.

Corporate strategy consultation

[TPR is consulting on its corporate strategy](#) for the next five years. The consultation will close on 8 June 2026. TPR welcomes responses from scheme managers, employers, employer representative bodies and professional advisers.

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The Pensions Ombudsman

Corporate plan 2026/27

On 26 May, the Pensions Ombudsman (TPO) published their [corporate plan for 2026/27](#). In article [2026/27: Building on solid foundations](#), TPO chair, Deborah Evans, reflected on progress made in 2025/26 and highlighted that whilst complaint volumes rose by 14%, representing a 58% increase over 2 years, TPO closed nearly 11,000 complaints which is a 63% increase in closures since the implementation of their new operating model two years ago.

Recent determinations relating to discretions

TPO has published two Determinations relating to the consideration of discretions in scheme rules.

In case [CAS-81099-B2P1](#), the key issue related to the exercise of discretion to extend the 12-month time limit for a Club Transfer. Due to employer delays, the member missed this deadline, and the Ombudsman found that reasonable steps had not been taken to facilitate the transfer. As a result, the employer was directed to seek the administering authority's consideration of its discretion to extend the time limit, highlighting the importance of using discretionary provisions to address unfair outcomes.

In case [CAS-82907-M1J5](#), the key issue was the failure to consider a discretionary power to extend the three-year time limit for requesting a reassessment of ill health early retirement benefits. The Scheme had declined the application solely on the basis that it was out of time, without considering whether the discretion should be exercised. The Ombudsman upheld the complaint, emphasising that decision-makers must actively consider available discretions in light of the member's individual circumstances, and directed the Scheme to consider whether the time limit should be extended.

HMRC

HMRC Newsletter 181

On 28 May 2026, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) published [pension schemes newsletter 181](#). The newsletter contains updates on:

- Notification of the withdrawal of the pension scheme online service
- Inheritance Tax on pensions
- Relief at source

Inheritance tax – technical note

On 11 May 2026, HMRC published a [Technical note: Inheritance Tax on pensions](#). The technical note provides further detail on reforms to the Inheritance Tax treatment of pensions legislated for in the Finance Act 2026. The note explains how the legislation will operate in practice for personal representatives, pension scheme administrators and beneficiaries.

HMRC will continue to publish secondary legislation, guidance and supporting materials ahead of implementation in April 2027.

Inheritance tax – Consultation on information sharing regulations

HMRC is consulting on draft regulations to amend the Registered Pension Schemes (Provision of Information) Regulations 2006. The changes require pension providers and personal representatives to share information with each other, beneficiaries and HMRC in respect of a relevant deceased person's pension.

The [HMRC consultation on Inheritance tax and pensions – information sharing regulations](#) closes on 11 June 2026.

Useful links

- [The Firefighters' Pensions \(England\) Scheme Advisory Board](#)
- [FPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [FPS Member](#)
- [FPS1992 guidance and commentary](#)
- [The Pensions Regulator Public Service Schemes](#)
- [The Pensions Ombudsman](#)
- [HMRC Pensions Tax Manual](#)
- [LGA pensions website](#)
- [LGPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [LGPC Bulletins](#)
- [LGPS member site](#)
- [Scottish Public Pensions Agency - Firefighters](#)
- [Welsh Government Fire circulars](#)

- Pensions Dashboards
 - [TPR guidance and checklist](#)
 - [DWP guidance on connection](#)
 - [PASA connection readiness guidance](#)

Contact details

Update your contact details

Readers will be aware that we carried out an exercise to update your contact details in [FPS Bulletin 76 – December 2023](#).

Going forward if you need to update your contact details, please complete the [contact details form](#) and return to bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

Raising a query

If you have a technical query, please complete the 'query form', that is available on the [member area](#) of the FPS regulations and guidance website and email

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bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk and one of the team's Firefighters' pension advisers will get back to you. To avoid delays in receiving a response, please avoid emailing advisers directly.

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While every attempt is made to ensure the accuracy of the bulletin, it would be helpful if readers could bring any perceived errors or omissions to the attention of the Bluelight team by emailing bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

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