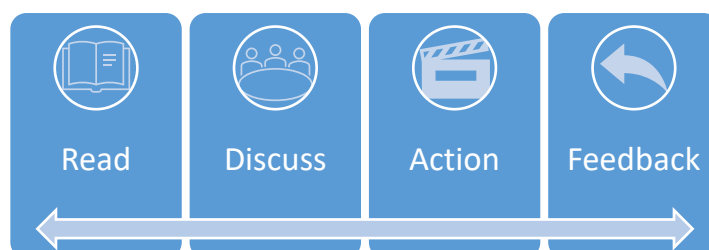


FPS Bulletin 92 – April 2025

Welcome to issue 92 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 | 13 May 2025 |
| FPS Technical Working Group | 22 May 2025 20 August 2025 24 November 2025 |
| SAB | 18 June 2025 11 September 2025 11 December 2025 |
| FPS Communications Working Group | 21 July 2025 15 October 2025 |
| Local Pension Board training | 16 June 2025 (MS Teams) <i>(fully booked)</i> 17 September 2025 (in person) 22 January 2026 (MS Teams) Refresher Training: 1 August 2025 (MS Teams) |
| LPB Chair Forum | 25 June 2025 26 August 2025 30 October 2025 |
| Administrator Forum | 12 May 2025 9 June 2025 14 July 2025 11 August 2025 8 September 2025 13 October 2025 10 November 2025 8 December 2025 |
| LGA FRA drop-in session | 23 May 2025 23 June 2025 23 July 2025 22 August 2025 23 September 2025 23 October 2025 (November date to be added) 23 December 2025 |
| Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) Training | 28 May 2025 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| III Health Retirement Training | <u>28 July 2025</u> |
| Induction Training | <u>8 May 2025</u> |

Actions arising

Scheme Managers:

[Contingent Decisions – opted out service reinstatement pause](#): should notify LGA via bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk should they have any contingent decision opt out cases where based on the current understanding they would end up with two legacy schemes in the remedy period.

[GAD guidance - Divorce](#): should ensure that their administrators are using the correct guidance and processing cases accordingly.

[Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act: amending Directions](#): will need to assess their position and implement the amendments and notify their administrator, where they have not already adopted the LGA recommendation.

[GAD calculator](#) - should ensure that the correct version of the calculator is being used. We advise that local versions of the calculator should not be made, and you refer to the website when needing to use the calculator to ensure the correct version is being used.

[FPS Top up Grant 2025](#): should ensure that their claim administrators/certifiers complete their return by **16 May 2025**

[Matthews Elections Data](#): should ensure that bulk input data for Matthew's elections up to and including 31 March 2025 are provided to GAD by **2 May 2025**.

[2025 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

[Pension Dashboard Programme – recent updates](#): should review the guidance and share with the relevant parties who are implementing dashboards for you.

[TPR launch dashboards industry social media campaign](#): should review TPR's toolkit and share its content with appropriate parties and complete the five actions TPR wants you take in preparing to connect.

[Registration codes](#): should review the hot topics article and share with the relevant parties who are implementing dashboards for you.

Administrators

[GAD guidance - Divorce](#): should ensure that they are using the correct guidance and processing cases accordingly.

[Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act: amending Directions](#): will need to liaise with their clients, where they have not already adopted the LGA recommendation.

Local Pension Boards

[Local Pension Board \(LPB\) training sessions](#): LPB members are encouraged to book onto a training session if they have not already done so.

Age Discrimination Remedy updates

Contingent Decisions – opted out service reinstatement pause

The Home Office are carrying out a forensic review of the legislation to determine what groups of members can reinstate opted out service to the FPS 1992.

Further to our [email](#) to the sector where we informed you that members who opted out after 31 March 2015 and did not rejoin during the remedy period can reinstate their opted out service within the remedy period to the FPS 1992. In addition, a further cohort of members with opted out service has now been identified as being able to reinstate to the FPS 1992, that is those that opted out after 31 March 2015 and did opt back in within the remedy period, but there are two important points to consider:

The period from date of rejoining to the end of the remedy period can still only be treated as FPS 2006, this period cannot under current legislation also be moved back to FPS 1992.

It is only the period of opted out service up to date of rejoining that can be reinstated to the FPS 1992.

We have raised the practical issues of implementing this, such as two legacy schemes in the remedy period, active service across two different legacy schemes, weighted accrual, how benefits are calculated and what remedy options the member can have.

To enable us to work with Home Office through some of the issues, scheme managers are urged to notify LGA at bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk as soon as possible if you identify any of these cases.

ACTION

Scheme managers should notify LGA via bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk should they have any contingent decision opt out cases where based on the current understanding they would end up with two legacy schemes in the remedy period.

GAD guidance – Divorce

The initial DRAFT versions of the retrospective divorce GAD guidance were issued to administrators and software suppliers on 24 March 2025 and 22 April 2025.

Administrators have also been invited to a joint police and fire Q&A session with GAD, with regards to the retrospective divorce guidance on 21 May.

The final version of the prospective divorce GAD guidance was issued to administrators and software suppliers on 24 March 2025 and has been published on the [Divorce \(pension debits and credits\)](#) section of the [FPS regulations and guidance](#) website.

This guidance should be used with effect from 1 October 2023.

ACTION

Scheme managers should ensure that their administrators are using the correct guidance and processing cases accordingly.

Administrators should ensure that they are using the correct guidance and processing cases accordingly.

Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act: amending Directions

In [FPS Bulletin 84 – August 2024](#) we provided detail on these changes following a [briefing paper](#) which set this out in more detail to scheme managers.

On 28 April 2025, [the Public Service Pensions \(Exercise of Powers, Compensation and Information\) \(Amendment\) Directions 2025](#) were made.

These directions come into force from 30 April 2025.

The LGA recommendation set out in point 16 of the briefing paper was that all scheme managers adopt the proposed position and allow contributions for active members to be repaid net of tax.

If, however, your FRA chose not to adopt this recommendation, you will need to amend your processes now.

ACTION

Scheme managers will need to assess their position and implement the amendments and notify their administrator, where they have not already adopted the LGA recommendation.

HMRC Offsetting guidance

As a result of remedy, some members will receive top-up payments of lump sum that will be unauthorised. This means the original unauthorised amount (UA) is now overpaid, the new UA needs to be offset from the old UA so the member pays the difference. This is known as offsetting.

- HMRC have amended regulations to allow for this and provided guidance on how the regulation provision for offsetting works.
 - HMRC legislation [The Public Service Pension Schemes \(Rectification of Unlawful Discrimination\)\(Tax\) Regulations 2025](#) this is the third set of tax regulations for discrimination and sets out the legislative position for the offsetting which is needed for immediate choice members who

previously received an unauthorised payment

- GAD have provided methodologies for how administrators will use the amended regulations to allow for this in practice. On 18 March 2025 GAD held a joint police and fire administrator meeting to discuss the offsetting guidance and to talk through some additional examples that they had prepared. The [slides](#) from this meeting are published in the [FPS Coffee morning](#) section of the [FPS regulations and guidance](#) website.

The guidance and examples are published in the [Age Discrimination Remedy - Useful Information](#) section of the [FPS regulations and guidance](#) website.

Matthews exercise updates

GAD Calculator

On 4 April 2025 GAD published version 2.7.0 of the Matthews 2 GAD calculator and user guidance. This has been published on the [Special members of FPS 2006 - GAD Calculator](#) section of the [FPS regulations and guidance](#) website.

We are aware that we were unable to publish this as promptly as we usually would have, and we apologise for any delays that this caused you.

This version of the calculator adds in the 2024/25 pension increases. The user guide update reflects the maximum commutation factor age difference between Northern Ireland and other jurisdictions.

This version of the calculator supersedes previous versions. Previous versions of the calculator should no longer be used.

The April interest file has already been loaded into v2.7.0. Future interest files will only work with the latest version of the Matthews 2 calculator.

ACTION

Scheme managers should ensure that the correct version of the calculator is being used. We advise that local versions of the calculator should not be made, and you refer to the website when needing to use the calculator to ensure the correct version is being used.

FPS

GAD guidance

Following a recent case that came via an FOI, readers are reminded that if there is a reference to refer cases to Home Office within **any** GAD guidance, that this should be done through LGA via bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk.

We encourage that you do not incorrectly inform members that guidance is outstanding, when no referral has been made.

FPS Top up grant 2025

On 24 April 2025 Home Office [emailed](#) claim administrators/certifiers to remind them that the DELTA forms for the Fire top up grant went live on 1 April 2025 and that the deadline for completion is **16 May 2025**.

ACTION

Scheme managers should ensure that their claim administrators/certifiers complete their return by **16 May 2025**

Matthews elections data

As a reminder, GAD have also asked FRAs to provide their data for final Matthews second options elections by Friday 2 May. This was initially announced in [FPS Bulletin 75](#) November 2023, page 6.

FRAs who have not progressed far enough with the exercise to have processed elections do not need to upload data. However, please do ensure you have responded to the Project Implementation Data request for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025.

We would like this data in the Matthews 2 Calculator bulk interface format. The following may be helpful steps to follow:

- FRAs who used the individual interface to process the election can use the 'Append to bulk interface' button to move details into the bulk interface (see user guide page 11 onwards).
- Once data is in the bulk interface it can be exported using the 'Export inputs' button (see user guide page 15 onwards).
- Inputs from the same version of the calculator can be collated together (e.g. using cut and paste in excel)
- We would suggest you upload separate version specific collated bulk input files for each calculator version (new calculator versions have introduced a handful of additional inputs. So, bulk input rows don't necessarily align between different version)

(Note it is possible to use the 'Import data' button to re-import inputs exported from earlier versions of the calculator into the latest version, which will align inputs correctly. However, for this valuation election data request GAD are happy to collate between different version specific collated bulk input files if more straightforward for FRAs

Data should be uploaded to the same FRA specific online secure Egress folder as the data extracts already provided using the Matthews 2 calculator bulk input format as described in [FPS Bulletin 75](#). Where FRAs don't already have employer-side

access to this and need it to upload this data, they can email Fire.2020Valuation@gad.gov.uk. We will send an invitation by return to the email address requested to access the respective folder.

ACTION

Scheme managers should ensure that bulk input data for Matthew's elections up to and including 31 March 2025 are provided to GAD by **2 May 2025**.

GAD recognise that the FRAs are extremely busy and appreciate your continued hard work on providing this data for the valuation. If FRAs have any queries about data for the valuation, please contact GAD at Fire.2020Valuation@gad.gov.uk.

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.

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:

- Injury on Duty

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

These logs record the technical queries we have been receiving under the age discrimination remedy, the Matthews exercise and the calculator queries that GAD have been receiving for in respect of the Matthews exercise.

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.

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The queries have been anonymised. The log is updated monthly in line with the bulletin release dates.

If you do not have access to the member restricted area of the FPS regulations and guidance website, you can request access by contacting the bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk inbox.

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

Firematthewscalculator@gad.gov.uk

Training and Development

2025 Training and Development

In [FPS Bulletin 88 – December 2024](#) we informed readers that we were launching a training programme for 2025. We are pleased to confirm that we have added a new [Training and Development](#) section to [FPS regulations and guidance](#) website, which provides information on what training and qualifications we are offering.

The training sessions that we have available, and the links to book are as follows:

Induction

[Virtual - 8 May 2025](#)

Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP)

[Virtual - 28 May 2025](#)

Ill Health retirement

[Virtual - 28 July 2025](#)

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.

Local Pension Board (LPB) Training Sessions

All 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 you book for these, as this will now be completed via a booking system, which is a change to the process.

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*Please note that you will need to put NA in the box where it asks for the purchase order.

The full training is aimed at newer LPB members, where they need a more detailed session on the different areas of FPS and their role. For this session we invite other stakeholders to cover certain sessions, including TPR, PDP and the Chair of the SAB.

The refresher training session is aimed at LPB members who have already received LPB training, as they have been a LPB member for a period already and just require a bit of a refresher in their knowledge.

This training is provided by the LGA Team and will provide a reminder of the purpose of an LPB, the key role and responsibilities of all stakeholders and the current hot topics.

If you have booked onto the full training and think that the refresher training would be more suitable, please contact us and we can transfer your booking.

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 May 2025. 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:

10 April 2025 – [Breaches recording and reporting](#)

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 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](#)

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

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

Other News and Updates

Fighting pension fraud webinar

On 25 March 2025, the Pension Scams Action Group (PSAG) held a webinar focused on fighting pension fraud.

PSAG is a multi-agency taskforce of law enforcement, government and industry working together to tackle pension fraud. Its core members include the Department for Work and Pensions, Financial Conduct Authority, His Majesty's Treasury, Money and Pensions Service, National Economic Crime Centre, Pension Scams Industry Group and The Pensions Regulator.

Key topics covered at the webinar:

- PSAG's strategic overview
- PSAG in action: updates on fraud prevention efforts
- replacing Action Fraud: The countdown to a new service from the City of London Police.

The event concluded with a 30-minute question and answer session.

For those who missed the live event, a [recording of the webinar](#) has been published.

Pensions Dashboards Programme



Dashboard Programme – Publications

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

DWP - Accounting Officer assessment

On 2 April 2025, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) published the latest assessment of the dashboard project from Oliver Morley, Accounting Officer at the Money and Pensions Service. It is normal practice for accounting officers to

scrutinise significant policy proposals or plans to start major projects.

The assessment concludes that the project is back on a viable footing, with a strong likelihood of completing delivery on time. However, critical dependencies remain, such as industry cooperation, quality of pension data and maintaining skilled resources.

Recent updates

The Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) has recently updated the following guidance:

- [Standards](#)
- [Connecting using a third party](#)
- [Change of connection plans](#)
- [Dashboards Forum: PDP update and focus on registration codes](#)

ACTION

Scheme managers should review the guidance and share with the relevant parties who are implementing dashboards for you.

The Pensions Regulator (TPR)



TPR launch dashboards industry social media campaign

On 11 April 2025, the Pensions Regulator's (TPR) launched their industry social media campaign – [see press release](#).

The campaign includes [a content toolkit](#) which provides a full briefing and also includes suggested content and supporting images for newsletters, and social media – as well as the relevant links to all the short films.

There are five actions TPR wants scheme managers to be taking to prepare for their upcoming dashboards connection date are:

1. start preparing data now – make sure it is accurate, accessible and digital
2. download TPR's checklist to keep on track of dashboards preparations
3. nominate a dashboards contact through TPR's Exchange portal to receive communications and guidance to help prepare

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

4. work with your administrator, AVC providers, and others supporting your scheme throughout the process
5. keep a record of decisions and preparations and maintain oversight at board meetings

ACTION

Scheme managers should review TPR's toolkit and share its content with appropriate parties and complete the five actions TPR wants you take in preparing to connect.

Nudge four email to scheme managers

Scheme managers can expect to receive their dashboards Nudge four email one month before their connect-by date set out in [DWP guidance](#) – i.e. one month before 31 October 2025. Unless authorities have not connected by 31 October 2025, this will be the last communication of this nature they will receive from TPR.

The Nudge four email will highlight TPR's expectations as to where they expect authorities to be in their dashboard's implementation. Authorities should be familiar with the connection process and have all the necessary information and support in place to connect by 31 October 2025. It will also highlight ongoing dashboards requirements by which authorities must comply.

Registration codes

As the first schemes approach their connect-by dates set in [DWP guidance](#), one of the key topics that's been coming up in TPR engagement meetings is around registration codes. What they are and why they are important, how many are needed, who issues them and who to, and how to go about getting replacement or additional codes if they are needed.

To help answer these questions and raise awareness, TPR have published a [hot topics article covering Registration codes and how to use them](#).

ACTION

Scheme managers should review the hot topics article and share with the relevant parties who are implementing dashboards for you.

TPR and PSAG use AI to uncover fraudulent websites

The Pensions Regulator (TPR) and the Pension Scams Action Group (PSAG) announced in [a press released published on 9 April 2025](#) that they have developed a new tool using artificial intelligence (AI) to detect scam websites.

The tool, created using machine learning technology, has already reviewed 830 websites, taken down 29 high-risk sites, and made 94 referrals to partner agencies. This collaborative effort aims to protect savers from online harm and enhance intelligence gathering to combat pension scams.

Innovation in pensions speech

Patrick Coyne, Interim Director of Policy and Public Affairs at TPR, delivered a keynote speech at the Pensions Age Conference entitled 'Innovation in pensions'.

The speech covered:

- why innovation matters to TPR
- how TPR will support innovation in savers' interests
- areas where innovation could really make the system work for everyone.

[A transcript of the speech is available on TPR's website.](#)

HMRC

Newsletter 169

HMRC published [Newsletter 169](#) on 24 April 2025. This includes articles on:

- **LTA protections:** The application deadlines for fixed protection 2016 and individual protection 2016 have passed (though see [earlier article on the Rectification Regulations 2025](#)), but individuals can still report changes to their protection through the Government Gateway or in writing to HMRC.
- **LTA protection look-up service:** In late 2025, the look-up service will move to the Managing Pension Scheme service and require authentication. The updated service will allow HMRC to provide schemes with additional information when checking whether the protection / enhancement a member is relying on is valid for a higher lump sum allowance. Later this year, HMRC will be asking for help to develop this. If you would like to be involved, email pensionsuserresearchrecruitment@hmrc.gov.uk and put 'look up service' in the subject line.
- **Check your pension protection service:** Starting 6 April 2025, the service for members checking pension protection validity through personal tax accounts has been renamed to 'Check your pension protections', with planned enhancements to be introduced in late 2025.
- **QROPS:** On 6 April 2025, the conditions for schemes in the European Economic Area (EEA) to qualify as a overseas pension scheme and as a recognised overseas pension scheme were aligned with those for schemes in the rest of the world. Scheme managers of QROPS in the EEA must confirm compliance with the new conditions to HMRC by 7 May 2025, or their schemes will lose QROPS status.
- **User research:** HMRC is seeking volunteers to provide feedback on the LTA protection Look Up Service, APSS262 Overseas Transfer Form, and Pension

Scheme Return; interested individuals should email pensionsuserresearchrecruitment@hmrc.gov.uk specifying their area of interest.

Pension scheme rates for 2025/26

On 6 April 2025, HMRC updated its [webpage setting out certain pension scheme rates](#). This shows the 2025/26 rates for:

- lump sum allowance
- lump sum and death benefit allowance
- annual allowance
- overseas transfer allowance
- pension related tax charges.

Useful links

- [The Firefighters' Pensions \(England\) Scheme Advisory Board](#)
- [FPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [FPS Member](#)
- [Khuf Firefighters Pensions Discussion Forum](#)
- [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](#)

Legislation

Statutory Instruments

[Public Service Pension Schemes \(Rectification of Unlawful Discrimination\) \(Tax\) Regulations 2025](#) [2025/419]

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

HMT Directions

The Public Service Pensions (Exercise of Powers, Compensation and Information) (Amendment) Directions 2025

Contact details

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 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.

Tara Atkins (Senior Firefighters' Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 020 7664 3031 (Teams Direct Dial)

Email: Tara.atkins@local.gov.uk

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