



FPS Bulletin 46 – June 2021

Welcome to issue 46 of the Firefighters' Pensions Schemes bulletin. We hope that readers remain safe and well.

Face-to-face meetings and training remain suspended for the time being. However, the Bluelight team are available at home by mobile, email or video.

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 or suggested items for future issues, please email claire.hey@local.gov.uk.

Contents

Calendar of events	3
FPS	3
Home Office informal immediate detriment guidance (June 2021)	3
LGA immediate detriment information note - version 2	4
Factsheets updated	4
Technical query log	4
FPS England SAB updates	5
IDRP data request update	5
FRA remedy self-assessment survey closing date	5
Other News and Updates	6
GAD review of the cost control mechanism published	6
HMT consultations published: cost control mechanism and discount rate methodology	6

Pension Dashboards Programme: Staging Call for Input	7
TPR publishes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	8
Finance Act 2021 receives Royal Assent	8
MaPS MoneyHelper goes live	8
DWP publishes consultation response on TPR powers	8
Events	9
FPS coffee mornings	9
HMRC	9
HMRC newsletters/bulletins	9
Legislation	9
Useful links	10
Contact details	10
Copyright	10
Disclaimer	11

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 claire.hey@local.gov.uk

Table 1: Calendar of events

Event	Date
FPS coffee and catch up	Every second Tuesday (13 and 27 July 2021)
SAB LPB effectiveness committee (TBC)	8 July 2021
SAB Cost-effectiveness committee (TBC)	13 July 2021
Fire Communications Working Group	13 July 2021
Firefighters' Technical Community	15 July 2021
SAB SMA committee (TBC)	16 July 2021
North East regional group	18 August 2021
SAB	9 September 2021
SAB	9 December 2021

FPS

[Home Office informal immediate detriment guidance \(June 2021\)](#)

On 10 June 2021, the Home Office issued an update to the existing informal and non-statutory guidance on immediate detriment cases. This can be found here: [Home Office informal detriment guidance 10 June 2021](#)

The guidance applies to pipeline immediate detriment cases (i.e. those cases where the member is about to retire and receive their pension) and does not cover where a pension is already in payment. This is technical guidance and aimed primarily at pension managers and practitioners.

As readers will know, to implement remedy in full, both primary and secondary legislation are required, as well as administration work (at local FRA level) to implement the changes. The deferred choice underpin will be implemented by October 2023.

As a result, the guidance will not offer resolution to all the current issues – there are outstanding technical issues that are being worked through across the public sector pension schemes and the responsible Government departments. The updated guidance aims to provide ways forward where possible.

The guidance provides informal advice but the overall responsibility for interpreting and applying the pension scheme regulations still remains with each FRA as the relevant scheme manager. FRAs and administrators will need to consider the guidance in relation to their own process and systems.

To note, the Home Office guidance only applies to England as firefighters' pensions policy is devolved in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales.

[LGA immediate detriment information note - version 2](#)

Following the release of the updated informal Home Office guidance on 10 June, we have updated the LGA information note to take account of this additional guidance:

[LGA immediate detriment information note – version 2](#)

The purpose of this information note is to provide FRAs with additional information relating to immediate detriment.

If your FRA is receiving and considering processing claims, please liaise with your FRA's nominated contact.

We are aware that FRAs may be receiving an increasing number of enquiries following publication of the updated information. A member note was provided directly to FRAs on 18 June 2021 for them to use if required to update scheme members on the current position.

[Factsheets updated](#)

The following factsheets have been updated in line with new limits or thresholds for 2021/22:

- [Topping up your State Pension](#)
- [FPS 2015 Added Pension](#) – Word factsheet and election form

We have taken the opportunity to convert the State Pension factsheet into a standalone webpage on the [FPS Member](#) site.

The [Added Pension information](#) is also available on the member website, but without the election form.

[Technical query log](#)

The current [log of queries and responses](#) is available on the FPS Regulations and Guidance website. The queries have been anonymised and divided into topics. The log will be updated monthly in line with the bulletin release dates.

Queries have been added this month in the following categories: contribution banding and pension sharing.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

Please bear with us if you experience a delay in response to your technical query. As you can imagine, much of our resource is currently focused on remedy-related issues.

FPS England SAB updates

IDRP data request update

In [FPS Bulletin 44 – April 2021](#) we launched this year's Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) data request to monitor trends and establish where further guidance or advice may be needed.

The [IDRP 2020-21 data request update](#) was presented to the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) at its meeting on 24 June 2021. The key findings are summarised below.

Thirty-four FRAs submitted data, equating to around 76 per cent. Of those responses, nine FRAs reported a nil return.

The FPS retains a two stage procedure and the [IDRP factsheet](#) issued in 2020 set out that Stage One decisions should be heard by the Chief Officer or a delegated senior manager, and the Stage Two decision should be heard by a nominated panel of representatives of the FRA.

Of the 25 FRAs who responded with an IDRP during 2020-21 there were 57 Stage One decisions; around one quarter (14) of those were upheld in the member's favour. Twenty Stage Two cases were reported. This is around half of the overturned number of cases from Stage One (43).

The data showed that the number of IDRPs received remains relatively low and that decision makers at both stages are generally in line with guidance.

Pensionable pay complaints were by far the most common type of dispute. Ill-health was also a common cause for complaint. The number of cases in relation to transfers and special members had increased and seven IDRPs about age discrimination remedy were received during the year.

Despite the development of resources to improve knowledge and understanding, pensionable pay and ill-health continue to be areas of contention. More development is planned in these areas, including a factsheet on resolving historic pensionable pay errors, and a review of the ill-health documentation.

The increase in other types of complaint could be linked to ongoing legal proceedings and may therefore be a continuing trend until resolution is reached.

Almost half of the number of overturned Stage One decisions went to Stage Two, showing that the second stage is still of value, albeit a low number of decisions were changed during the Stage Two process.

FRA remedy self-assessment survey closing date

The SAB survey of FRA's remedy arrangements closes today – 30 June 2021.

Thank you to the authorities who have submitted a response to date. We will contact those outstanding within the next three weeks to offer any extra support needed to make a submission.

The data will be collated and analysed to provide a report to the SAB at its September meeting.

Other News and Updates

GAD review of the cost control mechanism published

In 2018, the then Chief Secretary to the Treasury (CST) announced a review of the cost control mechanism by the Government Actuary to examine whether it was operating appropriately and in line with the original policy intentions.

On 15 June 2021, the CST laid [written statement HCWS90](#) to announce the publication of the [Government Actuary's review](#). The final report sets out the Government Actuary's assessment of the current mechanism and recommendations on possible changes. These changes are being now being consulted on.

HMT consultations published: cost control mechanism and discount rate methodology

HM Treasury (HMT) published two public consultations on 24 June 2021 alongside [written statement HCWS117](#). The consultations seek views on proposals to changes to the cost control mechanism in public service pension schemes, and secondly on the appropriate methodology for setting the discount rate used in scheme valuations.

The consultations run for eight weeks and close on 19 August 2021.

[Consultation on changes to the cost control mechanism:](#)

As detailed above, the Government Actuary has recently concluded his review of the cost control mechanism in the public service pension schemes. The Government has considered the report and is now consulting on three changes to the mechanism, all of which are recommendations by the Government Actuary:

1. Moving to a reformed scheme only design: to remove any allowance for legacy schemes in the cost control mechanism, so the mechanism only considers past and future service in the reformed schemes.
2. Widening the corridor: to widen the corridor from 2 per cent to 3 per cent of pensionable pay.

3. Introducing an economic check: currently the mechanism does not include changes in long-term economic assumptions and therefore cannot consider the actual cost to the Government of providing pension benefits. The Government proposes introducing an economic check so that a breach of the mechanism would only be implemented if it would still have occurred had the long-term economic assumptions been considered.

The outcome of the consultation will not impact on the 2016 cost control valuations.

[Consultation on the discount rate \(the “SCAPE rate”\) methodology:](#)

The Superannuation Contributions Adjusted for Past Experience (SCAPE) discount rate is a discount rate used in the valuation of unfunded public service pension schemes to set employer contribution rates.

It expresses future pension promises that are being built up in present-day terms and is set by HMT following a prescribed methodology. The current methodology for setting the SCAPE discount rate has been in place since 2011. This consultation seeks views on the objectives for the SCAPE discount rate and the most appropriate methodology for setting the SCAPE discount rate going forward.

The options are broadly:

- In line with long-term GDP growth (current approach); or
- In line with the Social Time Preference Rate (the previous approach).

The current level of the rate will not be changed by this consultation; the Government will carry out a separate exercise to set a new rate in line with the chosen methodology following this consultation.

Next steps

The SAB will be considering a response to both consultations.

PDP: Staging Call for Input

As confirmed in [FPS Bulletin 45 - May 2021](#), the Pensions Dashboard Programme (PDP) has launched a [call for input on staging](#) for the dashboard. For those looking to submit a response, the [dashboard staging date discussion paper](#) provided to the SAB gives a useful summary of the PDP proposals and their impact on the FPS.

Stakeholders may wish to respond to the PDP with their views on how the dashboard staging date would interact with age discrimination remedy and its effect on providing value to firefighters.

The SAB will be providing a response to the call for input recommending a later staging date for Fire, which would follow the first successful run of annual benefit statements on a remedied basis, most likely in 2024.

The deadline for responses is 9 July 2021.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

TPR publishes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

On 24 June 2021, The Pensions Regulator (TPR) published its [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#).

The strategy sets out how TPR will embed diversity and inclusion throughout its organisation and how it will support the schemes it regulates to do likewise.

Finance Act 2021 receives Royal Assent

On 10 June 2021, the Finance Act 2021 received Royal Assent.

The Act gives legal effect to the Government's decision to [freeze the lifetime allowance at £1,073,100 for tax years 2021/22 to 2025/26](#), as announced at the last budget.

MaPS MoneyHelper goes live

On 18 March 2021, the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) revealed plans to launch [a single offering for consumers called MoneyHelper](#). This will replace the Money Advice Service, the Pensions Advisory Service and Pension Wise, although Pension Wise will continue as a named service under the MoneyHelper umbrella.

The MoneyHelper website is now live at www.moneyhelper.org.uk.

Links to one of the legacy websites (Money Advice Service, The Pensions Advisory Service and Pension Wise) will automatically redirect to the new location on MoneyHelper. If the article(s) or tool(s) no longer exist, it will redirect to the most relevant landing page on the topic.

Following the launch of MoneyHelper, you will need to change how you reference MaPS in your communications. You will need to change any reference to:

- The Money Advice Service and The Pensions Advisory Service to 'MoneyHelper', and
- Pension Wise to 'Pension Wise a service from MoneyHelper'.

You can find support and messaging to help you prepare on the MaPS [Introducing Moneyhelper](#) webpage.

DWP publishes consultation response on TPR powers

The Pension Schemes Act 2021 ("the Act") gained Royal Assent on 11 February 2021. [Part 3 of the Act](#) relates to new powers for TPR and contains various provisions to make associated regulations

On 29 June 2021, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) published its response to the consultation [Strengthening The Pensions Regulator's Powers: Contribution Notice and Information Gathering Powers Regulations 2021](#), which sought views on the proposed drafting of two sets of regulations.

[The Pensions Regulator \(Information Gathering Powers and Modification\) Regulations 2021](#) [SI 2021/754] come into force on 1 October 2021.

Events

FPS coffee mornings

Our MS Teams coffee mornings are continuing every second Tuesday. 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.

The next events are scheduled to take place on 13 and 27 July 2021. We will then be taking a short break over the holiday period and will resume the sessions in September.

If you do not already receive the meeting invitations and would like to join us, please email bluelight.pensions@local.gov.uk.

HMRC

HMRC newsletters/bulletins

On 25 June 2021 HMRC published [Pension schemes newsletter 130](#) containing important updates and guidance for schemes. Articles include:

- an extension to some of the temporary changes to pension processes as a result of coronavirus
- managing the Pension Schemes service
- signing into online services
- self-invested personal pensions (SIPP) and small self-administered scheme (SSAS) pensions – connected tenants

Practitioners and administrators who use HMRC's online services should make sure that they have signed in recently to avoid losing access.

Legislation

Act	Title
2021 c.26	Finance Act 2021
SI	Reference title
2021/620	The Pension Schemes Act 2021 (Commencement No. 1) Regulations 2021
2021/752	The Pension Schemes Act 2021 (Commencement No. 2) Regulations 2021
2021/754	The Pensions Regulator (Information Gathering Powers and Modification) Regulations 2021

Useful links

- [The Firefighters' Pensions \(England\) Scheme Advisory Board](#)
- [FPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [FPS Member](#)
- [Khub 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](#)
- [Welsh Government Fire circulars](#)

Contact details

Clair Alcock (Senior Pension Adviser)

Telephone: 020 7664 3189

Email: clair.alcock@local.gov.uk

Kevin Courtney (NPCC Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 020 7664 3202

Email: kevin.courtney@local.gov.uk

Claire Hey (Firefighters' Pension Adviser)

Telephone: 020 7664 3205

Email: claire.hey@local.gov.uk

Copyright

Copyright remains with Local Government Association (LGA). This bulletin may be reproduced without the prior permission of LGA provided it is not used for commercial gain, the source is acknowledged and, if regulations are reproduced, the Crown Copyright Policy Guidance issued by HMSO is adhered to.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin has been prepared by the Bluelight Pensions team, part of the Local Government Association (LGA). It represents the views of the team and should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. Readers may wish, or will need, to take their own legal advice on the interpretation of legislation. No responsibility whatsoever will be assumed by the LGA for any direct or consequential loss, financial or otherwise, damage or inconvenience, or any other obligation or liability incurred by readers relying on information contained in this bulletin.

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 bluelight.pensions@local.gov.uk.



FPS Bulletin 47 – July 2021

Welcome to issue 47 of the Firefighters' Pensions Schemes bulletin. We hope that readers remain safe and well.

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 or suggested items for future issues, please email claire.hey@local.gov.uk.

Contents

Calendar of events	3
FPS	3
PSP&JO Bill introduced	3
Knowledge Hub technical forum reinstated	4
Technical query log	4
FPS England SAB updates	5
TPR 2020-21 Governance and Administration survey	5
Template FPS Administration Strategy published	5
SAB response to pensions dashboards staging call for input	6
Other News and Updates	6
Clair Alcock leaves the team	6
HMT response to consultation on implementation of increased NMPA	7
MHCLG consultation on special severance payments	7
TPO's term of office extended	7
Stronger nudge to pensions guidance consultation	7

Actuarial, Benefits and Governance Consultancy Services Framework	8
HMRC	8
HMRC newsletters/bulletins	8
Contracting-out reconciliation update	9
Pension Scheme Pays reporting: information and notice deadlines	9
Events	10
FPS coffee mornings	10
Legislation	10
Useful links	10
Contact details	10
Copyright	11
Disclaimer	11

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 claire.hey@local.gov.uk

Table 1: Calendar of events

Event	Date
North East regional group	18 August 2021
FPS coffee and catch up	Next scheduled event 24 August 2021
Eastern regional group	7 September 2021
SAB	9 September 2021
Eversheds Sutherland cyber and data breach training	20 September 2021
SAB	9 December 2021

FPS

PSP&JO Bill introduced

On 19 July 2021, HM Treasury (HMT) introduced the Public Service Pensions & Judicial Offices Bill (PSP&JO Bill) to the House of Lords.

The following documents are available from the [PSP&JO Bill publications page](#) and updated versions will be added as the Bill progresses through Parliament:

- Bill (as introduced)
- Explanatory Notes
- Delegated Powers Memorandum
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Impact Assessment
- Two documents on the Bill's first reading

The PSP&JO Bill sets out in law how the Government will remove the discrimination identified by the courts in the way that the 2015 reforms were introduced for some members (i.e., remedy).

This is the primary legislation which closes final salary schemes for accrual past 31 March 2022 and moves all remaining members into FPS 2015, while ensuring that existing transitional protections such as the final salary link and double accrual are retained.

More information about how benefits are calculated for transitional members of the FPS 2015 is available from the [FPS 2015 transition members](http://www.fpsmember.org) page of www.fpsmember.org, including details of how final salary accrual in the FPS 1992 is treated under the [double accrual protection](#).

HMT has provided a [central Q&A document](#) and we are expecting a version that is more tailored to the FPS in due course.

Details of the Bill have been published on www.fpsmember.org under [Age Discrimination Remedy](#) and we will be working with the Fire Communications Working Group on developing central communications for scheme members.

The second reading of the Bill is due to take place in the House of Lords on 7 September 2021.

Knowledge Hub technical forum reinstated

Readers may remember that before the introduction of www.fpsregs.org, all resources and technical advice were provided through a Knowledge Hub forum.

While we have moved away from this platform in order to provide central and consistent access to resources and formal technical guidance, the forum has been reinstated for members to share technical knowledge and best practice, in order to promote peer working and collaboration within the sector.

Forum members can raise technical queries and share experiences with colleagues; however, users must note that any information provided is on an informal basis and should not be treated as legal advice. If a query needs to be escalated, it should be logged using the existing [technical query form](#).

The forum is restricted to administrators and employer representatives of the FPS and can be accessed using the following link:

<https://khub.net/group/thefirefighterspensionsdiscussionforum/group-forum>

You will need to register and request to join if you are not already a member.

Readers should also note that the Firefighters' Pensions practitioners' group on Workplace will shortly be closed down as it is not being used.

Technical query log

The current [log of queries and responses](#) is available on the FPS Regulations and Guidance website. The queries have been anonymised and divided into topics. The log will be updated monthly in line with the bulletin release dates.

No new queries have been added this month.

Please bear with us if you experience a delay in response to your technical query. As you can imagine, much of our resource is currently focused on remedy-related issues.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

FPS England SAB updates

TPR 2020-21 Governance and Administration survey

On 1 July 2021, the Pensions Regulator (TPR) published the results of its [2020-21 Governance and Administration survey](#).

The survey was conducted online between January and March 2021 and aims to track governance and administration practices among public service pension schemes. The 2020-21 survey also included new questions on response to the pandemic and pensions dashboards.

TPR measures annual progress against the following six key processes:

- have a documented policy to manage board members' conflicts of interest
- have access to the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to properly run the scheme
- have documented procedures for assessing and managing risk
- have processes to monitor records for accuracy and completeness
- have a process for resolving contribution payment issues
- have procedures to identify, assess and report breaches of the law.

Three quarters (74 per cent) of Firefighters' schemes who responded to the survey had all six processes in place. This is a significant increase from 55 per cent in 2019.

The report is being considered by the Local Pension Board (LPB) effectiveness committee ("the Committee") to make recommendations to the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) on any actions needed.

The [TPR six key processes factsheet](#) will be updated in due course to reflect the latest performance and give further guidance to FRAs in order to achieve a higher rate of understanding and compliance ahead of future surveys.

In the short-term, the Committee recommends that LPBs can use the survey results to carry out an annual evaluation.

Template FPS Administration Strategy published

In [FPS Bulletin 34 – June 2020](#) we launched a consultation on a template pension administration strategy for the FPS, which was developed following a recommendation in [AON's 2019 review](#) of the administration and management of the scheme.

The initial consultation response was published with [FPS Bulletin 37 – September 2020](#).

All feedback has now been considered and we are pleased to include tracked versions of the [updated consultation response](#) and the [revised template strategy](#) as appendices to the bulletin. The final strategy is available from the [guides and sample documents page](#) of www.fpsregs.org as a Word document for FRAs to download and adapt to suit their individual requirements.

TPR reported in section 4.3 of the latest [governance and administration survey results](#) that just under half of Firefighters' schemes had an administration strategy, compared to almost three-quarters of schemes across the public sector. We hope that publication of the template will help schemes to put an administration strategy in place and increase this outcome for the 2021-22 survey.

SAB response to pensions dashboards staging call for input

We confirmed in [FPS Bulletin 46 – June 2021](#) that the SAB would respond to the Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) call for input on dashboard staging, which proposed that public service schemes join the dashboard within a two-year period starting from April 2023.

In summary, the [Board's response to the call for input](#) was that staging for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme should be only after the age discrimination remedy has been implemented and the first set of annual benefit statements issued successfully in Autumn 2024.

Other News and Updates

Clair Alcock leaves the team



Many of our readers will be aware that Clair will shortly be leaving the LGA to take up a new role as Head of Police Pensions with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). Clair's last day is 3 September 2021.

Clair is a familiar face to many and has worked for the LGA in the pensions team since December 2014, leading and advising stakeholders in the management, governance, and administration of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes.

Clair works closely with all stakeholders across the Fire sector and has had a significant impact on improving the understanding of the pension schemes and its effect on the workforce and employer.

Before joining the LGA, Clair was the lead consultant for software development on Police and Fire Pensions having previously worked with both private and public sector pension schemes.

Clair will be sorely missed by all colleagues at the LGA and across the Fire sector. Congratulations on your new role Clair, and good luck!

HMT response to consultation on implementation of increased NMPA

We confirmed in [FPS Bulletin 42 – February 2021](#) that HMT was consulting on the implementation of an increased normal minimum pension age (NMPA) from age 55 to age 57 on 6 April 2028.

NMPA is the minimum age at which most pension savers can access their pensions without incurring an unauthorised payments tax charge (unless they are taking their pension due to ill-health).

On 20 July 2021, HMT published its [response to the NMPA consultation](#) in addition to a [policy paper and draft regulations introducing measures to increase the NMPA](#).

The measures will not affect members who:

- are retiring due to ill health
- have a protected pension age
- are members of the firefighters, police, and armed forces public service schemes.

MHCLG consultation on special severance payments

The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has published a consultation on New Best Value statutory guidance covering special severance payments for local authorities in England. You can find the draft statutory guidance and covering letter from MHCLG on the [scheme consultations](#) page of www.lgpsregs.org.

Our colleagues on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) team also have published [LGA's initial comments](#) on this page.

MHCLG welcomes responses from all interested parties. They are particularly keen to receive responses from the bodies listed in the Annex to the covering letter. This list covers public sector scheme employers, including Fire and Rescue Authorities and the London Fire Commissioner.

TPO's term of office extended

The DWP has confirmed that it has extended the term of Anthony Arter as The Pensions Ombudsman (TPO) for another year.

In a [letter to Work and Pensions Committee Chair Stephen Timms](#), Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion, Guy Opperman stated that Mr Arter's term will be extended for a period of 12 months from 1 August 2021.

Stronger nudge to pensions guidance consultation

On 9 July 2021, [DWP launched a consultation on draft regulations](#) that will require occupational pension schemes, in most situations, to nudge members aged 50 or above applying to access, or to transfer out for the purposes of accessing, their benefits.

The regulations will require pension schemes to explain the nature and purpose of

Pension Wise guidance and facilitate the booking of a Pension Wise appointment as part of the application process. The regulations will also require the member to have confirmed that they have received the guidance or opted out of receiving it before the scheme can action the application.

The regulations will implement the duty set out in section 19 of [the Financial Guidance and Claims Act 2018](#).

The consultation applies to England, Wales, and Scotland. It is anticipated that Northern Ireland will make corresponding regulations. The consultation closes on 3 September 2021.

Actuarial, Benefits and Governance Consultancy Services Framework

On 1 July 2021, the National LGPS Frameworks launched the [Actuarial, Benefits and Governance Consultancy Services Framework 2021](#).

The [framework joining instructions](#) confirm that scheme managers of public sector pension schemes can use the consultancy services framework.

If you would like more information or copies of the supporting documentation (including provider catalogues and guidance notes) or you have a query about this or any other framework, please email: NationalLGPSframeworks@norfolk.gov.uk.

HMRC

HMRC newsletters/bulletins

On 30 July 2021, HMRC published [Pension schemes newsletter 131](#) containing important updates and guidance for schemes. Articles include:

- relief at source – annual return of information for the tax year 2020 to 2021
- relief at source and National Insurance applications
- Managing pension schemes service:
- Retirement annuity contracts and deferred annuity contracts
- amending an Accounting for Tax return
- Managing pension schemes service – user research
- annual allowance - pension savings statements for tax year 2020 to 2021
- annual allowance - declaring the annual allowance charge on the Self Assessment tax return
- non-taxable payments following a member's death and Real Time Information (RTI) reporting
- pension flexibility statistics
- qualifying recognised overseas pension schemes transfer statistics

Contracting-out reconciliation update

On 26 July 2021, HMRC published [Countdown Bulletin 55](#) with updates on:

- the closure of Scheme Cessation and Scheme Reconciliation eRooms
- final data cuts for Pension Schemes
- how to raise queries with HMRC

Pension Scheme Pays reporting: information and notice deadlines

On 20 July 2021, [HMRC published a policy paper](#) and [draft regulations proposing to extend the mandatory scheme pays deadline](#) for members whose pension input amount is retrospectively changed.

The proposal has been made because of the age discrimination remedy, where a member's annual allowance position for a previous tax year may be changed retrospectively. However, HMRC has confirmed that the proposal will not be restricted to just these cases.

The proposal will extend the scheme pays deadline where –

- the administrator gives information to the member about a change to the pension input amount on or after 2 May in the year following that in which the relevant tax year ends and before the end of the six-year period beginning with the end of the tax year, and
- as a result of the change, the member qualifies to elect for mandatory scheme pays.

In these cases, it is proposed that the member must give the scheme pays election within three months from being given the information about the change or, if earlier, before the end of the six-year period beginning with the end of the relevant tax year. In other cases, the deadline remains 31 July in the year following that in which the tax year ends.

Consequently, the draft regulations also propose amending the deadline by which the administrator must report and pay the charge to HMRC. It is proposed that administrators will need to report the charge on the Accounting for Tax return for the quarterly period following that in which the administrator receives the scheme pays election (though schemes will continue to be able to include the charge on a return for an earlier period). This proposal will apply to all scheme pays elections (not just those resulting from a retrospective change).

The Government signified its intention to make these changes on Tax Day in March. See [FPS Bulletin 43 – March 2021](#) for more information.

It is intended that the changes will commence on 6 April 2022 with retrospective effect to 6 April 2016.

Events

FPS coffee mornings

Our MS Teams coffee mornings are continuing every second Tuesday. 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 will be taking a short break over the holiday period and will resume the sessions on 24 August 2021.

If you do not already receive the meeting invitations and would like to join us, please email bluelight.pensions@local.gov.uk.

Legislation

SI	Reference title
2021/764	The Financial Guidance and Claims Act 2018 (Commencement No. 8) Regulations 2021

Useful links

- [The Firefighters' Pensions \(England\) Scheme Advisory Board](#)
- [FPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [FPS Member](#)
- [Khub 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](#)
- [Welsh Government Fire circulars](#)

Contact details

Clair Alcock (Senior Pension Adviser)

Telephone: 020 7664 3189

Email: clair.alcock@local.gov.uk

Kevin Courtney (NPCC Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 020 7664 3202

Email: kevin.courtney@local.gov.uk

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

Claire Hey (Firefighters' Pension Adviser)

Telephone: 020 7664 3205

Email: claire.hey@local.gov.uk

Copyright

Copyright remains with Local Government Association (LGA). This bulletin may be reproduced without the prior permission of LGA provided it is not used for commercial gain, the source is acknowledged and, if regulations are reproduced, the Crown Copyright Policy Guidance issued by HMSO is adhered to.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin has been prepared by the Bluelight Pensions team, part of the Local Government Association (LGA). It represents the views of the team and should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. Readers may wish, or will need, to take their own legal advice on the interpretation of legislation. No responsibility whatsoever will be assumed by the LGA for any direct or consequential loss, financial or otherwise, damage or inconvenience, or any other obligation or liability incurred by readers relying on information contained in this bulletin.

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 bluelight.pensions@local.gov.uk.



FPS Bulletin 48 – August 2021

Welcome to issue 48 of the Firefighters' Pensions Schemes bulletin. We hope that readers remain safe and well.

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 or suggested items for future issues, please email claire.hey@local.gov.uk.

Contents

Calendar of events	2
Actions arising	2
FPS	3
PSP&JO Bill Home Office guidance	3
LGA update on the PSP&JO Bill	3
Technical query log	3
FPS England SAB updates	4
SAB response to HMT consultations	4
TPR publishes interim response to code of practice consultation	4
Other News and Updates	4
Farewell from Clair Alcock	4
Briefing paper on the PSP&JO Bill published	4
TPR scheme return	5
Guidance on GMPs and new State Pension	5
Action Fraud webinars	5
HMRC	5

Managing Pension Schemes (MPS) service	5
HMRC newsletters/bulletins	6
Events	6
FPS coffee mornings	6
Legislation	7
Useful links	7
Contact details	7
Copyright	7
Disclaimer	8

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 claire.hey@local.gov.uk

Table 1: Calendar of events

Event	Date
FPS coffee and catch up	14 and 28 September 2021
Eastern regional group	7 September 2021
SAB	9 September 2021
Eversheds Sutherland cyber and data breach training	20 September 2021
North East regional group	17 November 2021
SAB	9 December 2021

Actions arising

Readers are asked to note the following actions arising from the bulletin:

[TPR scheme return](#): Scheme managers to check contact details are correct on the Exchange.

[Managing Pension Schemes \(MPS\) service](#): FRAs to enrol on to the new MPS service, no later than 24 September 2021.

FPS

PSP&JO Bill Home Office guidance

Home Office guidance has now been published, following the announcement of the introduction of [Public Service Pensions & Judicial Offices \(PSP&JO\) Bill](#) and the accompanying centralised Q & A document in [FPS Bulletin 47 – July 2021](#).

The [PSP&JO Bill Home Office guidance](#) is a more tailored version of the central FAQs for the FPS. It provides a detailed summary of how the Bill legislates to remove the discrimination identified in the McCloud/Sargeant litigation and what it means for affected scheme members.

For reference, it contains information on:

- what the Government has published;
- the background and detail of the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill;
- how the Bill will implement changes across all the main public service pension schemes in response to the Court of Appeal judgment in the McCloud and Sargeant cases;
- the next steps following the Bill and any additional information which may be helpful to members.

Please note that the guidance will be kept under review.

LGA update on the PSP&JO Bill

We are pleased to publish an [LGA update on the PSP&JO Bill](#) and what it means for the FPS.

The update comments on the main provisions of the Bill and looks in particular at the effect for transition members.

Technical query log

The current [log of queries and responses](#) is available on the FPS Regulations and Guidance website. The queries have been anonymised and divided into topics. The log will be updated monthly in line with the bulletin release dates.

Queries have been answered this month in the following categories: compensation scheme (page 35).

Please bear with us if you experience a delay in response to your technical query. As you can imagine, much of our resource is currently focused on remedy-related issues.

If you need an informal steer from sector colleagues in the meantime, please use the recently reinstated [Knowledge Hub technical forum](#), as detailed in [FPS Bulletin 47 – July 2021](#).

FPS England SAB updates

SAB response to HMT consultations

We told readers in [FPS Bulletin 46 – June 2021](#) that HM Treasury (HMT) had published two public consultations seeking views on proposals to reform the cost control mechanism in public service pension schemes, and secondly on the appropriate methodology for setting the discount rate used in scheme valuations.

The Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) submitted responses to both consultations on 19 August, working closely with the [Cost-effectiveness committee](#) and the actuarial advisers to the SAB, First Actuarial.

The responses can be found on the [consultations page](#) of the SAB website.

TPR publishes interim response to code of practice consultation

Between 17 March and 26 May 2021, the Pensions Regulator (TPR) consulted on a proposed new code of practice. The first phase of the new modular code contains 51 topic-based units and replaces 10 of the longer existing codes of practice.

TPR published its [interim response to the code of practice consultation](#) on 24 August 2021. Key points or issues raised were support for setting common expectations of all schemes, the intended audience for modules, use of the new term 'governing body', and the requirement for schemes to undertake an own risk assessment.

TPR is currently reviewing the detailed feedback received and the earliest time that the new code might become effective is summer 2022.

Other News and Updates

Farewell from Clair Alcock

As announced in the last bulletin, I have been offered the post of Head of Police Pensions for NPCC and I will leave LGA on 3 September.

I have been lucky to work in a sector with so many committed stakeholders who have shared my vision in building the delivery of Fire pensions and thank you all for your support and encouragement. It has been an absolute pleasure working with the Fire sector and thank you for the kind words I have already received.

I am delighted to announce that after a successful interview Claire Hey has been offered the post as my successor, and I wish her all the best and know that she will receive wide support from the sector.

Briefing paper on the PSP&JO Bill published

The House of Lords Library published [briefing paper LLN-2021-0019](#) about the PSP&JO Bill on 26 August 2021.

The paper gives an overview of the Bill and a useful explanation of the policy background. The provisions of the Bill are listed by clause with a brief description of what each intends to achieve.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

TPR scheme return

Scheme return notices are being sent to public service pension scheme managers in September.

[Information about completing and submitting a public service scheme return](#) can be found on the TPR website. Schemes are advised to make sure that their contact details are up to date on the [Exchange](#) system.

Completing the scheme return is a legal requirement and scheme managers could be fined for failing to submit a completed return by the deadline.

Guidance on GMPs and new State Pension

On 12 August 2021, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) published a factsheet: [Guaranteed Minimum Pension \(GMP\) and the effect of the new State Pension](#). The factsheet is for individuals who have a GMP and reach their State Pension age after 5 April 2016.

Action Fraud webinars

Action Fraud is hosting a series of free webinars on reporting pension scams, supported by TPR, Pension Scams Industry Group (PSIG) and the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC).

View the agenda and register for one of the webinars below:

- [16 September 2021](#)
- [21 October 2021](#)
- [25 November 2021](#)

The webinar will provide clarity on when to report, what to report and who to report to, and will feature expert speakers with a short Q and A session.

HMRC

Managing Pension Schemes (MPS) service

On 16 August 2021, HMRC published [Managing Pension Schemes service newsletter – August 2021](#). The latest newsletter has articles on:

- declaring as pension scheme administrator for a retirement annuity contract and deferred annuity contract
- submitting an Event Report
- migration
- Accounting for Tax (AFT) return
- how you can help us
- signing into online services
- updating your details

HMRC is currently contacting all FRAs by email to help them enrol on the new MPS before migration. Enrolment should ideally take place before 24 September 2021.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

HMRC has emphasised the importance of the FRAs making sure that the correct legal sub-scheme administrator registers on MPS. The legal sub-scheme administrator is the named FRA, not the appointed pension administrator (practitioner). This is important as HMRC may issue tax assessments, penalty notices and Information notices on the sub-scheme administrator. If these are not paid and enforcement action proceeds, this should be on the legal sub-scheme administrator.

The provisions for sub-schemes are set out in [The Registered Pension Schemes \(Splitting of Schemes\) Regulations 2006](#). The core regulations set out the basic rules for splitting a scheme. There are then three schedules:

- schedule 1 sets out the schemes to be split
- schedule 2 sets out the names of the sub-scheme administrators for each split scheme
- schedule 3 sets out those responsibilities and liabilities of a scheme administrator in FA04 and secondary legislation which are to apply instead to a sub-scheme administrator.

If you have any questions about or feedback on the Managing Pension Schemes service, please contact migration.mps@hmrc.gov.uk.

HMRC newsletters/bulletins

On 27 August 2021, HMRC published [Pension schemes newsletter 132](#) containing important updates and guidance for schemes. Articles include:

- Relief at source
 - annual return of information — interim repayments
 - APSS106 annual claims for tax year 2020 to 2021
 - reporting excess relief
- Annual allowance
 - pension savings statements for tax year 2020 to 2021
- Pension scheme migration:
 - viewing pension schemes
 - schemes without Pension Scheme Tax References (PSTRs)
 - wound up pension schemes
 - multiple IDs

Events

FPS coffee mornings

Our MS Teams coffee mornings are continuing every second Tuesday. 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.

The next session is due to take place on 14 September 2021.

[Click here to return to Contents](#)

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

Legislation

SI	Reference title
2021/950	<u>The Pension Schemes Act 2021 (Commencement No. 3 and Transitional and Saving Provisions) Regulations 2021</u>

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](#)
- [Welsh Government Fire circulars](#)

Contact details

Claire Hey (Senior Pension Adviser)

Telephone: 07825 731 924

Email: claire.hey@local.gov.uk

Kevin Courtney (NPCC Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 020 7664 3202

Email: kevin.courtney@local.gov.uk

Copyright

Copyright remains with Local Government Association (LGA). This bulletin may be reproduced without the prior permission of LGA provided it is not used for commercial gain, the source is acknowledged and, if regulations are reproduced, the Crown Copyright Policy Guidance issued by HMSO is adhered to.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin has been prepared by the Bluelight Pensions team, part of the Local Government Association (LGA). It represents the views of the team and should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. Readers may wish, or will need, to take their own legal advice on the interpretation of legislation. No responsibility whatsoever will be assumed by the LGA for any direct or consequential loss, financial or otherwise, damage or inconvenience, or any other obligation or liability incurred by readers relying on information contained in this bulletin.

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 bluelight.pensions@local.gov.uk.