

## FPS Bulletin 88 – December 2024

Welcome to issue 88 of the Firefighters' Pensions Schemes bulletin.

"I remember writing in December 2023's FPS Bulletin what a very busy year it had been in the world of Firefighters' Pensions. Well, I think this year may have been just as busy if not more so!

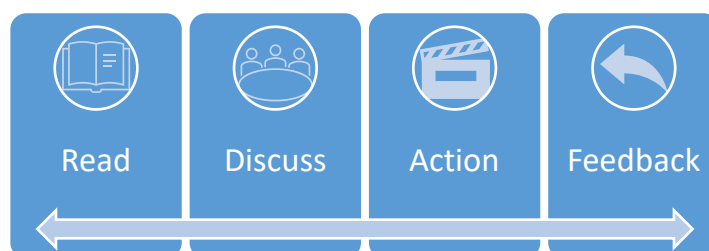
The first thing I would like to say to the fire sector is how proud you should all be for the hard work you have put in this last year. At our recent [coffee morning](#) we reflected on the positives of the year, and I think when we are all so busy, and facing challenges, it is very easy to forget how far you have come, so this is your reminder!

We also want to thank you for your input in the numerous forums and working groups we have held, as without your input they just do not work."

We look forward to working with you in 2025. But in the meantime, it's time to sit back and enjoy the holiday season.



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](mailto: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](mailto:bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk).

**Table 1: Calendar of events**

Event	Date
<a href="#">FPS Coffee Morning</a>	14 January 2025 28 January 2025
<b>FPS Technical Working Group</b>	27 February 2025 22 May 2025 20 August 2025 24 November 2025
<b>SAB</b>	19 March 2025 18 June 2025 11 September 2025 11 December 2025
<b>FPS Communications Working Group</b>	21 January 2025
<a href="#">Local Pension Board training</a>	23 January 2025 (MS Teams) <i>(fully booked)</i> 25 March 2025 (MS Teams) <i>(fully booked)</i> 16 June 2025 (MS Teams) <i>(fully booked)</i> 17 September 2025 (in person) 22 January 2026 (MS Teams)  Refresher Training: 11 February 2025 (MS Teams)

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## Actions arising

### Scheme Managers

#### Age Discrimination remedy

[NS&I Direct Saver Interest rates](#): should ensure that they have updated the new NS&I rate in the calculator for calculations on or after 20 December 2024.

[Annual Benefit Statement Remediable Service Statements \(ABS-RSS\) Readiness](#): should ensure that they have considered these readiness questions and discussed the relevant points with their administrator.

[Annual Benefit Statement Remediable Service Statement FAQs](#): should direct members to the FAQs when producing the ABS-RSS'.

#### Matthews

[GAD calculator](#): should ensure that those who are involved with the Matthews exercise are aware of the new version of the calculator.

[Amendments to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme: retained firefighters](#): we encourage you to review the consultation and draft a response accordingly.

[Project implementation data request](#): to complete the Project implementation data request and return to the [bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk](mailto:bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk) by **17 January 2025**

#### Training and Events

[Level 2 – Award in Pensions Essentials \(APE\) Qualification](#): to are encouraged to engage with the development of the new training programme for 2025, and to contact [bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk](mailto:bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk) if you would like to register your employees on this qualification course.

### Administrators

#### Age Discrimination remedy

[CETV guidance](#): should ensure that they are using the guidance for those members who are eligible for the age discrimination remedy where a transfer out takes place.

[NS&I Direct Saver Interest rates](#): should ensure that the correct NS&I rate is quoted in their figures to members and administrators who use Heywood as their software supplier should liaise with the scheme managers on how the new interest rates will be recalculated outside of the software.

[Annual Benefit Statement Remediable Service Statements \(ABS-RSS\) Readiness](#): should ensure that they are prepared and have discussed the relevant points with their clients and communicated appropriately with members.

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[Annual Benefit Statement Remediable Service Statement FAQs](#): should direct members to the FAQs when producing the ABS-RSS’.

## Matthews

[Amendments to the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme: retained firefighters](#): we encourage you to review the consultation and draft a response accordingly.

[Arrears of pension and tax payable](#): are advised to follow this process and make members aware of the tax implication of being paid the areas in a single tax year.

## Local Pension Boards

### Matthews

[Amendments to the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme: retained firefighters](#): we encourage you to review the consultation and draft a response accordingly.

## Training and Events

[Local Pension Board \(LPB\) Training Sessions](#): are encouraged to book onto a session.

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## Age Discrimination Remedy updates

### CETV guidance

On 19 December 2024, we emailed administrators, copying to scheme managers and internal pensions contacts informing them that guidance for applying McCloud remedy to non-club transfers and cross-border transfers out had been published in the [CETV pages](#) of the [GAD guidance](#) section of the [FPS regulations and guidance](#) website.

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

### **ACTION:**

Administrators should ensure that they are using the guidance for those members who are eligible for the age discrimination remedy where a transfer out takes place.

### NS&I rate Direct Saver Interest rates

On 10 December 2024 we emailed the sector to inform them of a change to the NS&I Direct Savers rate on 20 December 2024, where the rate changes from 3.75% to 3.50%.

This change affects any information that is calculated and provided to members on or after this date for all types of calculations where the NS&I rate is used. Scheme managers will need to update the new rate within the relevant calculator and pension administrators will need to ensure that the correct amount of interest is quoted when providing figures to members.

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**ACTION:**

Scheme managers should ensure that they have updated the new NS&I rate in the calculator for calculations on or after 20 December 2024.

Administrators should ensure that the correct NS&I rate is quoted in their figures to members and administrators who use Heywood as their software supplier should liaise with the scheme managers on how the new interest rates will be recalculated outside of the software.

## Annual Benefit Statement Remediable Service Statements (ABS-RSS) Readiness

We know that the sector has already commenced, or completed sending out their ABS-RSS' but we are also aware that some are about to commence this ahead of the 31 March 2025 deadline.

We therefore thought it may be useful to set out some readiness questions, to help you ensure you are ready for their delivery:

1. What will the processes be to ensure the interest is calculated correctly on the statement at the date of issue? If FRAs have provided the GAD contribution adjustments what date will the interest be calculated to and does this require re-calculation, so the interest is calculated at the date of statement as per the regulations.
  - a. This is covered in the [interest process FPS 1992 and FPS 2006 \(special\)](#) and interest process [FPS 2006 factsheets](#) which have been published in the [retrospective remedy area](#) of the [FPS regulations and guidance](#) website.
2. It is inevitable that some members will not get a statement, (data errors, missing data such as transfers, non-rolled back CETVS and divorce) what is the plan to inform members whether they do or do not have a statement to view and what is the plan to issue these by 31 March 2025?
3. Who is going to do the contributions adjustment for the member, this is covered in the [Contribution adjustment process](#) guidance and how will members be signposted in the ABS-RSS so they know how to make or request an adjustment. If it is the FRAs, do they know the administrators' expectations of them. Have administrators discussed with FRAs whether they will waive the interest between the date of the statement and payment if the process to recalculate it is uneconomical to do so.
4. How confident are administrators of accurate remedy and contribution data where this has been received from FRAs. Has there been any data cleansing and reconciliation to ensure the data meets expectations, how robustly has the ABS-RSS process been tested.

5. The final point is do not under prepare for a significant engagement level from members once they start receiving the statements, there is now only a short period left to 31 March 2025 how will you manage engagement levels and any errors found in statements.

**ACTION:**

Scheme managers should ensure that they have considered these readiness questions and discussed the relevant points with their administrator.

Administrators should ensure that they are prepared and have discussed the relevant points with their clients and communicated appropriately with members.

### **ABS-RSS FAQs**

We are pleased to have published a set of [ABS-RSS FAQs](#), which have been added to the [FPS member](#) website.

**ACTION:**

Scheme managers and administrators should direct members to the FAQs when producing the ABS-RSS'.

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## **Matthews exercise updates**

### **GAD calculator**

In [FPS Bulletin 87 – November 2024](#) we confirmed that a new version of the GAD calculator would be published when the interest files were uploaded. Regrettably this was not the case, but we are pleased to confirm that an updated version of the calculator has now been published in the [Special members of the FPS 2006 - GAD calculator](#) section of the restricted area of the [FPS regulations and guidance](#) website.

We recommend that you do not make local copies of the calculator but that you refer to the website to ensure that you are always using the most up to date version.

**ACTION:**

Scheme managers should ensure that those who are involved with the Matthews exercise are aware of the new version of the calculator.

### **Amendments to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme: retained firefighters**

Today, 23 December 2024, Home Office published their [consultation on the policy changes for the Matthews second options exercise](#).

We will be holding a coffee morning on 14 January 2025, to highlight the changes included and our initial views to be included within our response.

We will then share our draft response with the sector ahead of the consultation deadline of **17 February 2025**.

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**ACTION:**

Scheme managers, administrators, and local pension boards we encourage you to review the consultation and draft a response accordingly.

**Arrears of pension and tax payable**

Following recent conversations, we wanted to clarify the position on the payment of arrears of pension and the tax payable.

In the same way any new or amended pension would be set up or amended, we would expect this to be the same for those involved in the Matthews exercise, with the arrears and tax payments made through the usual pensioner payroll process.

In an email of [9 August 2024](#), we confirmed that this will currently impact a member's tax position, as there is no HMRC spreading mechanism that can be relied upon.

We continue our discussions with Home Office with regards to the compensation solution, where we are hoping this will be recognised.

If you choose to pay the arrears via an alternative route, you will need to make the member aware that the arrears are subject to tax, and that they will need to complete a self-assessment.

In the meantime, we have amended the following supporting documents to make this clearer to individuals involved in the Matthews exercise:

- [Individual Statement of Details – Special Pensioner member - Cohort 1, Scenario 2](#)
- [Member FAQs](#)

These documents are published in the [second options exercise](#) section of the FPS regulations and guidance website and the [Members FAQs](#) page of the FPS member website.

We will continue to review the documents available to ensure that all that it is felt relevant are updated, if however, you need to use one of these documents before we have been able to update them, please feel free to amend it yourself.

**ACTION:**

Administrators are advised to follow this process and make members aware of the tax implication of being paid the areas in a single tax year.

**Project implementation data request**

Further to our request in [FPS Bulletin 85 - September 2024](#) we would now like to collect the data for period 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024. We will contact directly with an updated data collection spreadsheet, as GAD have asked us to request some additional information, following discussions at the recent [Scheme](#)

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[Advisory Board \(SAB\)](#) meeting. Earlier templates will not capture the detail we are now asking you to provide.

**ACTION:**

Scheme managers to complete the Project implementation data request and return to the [bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk](mailto:bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk) by 17 January 2025

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## FPS

### Firefighters' Pensions Team



We are sad to be saying goodbye to Sandra Sedgwick, who has been a valuable member of the team since March 2024. Sandra has worked tirelessly on the Matthews exercise to help FRAs by producing supporting documents and fielding endless queries on what we know is a challenging area.

Sandra has decided to go back to her finance roots, where she will be able to work in a hybrid role closer to home.

I am sure you will join me in wishing her well in her new role, our loss is definitely their gain.

As we asked in [FPS Bulletin 85 – September 2024](#) we would like to emphasise how important it is during this time that when [raising a query](#) that you first review the relevant query logs, the links of which are covered in each Bulletin, and the newly developed [website document indexes](#). If your query is not already covered then please complete a [query form](#) and send to the [bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk](mailto:bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk) inbox, this will then mitigate any risk of your query getting lost in our individual inboxes.

In the new year we will be recruiting for Sandra's replacement as well as a Programme Support Officer role. In the meantime, if anyone would like to discuss either of these roles, please do not hesitate in contacting me directly [tara.atkins@local.gov.uk](mailto:tara.atkins@local.gov.uk).

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## Training and Qualifications



We are really pleased to announce as per our coffee morning this month, that we are working to deliver a training programme to the fire sector in 2025.

To help us to understand the requirements of the sector we are holding a training working group meeting on 9 January 2025 at 12:00. If you think you can help us in this journey, please contact me directly [tara.atkins@local.gov.uk](mailto:tara.atkins@local.gov.uk).

Further information of the training that will be available from January 2025 is included within the [events](#) section of the bulletin.

### Website document index

We are pleased to be publishing a website document index for the Matthews and Age discrimination remedy pages of the [FPS regulations and guidance](#) website in the first couple of weeks of January 2025.

The indexes are designed to help readers know what supporting documents are available on the website for each remedy exercise and where they are published.

The indexes will be published on a new 'resources' page under each of the Age discrimination remedy and Special members of FPS 2006 sections of the FPS regulations and guidance website.

[Age discrimination remedy](#) ▼     [Special members of FPS 2006](#) ▼

### 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](#).

As it is a year since we carried out this exercise we ask scheme managers to ensure that we are updated on any change in contact details, please complete the [contact details form](#) and return to [bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk](mailto: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

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with the bulletin release dates.

Queries have been answered this month in the following categories:

- Abatement
- Unauthorised payments

### **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.

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](mailto: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](mailto:FirePoliceMcCloudTaxInterest@gad.gov.uk)

[Firematthewscalculator@gad.gov.uk](mailto:Firematthewscalculator@gad.gov.uk)

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## FPS England SAB updates

### Update from the SAB Chair, Joanne Livingstone

“Dear Friends & colleagues,

It does not feel like a year since I last put pen to paper for a seasonal message, perhaps reflecting the busy nature of the year we have all experienced. Work on remedies continued, we saw the inauguration of a new Government, speculated about the contents of the Budget and sought to assess the fortunately fewer than anticipated pension changes introduced by it and we now close the year with a consultation on contribution changes. At the same time supplying valuation data, getting ready for the pensions dashboard and considering the impact of the new General Code from the Pensions Regulator on governance will have formed a large part of the workload of those dealing with Firefighters’ Pensions.

I am tempted to ask Santa this year for three fire pension related things:

- Swift resolution on the outstanding guidance, models and amendments needed to make delivery of remedies easier.
- For those who are still struggling with producing the data needed for remedies and valuations, the time and support that they need to be able to give this area the priority it requires.
- A quiet year ahead!

The festive season is, of course, not just about presents and letters to Santa. Whatever one’s beliefs it is a time for family and fellowship. And on the fire family front there have been a number of changes throughout the last year. Claire Johnson is currently on maternity leave having given birth to her second daughter in the Autumn. Her role is being ably filled by Tara Atkins with support from Jo Donnelly, Local Government Head of Pensions. We were also very pleased to be able to share, with the police service, Clair Alcock our former Senior Pensions Adviser who is both helping the LGA at the current time and is the Independent Chair of the London Fire Brigade Local Pensions Board. We also thank Sandra Sedgwick for her work in 2024 before her departure from the team at the end of this year.

For the Fire SAB, Andrew-Fox Hewitt and Adam Taylor replaced Pete Smith and Andrew Scattergood. Councillor Biederman has recently stepped down from the SAB.

With regard to fellowship, I am grateful to both the Local Pension Board Effectiveness Sub-Committee and the LGA Fire Pensions Teams for their ongoing work to improve communications and training. Tony Curry and I have enjoyed attending the Local Pension Board training sessions and they provide the SAB with excellent input and feedback. I am excited to attend my first Board Chairs session next year. The AGM really demonstrated fellowship at its finest as the attendees took the opportunity to question, inform and guide the development of the new services that advancing technologies and dashboards will seek to bring. This deep commitment and knowledge was again admirably displayed at the session I attended on the pension contribution consultation and I hope that those of you that did not make this session will be able to attend the in person session on 21 January.

So with my thanks to you all, I again asked ChatGPT to dedicate a verse to you.

The fire pension folks toil all day,  
With rules that are twisted and gray.  
They strive to correct,  
What the past did neglect,  
And ensure that the system won't sway.

Festive Best Wishes,

Joanne Livingstone. Chair, English Firefighters' Pension Scheme Advisory Board”

### **12 December 2024 SAB meeting**

The Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) last met on 12 December 2024 and their meeting covered:

- Home Office updates
- GAD update
  - 2024 valuation
  - Matthews 2 calculator and manual cases process
- LGA general update
- SAB Governance update
  - Terms of reference review
- Budget 2024 – inheritance tax consultation

### **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](#)

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## Other News and Updates

### Pensions Dashboards Programme



#### Dashboard Programme – Publications

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

### The Pensions Regulator (TPR)



#### Pension Dashboard update

TPR have provided us with the following update, that they have asked that we share with the sector:

#### Pensions dashboards guidance

We have published our updated [pensions dashboards guidance](#), which includes updates on:

- Registration codes: we have included a new section which outlines the actions trustees need to take in respect of registration codes.
- Legislative change: this update incorporates DWP's guidance on staged connection. We expect schemes to connect in line with this guidance, and to consider and mitigate the risk if they delay connection.
- Updates to MaPS' standards: the draft data standards, reporting standards and Code of Connection have been updated, following industry feedback and experience with the voluntary participants for testing.
- Industry feedback: the dedicated industry engagement team for Dashboards

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have consistently provided insight and feedback from providers and schemes, which we have reflected in clarifications and updated scenarios.

- Data expectations: we have set out clarifications on data for matching purposes and to return accurate and timely data to members.
- Ongoing developments: while testing is ongoing, and with further developments, we have highlighted where schemes need to be alert to these developments and to speak regularly to their providers to ensure they are up-to-date.

### **Article: Pensions dashboards ‘hot topics’: update from The Pensions Regulator**

We have written a [targeted article](#) focussing on ‘hot topics’ we are hearing about through our industry engagement. This article covers how trustees should be working with their advisers – please do share the article with funds through your own communications channels. We are looking to write a further article in Feb/March next year which focusses on registration codes (what they are, how to use them, how to request additional codes, etc).

### **Nudge 3 email**

To note: This [email](#), which includes 2 registrations codes per scheme, will be sent to all relevant schemes 3-5 months ahead of their ‘connect by’ date, as set out in DWPs guidance, and which for PSPS is October 2025. On Tues 17<sup>th</sup> December, we sent the first of these to those master trusts who are due to connect in April 2025, with a corresponding email (without the registration codes) sent to nominated contacts today. I’ve attached a copy of the email to schemes for your reference. Note that while there will be small email variations between scheme types, the differences between the emails are minimal.

### Useful links

- TPR: [Updated pensions dashboards guidance](#)
- TPR: [Webinar recording and slides](#)
- PDP: [Progress update report](#)
- PDP: [Draft data standards 1.3](#)
- PDP: [Draft reporting standards 1.2](#)
- PDP: [Draft code of connection 1.2](#)
- PASA: [Data scoring guidance](#)



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## HMRC

### Digital Service

On 14 November 2024, HMRC updated their [Calculate your Public Service Adjustment](#) page to include a video to help explain to members how to use their digital service.

We have added a link to this on the [FPS members](#) website.

### Newsletter 165

On 5 December 2024 [HMRC published newsletter 165](#), which included:

- information regarding the Managing Pension Schemes Service,
- tax treatment of PCLS when paid back to a scheme, and
- the Lifetime allowance abolition

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## Training and Events

### Level 2 – Award in Pensions Essentials (APE) Qualification

We are pleased to announce in partnership with Barnett Waddingham a level 2 Award in Pensions Essentials (APE) qualification.

The qualification is aimed at those new to pensions and is not Firefighters' pension scheme specific. Barnett Waddingham's [factsheet](#) provides more information of what is involved in the qualification and what each of the five units cover.

The cost of the qualification is £950 plus VAT and is based upon having a take up of 14-18 delegates on each cohort of entrants. This is a rolling entry so as soon as we have enough delegates we can set a commencement date for each cohort.

If you are interested in your employees registering for the APE qualification, please contact [bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk](mailto:bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk) we will then pass your details to Barnett Waddingham who will then complete the registration process with you directly.

#### **ACTION**

**Scheme managers** to are encouraged to engage with the development of the new training programme for 2025, and to contact [bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk](mailto:bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk) if you would like to register your employees on this qualification course.

### 2025 Training Programme

As covered earlier in the bulletin we are creating a training programme for 2025, our first training that we will be delivering is:

- **Induction training**

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Induction training is aimed at new employees of FRAs who need to understand the history of the Firefighters Pension Scheme and the relevant pension areas and actions needed within an FRA. The agenda of the training is as follows:



## Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Introduction to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme(s) (FPS)

Sargeant and Matthews

Contingent Decisions

Retirement Process

- Ill Health and injury retirement
- Re-engagement and abatement
- Protected Pension Age
- Authority Initiated Retirement

What else?

- BAU
- Local Pension Boards
- Reference materials

We will be looking to hold this full day training both in person and virtually and the cost will be:

**In person** - £295 plus VAT (inclusive of lunch)

**Virtual** - £255 plus VAT

The cost structure is the same as the training offered by our LGPS counterparts, and future training will be based upon this cost structure. Any part day training offered will be costed at a proportionate rate.

We aim to have the dates and booking facilities added to the LGA events pages and live before the January FPS bulletin.

### Firefighters' Pensions Qualification

We have listened to the fire sector with regards to the difficulties they are having in recruiting resource who have the relevant firefighter pensions knowledge and experience.

We are therefore looking to develop a scheme/pensions manager qualification, which will cover the relevant areas of firefighters' pensions that a scheme manager/pensions manager needs to carry out the role within an FRA.

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Subject to the development going as planned we aim to launch this qualification at the firefighters AGM in September.

We will provide further information in the January FPS bulletin, where we will be asking you to complete a survey to help us inform the development of the qualification.

### **Local Pension Board (LPB) Training Sessions**

Further to [FPS Bulletin 77 – January 2024](#) where we let readers know that we launched our new LPB training.

We are pleased to confirm our 2025 dates as follows:

#### **Full training**

- Thursday 23 January 2025 10:00 – 14:00 (MS Teams) *(Fully booked)*
- Tuesday 25 March 2025 10:00 – 14:00 (MS Teams) *(Fully booked)*
- Monday 16 June 2025 13:00 – 17:00 (MS Teams) *(Fully booked)*
- Wednesday 17 September 2025 11:00 – 15:30 (in person – 18 Smith Square)
- Thursday 22 January 2026 10:00 – 14:00 (MS Teams)

**Please note:** We are just finalising a date and location for a further in person training session, which we aim to publish in our January bulletin.

The full training is aimed as LPB members who have not been on the board for long, and who require knowledge of history of the Firefighters' pension schemes, introduction of the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) and Local Pension Boards, as well as the overall governance of the role of the LPB.

Attendees will hear from a range of speakers including:

**LGA** – to provide an overview of the FPS scheme(s) and current pension related hot topics e.g. Matthews and McCloud

**SAB (England) Chair** – to give an introduction and overview of the work that SAB are involved in.

**Fire LPB Effectiveness Committee Chair** – to provide input on LPB effectiveness and what the committee have been working on.

**The Pensions Regulator** – to provide an update on the Administration and Governance survey and how the results relate to Fire, as well as covering the importance of the Public Sector Pensions toolkit and any current developments e.g. the General Code.

**The Pensions Dashboard Programme (PDP)/ The Pensions Regulator (TPR)** – to provide an update on the programme and requirements on scheme managers/to

provide detail of the tools that scheme managers can use to help them prepare for dashboards e.g. checklists.

### **Refresher training**

- Tuesday 11 February 2025 10:00 – 13:00 (MS Teams)

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 cover the current hot topics, management, and governance and the six key principles.

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

To book:

Please email [bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk](mailto:bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk) for the MS Teams sessions and we will announce when the booking link goes live for the 2025 in-person session at the LGA offices, 18 Smith Square, Westminster, SW1P 3HZ.

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

### **FPS coffee mornings**

Our MS Teams coffee mornings are continuing in January 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 will be holding our first coffee morning of 2015 on 14 January 2024 which will cover the Matthews consultation. Our second session will be held on 28 January 2024, where we will be providing a session on navigation of the FPS regulations and guidance website.

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

#### [End of year review and a look at 2025](#)

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

### **Heywood Drop in Sessions**

Heywood is hosting informal Sargeant drop-in sessions on the third Thursday of every month.

The sessions are an opportunity for Heywood customers to discuss overall progress on the Sargeant implementation project, share experiences, provide feedback, and enable Heywood to provide support in real time.

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If you are a Heywood administrator and would like to receive the joining details and meeting link, please contact your Heywood Customer Relationship Manager.

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## 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](#)
- [Scottish Public Pensions Agency - Firefighters](#)
- [Welsh Government Fire circulars](#)
- Pensions Dashboards
  - [TPR guidance and checklist](#)
  - [DWP guidance on connection](#)
  - [PASA connection readiness guidance](#)

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## 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](mailto: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 (Firefighters' Pensions Adviser)

Telephone: 020 7664 3031 (Teams Direct Dial)

07825 731 924

Email: [Tara.atkins@local.gov.uk](mailto:Tara.atkins@local.gov.uk)

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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](mailto:bluelightpensions@local.gov.uk).