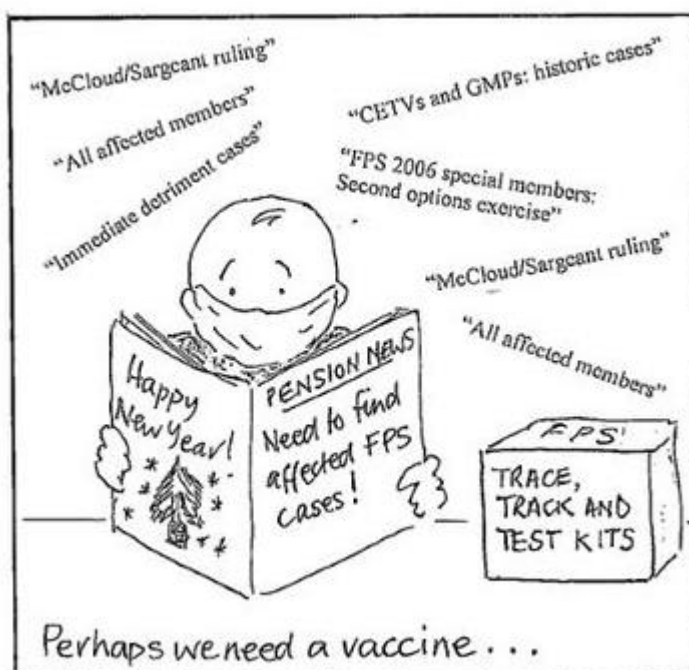




FPS Bulletin 40 – December 2020

Welcome to issue 40 of the Firefighters' Pensions Schemes bulletin.

We hope that readers remain safe and well. May we take this opportunity to wish you all a happy festive period. Many thanks for your help and support during a challenging year – perfectly captured in this illustration by Eunice Heaney.



Face-to-face meetings and training remain suspended into 2021 due to restrictions on travel and social distancing. 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.

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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 claire.hey@local.gov.uk

Table 1: Calendar of events

Event	Date
FPS coffee and catch up	Every second Tuesday from 12 January 2021
North East regional group	17 February 2021
SAB	11 March 2021
SAB	24 June 2021
SAB	9 September 2021
SAB	9 December 2021

Actions arising

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

[2020-21 statutory levy](#): FRAs to provide a valid purchase order number for invoicing of the annual levy, based on the number of employees eligible to join one of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes at 1 April 2020.

FPS

Joint statement on age discrimination remedy

Please see below a joint statement issued on 4 December 2020 by the Home Office and LGA Bluelight team regarding public service pensions age discrimination remedy:

“As you are aware the Treasury’s public consultation on the Public Sector Pension remedy closed on the 11 October. This note is intended to outline next steps for delivery of the remedy.

The Treasury are currently considering consultation responses and expect to publish their response to the consultation in the new year. This will outline the policy intent of the remedy, including whether immediate or deferred choice will be adopted.

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Changes to both primary and secondary legislation will be required to remove the discrimination. The Home Office will need to work with the Treasury to understand the policy and proposed legislation and to draft regulations to make the changes required for the Fire schemes.

In order to deliver the remedy to the timeline set out by the Treasury, the Home Office and the LGA Bluelight pensions team are committed to ensuring that you are fully up to speed with all policy and regulation developments so that work can progress at pace. It will be essential that Fire and Rescue Authorities start the process of considering what technology/administration processes will be required to implement the remedy, including what data should be retained, at the earliest opportunity and we will be engaging with you further to understand your dependencies and any challenges you will face.”

Standard wording for inclusion with CETVs in divorce cases (and others)

On 14 December 2020, we emailed pension managers and administrators with the following standard wording provided by HM Treasury (HMT). The text should be included with Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETVs) issued prior to remedy to alert the member – and others “using” the CETV – to the fact that it may well not be a final figure:

“The Government is currently in the process of consulting on, and finalising, proposals to address discrimination identified by the Courts in respect of certain members that may affect the cash-equivalent transfer value (CETV) set out in this communication. For more information please [see the consultation documents available here](#). It is expected that, in due course, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period.

It is important for the recipient of this CETV to note that the value given may change in future.”

HMT has confirmed that the wording should be used for CETVs in divorce and transfer cases, but not for Club transfers.

When using the wording, please make sure the hyperlink to the consultation is not lost if you copy and paste the text to another electronic document. If you send a hard copy of the communication rather than sending electronically, the full link text must be included.

December 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 on a monthly basis in line with the bulletin release dates.

No new queries have been added this month.

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FPS England SAB updates

Year-end message from the Chair

Following a whirlwind four months and in keeping with tradition, we are pleased to bring you this year-end message from Joanne Livingstone, chair of the FPS England Scheme Advisory Board:

“Dear Friends & colleagues,

Although it has become a cliché to say so, it has certainly been a year that none of us will forget. For me, the process of being appointed as the Chair of the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) for England and then getting up to speed on the Fire Pensions front was a welcome distraction from the international emergencies. And there has certainly been a lot going on for Fire Pensions.

The year was dominated by the HMT consultation on remedy for the age discrimination detriment created by the transitional arrangements for the introduction of the 2015 Scheme...”

Read [Joanne's year-end festive message](#) in full on the [Board updates page](#).

SAB levy 2020-21 – Request for Purchase Order numbers reminder

As detailed in [FPS Bulletin 39 – November 2020](#), we have now started the collection process of the SAB and technical support levy for 2020-21.

FRAs were asked to provide a valid purchase order number by 31 December 2020, stating the number of employees eligible to join one of the Firefighters’ Pension Schemes at 1 April 2020.

Thank you to the organisations who have completed the [statutory levy form](#). We will send a direct reminder in January to those who do not respond by the deadline.

Other News and Updates

Cost-cap review stakeholder meeting

On 23 October 2020, the Government Actuary’s Department (GAD) held a stakeholder meeting to discuss the operation of the cost-control mechanism across public service pension schemes.

A paper setting out a [summary of the key discussion points](#) was released following the meeting.

You can find this and other documents relating to the valuation and cost-cap on our [scheme valuations](#) webpage.

Pension Dashboards Programme – key data standards published

The Pension Dashboards Programme (PDP) published several updates relating to [dashboard data standards](#) on 15 December 2020. These include an introduction to data standards video and a guide containing detailed information on the data that will be needed for initial dashboards.

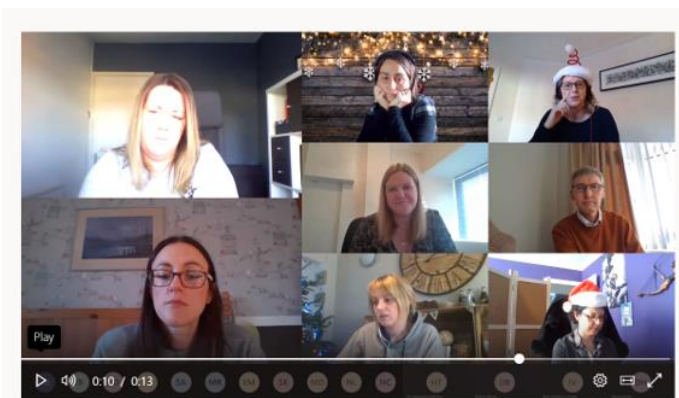
Events

FPS coffee mornings

We will restart our MS Teams coffee mornings every second Tuesday after the Christmas break. 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 event is scheduled to take place on 12 January 2021.

The sessions have been increasingly popular since we began hosting them in May. We had a record attendance of 34 at our final session on 15 December, where attendees were invited to get into the Christmas spirit early.



If you would like to join us, please email bluelight.pensions@local.gov.uk.

Training and events – 2020 facts and figures

Even though 2020 has looked very different, it has become tradition to provide a roundup of events attended and facilitated by the team. We have become very adept at using Teams and Zoom and will happily provide training sessions virtually upon request.

This year's meetings have numbered 12 regional Fire Pension Officer Group meetings, 12 local or regional training sessions for Local Pension Boards (LPBs) and scheme managers, 6 meetings of the SAB including two special meetings to discuss the HMT consultation, 12 technical discussions with stakeholders on remedy, 3 communications group, and 2 technical group meetings.

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In addition to our business as usual engagements, we managed to continue to hold our two popular annual events: Local Pension Board 'wrap up' training and the two-day AGM. Information about our national events can be found on our [Events page](#).

Finally, we have been regular virtual visitors to the devolved SAB meetings to provide an overview of issues arising in England and continue to represent FPS interests at sector specific forums including HMT led meetings.

HMRC

HMRC newsletters/bulletins

On 3 December HMRC published [Pension schemes newsletter 126](#) containing important updates and guidance for schemes. Articles include:

- Managing Pension Schemes
- Relief at source
- Pension scheme returns for 2019 to 2020
- Signing in to online services
- In-specie contributions
- Annual allowance charge - members declaring their annual allowance charge on their Self-Assessment tax return

Legislation

SI number Reference title

2020/1332	The Occupational Pensions (Revaluation) Order 2020
2020/1391	The State Pension Debits and Credits (Revaluation) (No. 2) Order 2020
2020/1392	The State Pension Revaluation for Transitional Pensions (No. 2) Order 2020
2020/1511	The Firefighters' Pension Schemes and Compensation Scheme (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

Useful links

- [The Firefighters' Pensions \(England\) Scheme Advisory Board](#)
- [FPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [Khub Firefighters Pensions Discussion Forum](#)
- [FPS1992 guidance and commentary](#)
- [The Pensions Regulator Public Service Schemes](#)
- [The Pensions Ombudsman](#)

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- [HMRC Pensions Tax Manual](#)
- [LGA pensions website](#)
- [LGPS Regulations and Guidance](#)
- [LGPC Bulletins](#)
- [LGPS member site](#)

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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 bluelight.pensions@local.gov.uk.

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