

Meeting:	Pension Board
Date:	03/11/2025
Title:	Pension Administration
Author:	Meirion Jones, Pensions Manager
Purpose:	For information only

Purpose

To provide the Pension Board with a summary of current developments in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) administration landscape and their implications for the Gwynedd Pension Fund.

1. McCloud Remedy

The Gwynedd Pension Fund has made **significant progress** in implementing the McCloud remedy, following the Supreme Court judgment which requires LGPS funds to rectify age discrimination in transitional protections.

To date, the Fund has **recalculated the majority of affected members' benefits**, ensuring that the corrected pension entitlements reflect the removal of discriminatory elements. This recalculation work has involved complex data analysis and benefit modelling, demonstrating the Fund's commitment to fairness and compliance.

Work is now ongoing to **update all member records with historic hours, breaks in service, and other relevant employment details** that impact benefit calculations. This is critical to ensuring the accuracy of revised benefits, particularly for members with variable working patterns or interrupted service histories.

The Fund continues to prioritise this project and aims to complete the remaining updates in a timely manner, ensuring all members receive the full benefits they are entitled to under the McCloud remedy.

2. 2025 Actuarial Valuation

The Gwynedd Pension Fund recently held its **Employer Forum** on **24th October 2025**, where the Fund's Actuary provided an overview of the triennial valuation process. During this session, individual employer results were shared, allowing employers to understand their specific funding positions and contribution rates.

Prior to the Employer Forum, individual meetings were conducted with the Fund's stabilised employers — namely the three councils, Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri, and North Wales Police — to discuss their valuation outcomes in detail.

The funding position at 'Whole Fund' level has improved to 166% (from 120% at 2022). Thanks to this well-funded position, all employers saw a **reduction in their contribution rates** compared to the rates they currently pay. This decrease was welcomed by employers, many of whom face ongoing financial pressures and challenges balancing their budgets.

The new contribution rates will be formally confirmed by the end of March 2026, with the revised rates coming into effect from **1 April 2026**.

3. Pensions Dashboard Programme

The government's Pension Dashboard initiative aims to provide members with a single, secure online platform to view all their pension savings across different schemes in one place. This is designed to improve transparency and help members better plan for their retirement.

Under the current regulations, all Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funds were required to **connect to the national Pension Dashboard ecosystem by 31 October 2025**. This involves setting up secure data sharing links and ensuring the fund's pension data is accurate, complete, and ready for digital exchange.

We are pleased to confirm that the **Gwynedd Pension Fund has met this connection deadline** and is now actively **testing the data link with the Dashboard platform**. This testing phase is critical to ensure smooth and secure data transmission once the Dashboard is fully operational.

At present, the exact date when the public will be able to access the Dashboard to view their combined pension pots across various schemes remains **uncertain**. The government and relevant industry bodies continue to work towards a phased public launch, but no firm timetable has yet been announced.

Gwynedd Pension Fund remains committed to ensuring full compliance with Dashboard requirements and will keep members and stakeholders informed as further details about public access and functionality become available.

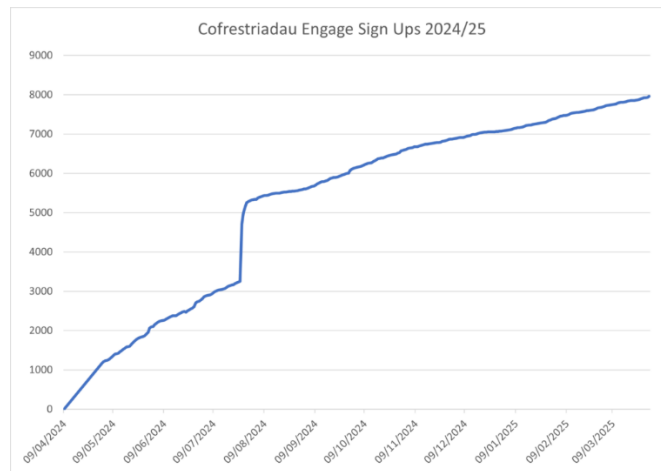
4. Access Reforms for Elected Members

The UK Government is currently consulting on a series of proposed improvements to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in England and Wales, focusing on **access and protections** for members. The proposals include reinstating scheme access for councillors and elected mayors in England, aligning the scheme's **Normal Minimum Pension Age** with national changes (rising from 55 to 57 in 2028), simplifying participation for multi-academy trusts, and introducing a **new Fair Deal** to safeguard pension rights for staff compulsorily transferred to private providers. These changes aim to modernise the scheme, enhance fairness, and strengthen long-term member protections.

The Gwynedd Pension Fund will be responding to this consultation on an **All-Wales basis**, in collaboration with other Welsh LGPS funds. Further information is available on the [UK Government website](#).

5. My Pension Online

Since April 2024, the Fund has successfully transitioned to the new **My Pension Online** portal, offering members improved access to their pension information and self-service features. Membership on the portal continues to grow steadily **month by month**, reflecting increased engagement and awareness among scheme members.



The Fund played a key role in supporting **Heywood** with the development of the **Welsh-language version** of the portal. This version is scheduled to be rolled out to **all Welsh LGPS funds by the end of the year**, ensuring bilingual accessibility across the region.

More recently, the Fund has been invited to assist Heywood with the **Welsh translation and development of online forms**, which will form part of future enhancements to the portal. These developments will ultimately enable members to **complete retirement processes online**, streamlining administration and improving the member experience.

6. Member Satisfaction Survey April 2025 – September 2025

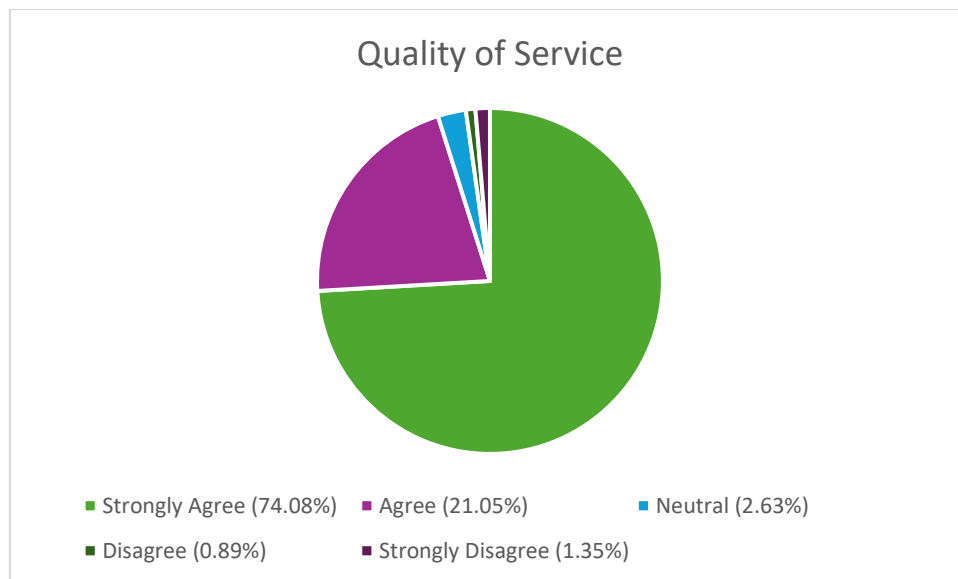
To ensure we continue delivering the highest standard of service to our members, the Fund issues a **Member Satisfaction Survey** at the conclusion of key processes—such as retirements and refund payments. This allows members to share their views on both the **quality of service received** and their **experience with Fund staff**.

A total of **58 members** participated in the survey between 01/04/2025 and 30/09/2025.

Quality of Service

The chart below illustrates member satisfaction across four key service areas:

- Overall service experience
- Clarity of information provided
- Quality of service delivery
- Timeliness in handling enquiries

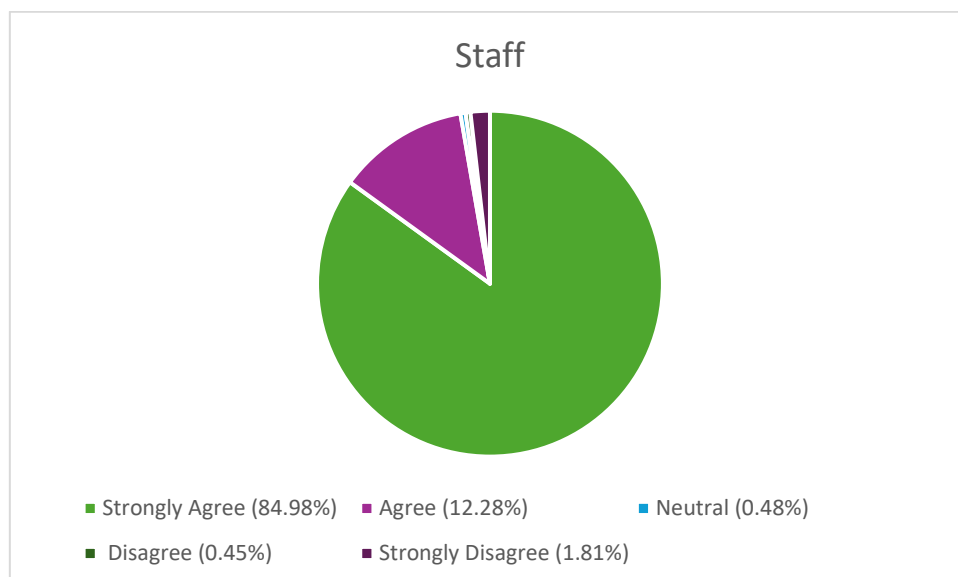


95.13% of respondents either *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that the quality of service was of a high Standard.

Staff Performance

The second chart reflects member feedback on staff performance, measured across:

- Courtesy and professionalism
- Timeliness of response
- Helpfulness and support
- Knowledge and expertise



Again, **97.26% of respondents** *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that staff performance met a high Standard.

7. Annual Benefit Statements

Under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) regulations, administering authorities are required to issue Annual Benefit Statements (ABS) to active and deferred members by **31 August each year**. These statements provide members with a clear summary of their pension benefits, including accrued rights, projected retirement benefits, and any other relevant information such as the impact of recent regulatory changes (e.g., McCloud remedy).

The purpose of the ABS is to help members understand their pension position, assist with retirement planning, and meet the transparency and governance standards expected of LGPS funds.

We are pleased to confirm that the **Gwynedd Pension Fund fully met these statutory requirements for the 2025 ABS cycle**. Statements were issued towards the **end of July 2025**, ahead of the deadline, ensuring members had ample time to review their benefits.

The majority of statements were published **online via the secure member portal**, reflecting the Fund's ongoing commitment to digital access and environmental sustainability. To support members in understanding their statements, the Fund also produced an **informative video guide** that explains how to interpret the figures and what they mean for retirement planning.

For members who preferred or required it, a **small number of paper copies** were printed and posted, ensuring accessibility for all members regardless of their digital preferences.

8. Data Quality

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is required by The Pensions Regulator (TPR) to maintain and report two key categories of data: common data and scheme-specific data. Common data includes essential personal details such as members' full names, dates of birth, National Insurance numbers, and current address information. This data is fundamental for effective communication with members, accurate benefit processing, and safeguarding against fraud or erroneous payments.

Scheme-specific data, on the other hand, relates directly to each member's LGPS membership and benefits. This includes information such as employment history, pensionable earnings, contributions paid, and details required to calculate pension entitlements accurately. Together, these data sets ensure that members receive the correct benefits in a timely manner and that the administering authority complies with regulatory standards.

The Gwynedd Pension Fund performs well in TPR's data quality assessments, reflecting its commitment to high standards of data management and record keeping. However, the Fund's main challenge affecting the common data score arises from 'gone away addresses' — cases where members have moved but have not informed the Fund of their new address. This issue hampers effective communication and poses a risk of unclaimed benefits or pensions being paid to deceased members.

To address this, Gwynedd Pension Fund has partnered with a professional tracing service to locate updated contact details for these members. This collaboration has already been successful in recovering many new addresses, allowing the Fund to reconnect with members

and ensure their pension payments reach the rightful recipients. Additionally, this process helps detect and prevent payments being made to members who have passed away, safeguarding fund assets.

The Fund continues to work closely with the tracing service and regularly reviews its internal data management processes to improve data accuracy and completeness further. These efforts not only help Gwynedd Pension Fund meet regulatory requirements but also enhance member engagement and protect the interests of both members and the Fund.

A data improvement plan has also been developed to further enhance the quality of our data. This plan will be discussed as a separate item at today's meeting, outlining the steps the Fund will take to continue improving data accuracy and completeness.

9. Member Communication

Over the past six months, the Gwynedd Pension Fund has actively engaged with its members through a range of communication initiatives designed to enhance understanding and awareness of pension benefits.

Fund officers regularly conduct **one-to-one meetings** with members, either via Microsoft Teams or face-to-face, providing personalised support to help members better understand their individual pension benefits and answer any questions they may have. These meetings have proven valuable in improving member confidence and satisfaction.

In addition, the Fund produced a **newsletter** which was distributed alongside the 2025 Annual Benefit Statements. This newsletter provided important updates for both active and deferred members, covering key topics such as regulatory changes, benefit improvements, and upcoming initiatives.

The Fund also took part in this year's **National Eisteddfod in Wrexham**, sharing a stall with the Clwyd Pension Fund. This event provided an excellent opportunity to engage directly with members, raise awareness of the LGPS, and foster collaboration by sharing working practices and experiences with officers from Clwyd Pension Fund.

Meanwhile, work continues behind the scenes to **redesign the Fund's website**. The planned re-launch in the new year aims to deliver a refreshed, user-friendly site with improved navigation and expanded content about the scheme and its benefits. This will further support members in accessing clear and comprehensive information about their pensions.

10. Performance Monitoring

The Fund recognises the importance of robust performance monitoring to ensure the efficient delivery of pension administration services. At present, a number of internal **changes are being implemented** to tasks, workflows, and procedures as part of a wider programme of service improvement and modernisation.

As a result of these ongoing changes, **comprehensive performance data is not currently available** for reporting. However, the Fund wishes to provide assurance that there is **no indication that service performance has declined** during this transitional period. Core processes continue to be delivered in line with statutory requirements and

member expectations.

Once the revised procedures are fully embedded, the Fund will resume detailed performance reporting, including key performance indicators (KPIs), benchmarking, and trend analysis. This will support transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement going forward.

11. Governance Compliance

The Gwynedd Pension Fund is currently undertaking a comprehensive **gap analysis** of its governance policies and procedures to ensure full readiness for the **Good Governance requirements** expected to be introduced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

This proactive review aims to identify and address any areas where existing arrangements may fall short of the anticipated standards. The Fund is assessing its internal controls, decision-making structures, risk management frameworks, and reporting mechanisms to ensure alignment with best practice and regulatory expectations.

What Are the Good Governance Requirements?

The Good Governance project, led by the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB), seeks to strengthen the governance standards across all LGPS funds. Key elements of the proposed requirements include:

- **Senior LGPS Officer Role:** Each fund must designate a named individual with overall responsibility for LGPS operations.
- **Annual Governance Statement:** Funds will be required to produce a detailed statement outlining governance arrangements, compliance, and improvement plans.
- **Improved Oversight and Transparency:** Enhanced reporting to local pension boards and committees, with clearer lines of accountability.
- **Robust Risk Management:** Demonstration of effective risk identification, mitigation, and monitoring processes.
- **Training and Competency:** Ensuring decision-makers and officers have appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles.

By conducting this gap analysis, the Fund is positioning itself to meet these requirements confidently and transparently. The outcomes will inform future policy updates and training plans, ensuring the Fund continues to uphold the highest standards of governance and member service.