

PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY
(Upper Division Staff) Widows',
Widowers' and Orphans' Pension Fund

NEWS LETTER

2025

Welcome to the newsletter

Fund membership,
Trustees and Advisers

Fund news

Pension news

Summary Funding
Statement

Help and advice





CHAIR STATEMENT

A warm welcome from your new Chair of Committee of Management, Hetal Kotecha

Welcome to the first newsletter for members of the Port of London Authority (Upper Division Staff) Widows' Widowers' and Orphans' Pension Fund (the Fund).

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Hetal Kotecha, and I have recently taken over as Chair of Committee of Management for the Fund following Mark Evans stepping down from the role in May 2025. Like Mark, I represent Independent Governance Group (IGG), as a professional independent trustee. We are grateful to Mark for his years of service as Chair and wish him well in his future endeavours.

I am delighted to bring you the first edition of the Port of London Authority (Upper Division Staff) Widows' Widowers' and Orphans' Pension Fund newsletter, where we bring you the latest information regarding the Fund, including the funding position, and the latest pension news.

You will have received a communication about the change to your pension administrator to Gallagher. You can read more about this change on page 4.

The 'Pension news' section on pages 5 to 7 includes details of the State Pension for 2025 / 26, guidance on how to protect your savings against scammers or cyber-attacks, and information on creating powers of attorney.

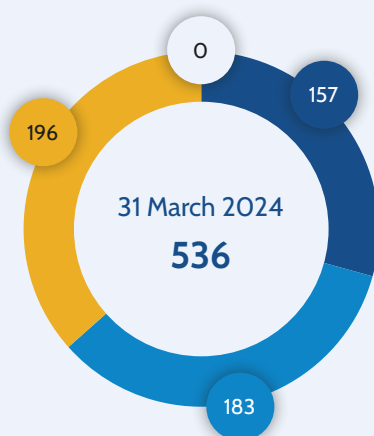
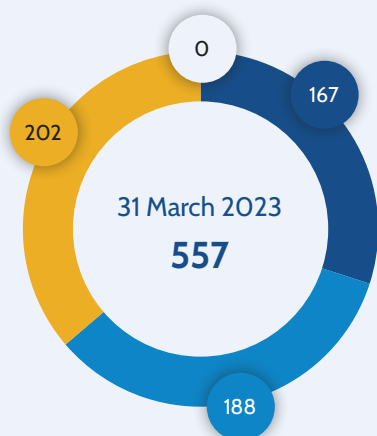
We hope you enjoy this newsletter. The Trustee welcomes your feedback, so please share any comments or suggestions of topics you would like covered in future editions.

Hetal Kotecha
Chair of Committee of Management



Photo courtesy of Rhys Hetherington

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE



- Subscribers in service
- Subscribers on pension
- Early leavers with preserved benefits
- Pensioners

TRUSTEES — LOOKING AFTER YOUR INTERESTS

The Port of London Authority sponsors the Fund, which is managed by a Committee specifically set up to operate the Port of London Authority (Upper Division Staff) Widows' Widowers' and Orphans' Pension Fund.

The Trustee Board consists of seven Trustee Directors.

Company appointed

Hetal Kotecha — Chair, IGG

Ms S Foster

Mr S Lockwood

Mrs S Mackenzie

Mr M Rolfe

Member nominated

Mr W Bean & Mr D Bird

Following the Member Nominated Trustee (MNT) exercise last year, there are two vacancies. If you are interested, please contact Debbie Bottacchi, the Pensions Manager, debbie.bottacchi@pla.co.uk

FUND ADVISERS

Although overall responsibility for running the Fund lies with the Trustee, much of the day-to-day management is delegated to professional advisers, listed below:

Actuary and Consultants

Mr D Gardiner, Aon Solutions UK Ltd



Investment Consultants

Lane Clark & Peacock LLP



Administrators

Port of London Authority



Auditors

Grant Thornton



Covenant Adviser

Interpath



Lawyers

Sackers & Partners



Secretary to the Trustee

Gallagher



PLAN NEWS



HETAL KOTECHA — THE NEWLY APPOINTED CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Hetal Kotecha is a Trustee Director at Independent Governance Group (IGG), the independent professional trustee appointed by the PLA. Hetal acts as Chair to a number of pension trustee boards, bringing with him 25 years' of trusteeship and governance experience.



More information about Hetal and IGG can be found at weareigg.com



GETTING TO KNOW GALLAGHER — YOUR NEW PENSION ADMINISTRATOR

Gallagher was appointed as the Secretary to the Trustee and the Fund Administrator in December 2024 but with services starting later.

A little about Gallagher

Gallagher is one of the world's largest insurance brokering, risk management and benefit consulting firms. Gallagher's Benefits & HR Consulting division provides integrated HR, pensions and employee benefits consulting, technology, and administration services to millions of people around the world.

What does this mean for you?

This change does not affect your benefits or entitlements under the PLA pension schemes in any way. It is purely an administrative change designed to enhance service delivery and future-proof the administration of the PLA pension schemes.

Until the transition is complete, please continue to use your existing contact channels. Further contact details will be provided in due course as part of the handover process.

If you have any queries regarding your benefits, please contact the PLA Pension Team by email at pensions@pla.co.uk.

PENSION NEWS



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE STATE PENSION INCREASE

For the 2025/26 tax year, the State Pension increased by 4.1%, which is the increase in wage growth. This is part of the 'triple lock' system, which ensures that the State Pension rises each year by the highest of 2.5%, inflation, or wage growth.

As a result:

- The full, new flat-rate State Pension (for those who reached State Pension age (SPA) after April 2016) is **£230.25 a week**, increasing by £472 a year.
- The full, old basic State Pension (for those who reached SPA before April 2016) is **£176.45 a week**, increasing by £363 a year.

DELEGATING ACCESS REGARDING YOUR FINANCES AND HEALTH — POWER OF ATTORNEY

Have you ever thought about how you and your family would manage your financial and medical affairs if you couldn't carry out everyday tasks for yourself? It's a good idea to plan ahead for a time when you might not be physically or mentally able to manage your own finances, including your pension.

A power of attorney is a legal document that allows someone to make decisions for you, or to act on your behalf if you're no longer able to manage your own affairs.

There are two different types of power of attorney:

- One covering your financial affairs
- One covering your medical care

You can only set up a power of attorney while you still have mental capacity to delegate, so it's good to plan ahead. Powers of attorney only come into effect when you are unable to manage your own finances or medical care, so hopefully they will never be required.

For more information about powers of attorney, visit ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/legal-issues/power-of-attorney

PENSION NEWS

CONTINUED

KEEPING YOUR SAVINGS SAFE

“It’s gone. Every fiver I’ve put aside. Every penny I’ve put in the piggy bank. Everything I’ve ever worked for.”

That was Jean’s anguished reaction when, on an episode of EastEnders last year, she found out she’d been the victim of a pension scam. It was a dramatic scene but, with pension scam fraudsters having stolen £17.7m from UK savers in 2023, it’s a sadly familiar story.

FOUR STEPS TO STAY SCAM-PROOF

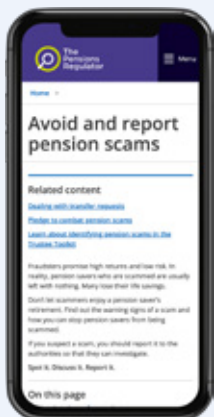
We want you to know the signs of a potential scam and what to do if you suspect you’re being targeted. Here are four things to keep in mind to help you stay safe.

- **Be cautious!** A legitimate financial adviser or pension provider will never contact you out of the blue. Be wary of cold calls, phishing emails and high-pressure sales tactics such as limited time offers.
- **Stay protected from Cyber Attacks!** Make sure you’re using strong passwords and keeping them confidential. Keep your devices and browsers up to date so that you have the latest software to guard against attacks.
- **Know your pension!** Understanding how your pension works will help you detect a suspicious offer. Generally you can only take money from your pension when you’re 55 or over (rising to 57 from April 2028).
- **Check the register!** Always make sure you’re dealing with someone genuine. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) keeps a register of authorised advisers. Go to register.fca.org.uk to check it.

Photo courtesy of Pippa Barber

YOUR SCAM-PROOF SIDEKICKS

There are lots of organisations out there providing resources to help you stay scam-proof. If you really want to make sure your defences are rock-solid, why not take a look at their websites?



The Pensions Regulator

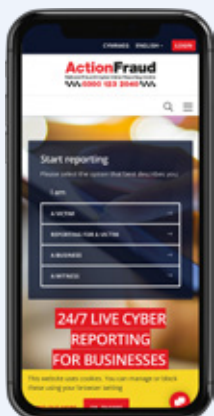
thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/pension-scams

The Pensions Regulator has produced some real-life case studies that show the devastating impact of pension scams.

The National Cyber Security Centre

ncsc.gov.uk

The UK's independent authority on cyber security, the NCSC can help you learn more about threats like email phishing attacks and malicious software.



Action Fraud

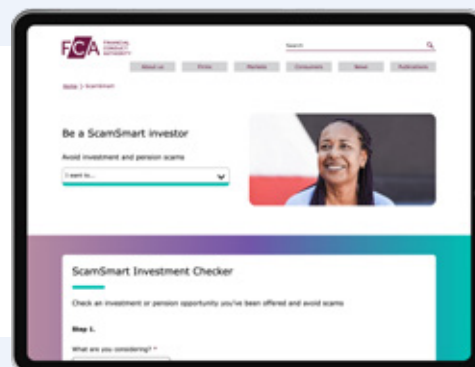
actionfraud.police.uk

The police website for reporting scams. Notifying Action Fraud of suspicious activity will make sure the situation is properly investigated and action taken to prevent other people from becoming victims.

The Financial Conduct Authority

fca.org.uk/scamsmart

The Financial Conduct Authority maintains the ScamSmart website, which contains information about how to spot a scam and what to do if you're suspicious.



WE HOPE YOU — AND YOUR PENSION — WILL STAY SAFE THIS YEAR!

SUMMARY FUNDING STATEMENT

It is the responsibility of the Committee of Management to make sure that a full valuation of the Fund is carried out every three years. In addition, the Committee of Management must, by law, provide you with an annual statement of the funding position of the Fund and remind you of the results of the last full valuation.

HOW IS MY PENSION FUNDED?

The Port of London Authority (the Authority) makes contributions so that the Fund can pay pensions and other benefits to members. All the Fund assets are in one common fund. Members do not have separate individual holdings.

The Committee of Management obtains regular valuations from the Scheme Actuary which provide an estimate of the assets needed today to meet the payment of benefits, allowing for future investment returns. Using this information, the Committee of Management and the Authority come to an agreement on how much the Authority should pay to keep the Fund's funding on track against this target.

The Pensions Regulator has powers to direct matters affecting the funding of the Fund in certain circumstances. No such directions have ever been made in relation to the Fund.

RESULTS OF THE LAST VALUATION

The latest valuation as at 31 March 2022 and funding positions for the last two years are shown below:

	2022	2023	2024
Assets	£25.415m	£19.815m	£18,596m
Amount assessed as needed to provide benefits (Liabilities)	£25.349m	£18.670m	£18.379m
Surplus	£0.066m	£1.145m	£0.217m
Funding level	100%	106%	101%

The funding position has improved since 31 March 2022 from a surplus of £66,000 to a surplus of £217,000 at 31 March 2024. The funding level has increased from 100% to 101%.

Following discussions between the Committee of Management and the Authority, it was agreed that no contributions would be payable to the Fund. The rate of contributions payable by the Authority will be reviewed as part of the next actuarial valuation due as at 31 March 2025.

CHANGE IN FUNDING POSITION BETWEEN 31 MARCH 2023 AND 31 MARCH 2024

The Committee of Management monitors the funding position between valuations. The latest report by the Scheme Actuary showed that as at 31 March 2024, the funding level of the Fund was estimated to be 101% with a surplus of £0.217 million.

The funding position has worsened slightly since the last report, largely due to pension increases being higher than expected and investment returns being lower than expected. These items have been partially offset by changes in market conditions which have reduced the value placed on the liabilities. The Fund continues to be in surplus.

You should be aware that the factors affecting the funding level are very changeable, particularly stock market performance, interest rates and life expectancy. The valuation results are only a snapshot at a particular point in time. This means that the funding level can go up or down.

PAYMENT TO THE AUTHORITY

There has not been any refund of surplus to the Authority out of the Fund.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EMPLOYER'S SUPPORT

The Committee of Management's objective is to have enough money in the Fund to pay pensions now and in the future. However, this relies on the ongoing existence of the Authority and its support for the Fund because:

- Assets can go down as well as up, and when there is a shortfall, the Authority will usually need to put in more money; and
- The cost of benefits may increase so that the Authority will need to put in more money.



SUMMARY FUNDING STATEMENT CONTINUED

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE FUND STARTED TO WIND UP?

The Rules of the Fund do not state how the benefits will be provided in the event of a wind up. If the Fund winds up, you may not receive the full amount of pension you have earned even if the Fund is fully funded on its target funding level. However, whilst the Fund remains ongoing, even though funding may temporarily be below target, pensions will continue to be paid in full.

If the Fund were to wind up, the Authority would be required to pay enough into the Fund to enable your benefits to be completely secured with an insurance company. At 31 March 2022, the estimated amount that the insurance company would require (known as full solvency) was approximately £24.1m. This means that there was a surplus of approximately £1.5m. **Please note that we are required by law to tell you this information – it does not imply that the Fund will wind up.**

In the event of a wind up, it may be the case that the Authority is unable to pay the full amount required by the insurance company. If the Authority became insolvent, the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) might be able to take over the Fund and pay compensation to members. The PPF has been set up by the government to help protect members' pensions where a company becomes insolvent, although it does not guarantee to pay full benefits. Further information and guidance is available on the PPF's website at ppf.co.uk. Alternatively, you can write to the Pension Protection Fund at

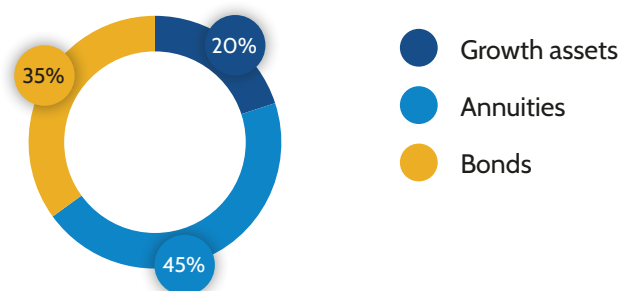
PO Box 254
Wymondham
NR18 8DN

WHY DOES THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT'S FUNDING PLAN NOT CALL FOR FULL SOLVENCY AT ALL TIMES?

The full solvency position assumes that benefits will be secured by buying insurance policies. Insurers are required to take a very cautious view of the future, include a profit margin and make an allowance for their expenses. By contrast, our funding plan assumes that the Authority continues to financially support the Fund, while adopting less cautious assumptions about the future.

WHAT IS THE FUND INVESTED IN?

The Committee of Management's policy is to invest in a broad range of assets to get the best return possible while taking account of the liabilities of the Fund, and the risks of having too much money in any one type of investment. We currently aim to invest in the following broad proportions:



This policy is reviewed regularly and is formalised in the Fund's Statement of Investment Principles at pla.co.uk/sites/default/files/2025-04/PLAPF-Statement-of-Investment-Principles.pdf

USE OF PERSONAL DATA

The Data Protection Act governs how the Committee of Management and the Scheme Actuary use and store personal data. You can find out more information about how your personal information is used at aon.com/unitedkingdom/products-and-services/human-capital-consulting/aon-hewitt-actuarial-services-privacy-statement.jsp and pla.co.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/pla-gdpr-privacynoticewops.pdf. Should you have any questions regarding the processing of your personal information, you should contact the Secretary in the first instance. General guidance is also available from the Information Commissioner's website.

Photo courtesy of Bradley Law

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

If you have any other questions, or would like any more information about the Fund, please contact the Secretary..

✉ The Committee of Management of the PLA (UDS)
Widows', Widowers' and Orphans' Pension Fund
London River House
Royal Pier Road
Gravesend, Kent
DA12 2BG

@ pensions@pla.co.uk

Please help us to keep in touch with you by telling us if you change address.

ADDITIONAL FUND DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST:

Statement of Funding Principles — This explains how the Fund is to be funded.

Statement of Investment Principles — This explains how the Committee of Management invests the assets of the Fund.

Schedule of Contributions — This shows how much money is being paid into the Fund.

Annual Report and Accounts — This shows the Fund's income and expenditure in the year up to 31 March 2024.

Actuarial Valuation Report — This report details the Actuary's check on the Fund's situation as at 31 March 2022.

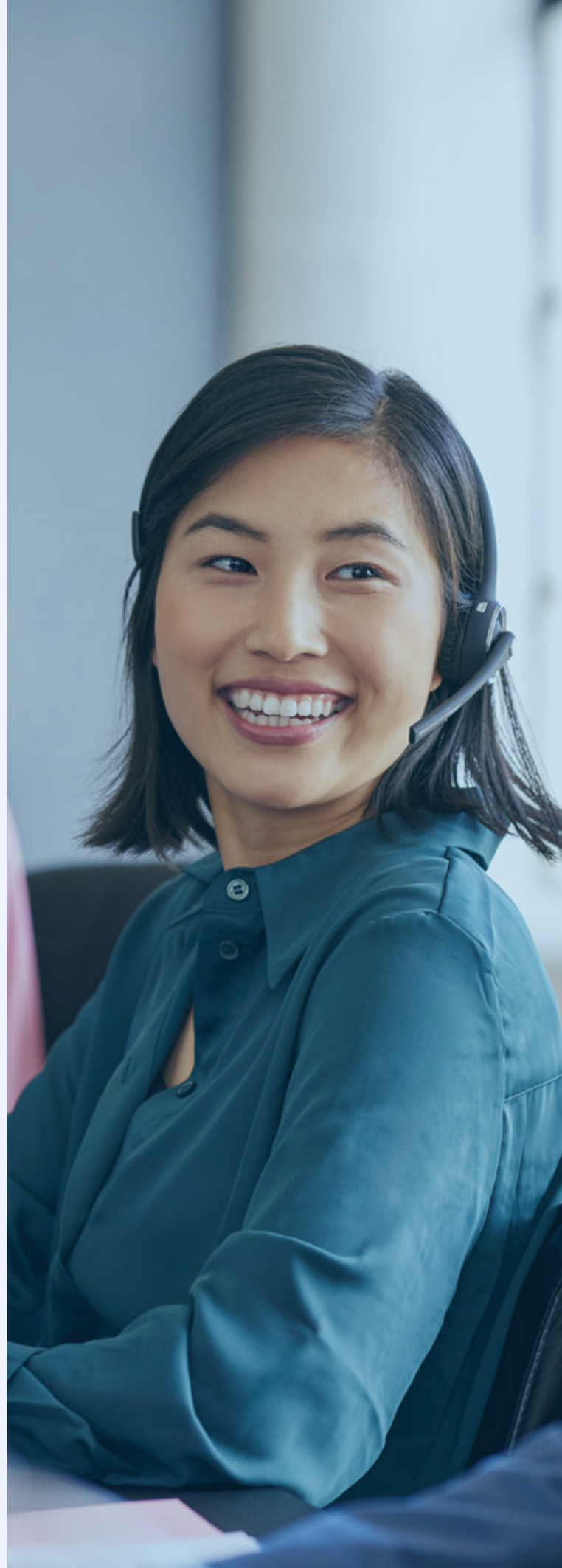
Actuarial Reports — These reports provide a review of the Fund's position as at 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2024.

Member Booklet — An overview of the Fund's contribution structure and the benefits available from the Fund for members and their beneficiaries on retirement or death.

Pension Benefits — If you are not receiving a pension from the Fund, you can request an illustration of your pension benefits.

Trust Deed and Rules — These detail the Rules and benefits of the Fund.

You can read more at pla.co.uk/pensions-homepage



HELP AND ADVICE



MONEYHELPER

moneyhelper.org.uk

Joins up money and pensions guidance to make it quicker and easier to find the right help. It brings together the support and services of three government-backed financial guidance providers: the Money Advice Service, the Pensions Advisory Service and Pension Wise.

Visit the website and select 'Pensions & retirement' to learn more.

MoneyHelper can also help you to find an independent financial adviser through its Retirement Adviser Directory: moneyhelper.org.uk/retirement-adviser-directory



MONEY SAVING EXPERT

moneysavingexpert.com

Provides information and articles that could help save you money.



THE PENSION TRACING SERVICE

gov.uk/find-pension-contact-details

Help with finding 'lost' pensions from previous employers.



THE PENSIONS REGULATOR (TPR)

tpr.gov.uk

Ensures schemes are run properly and protects members against fraud.



THE PENSIONS OMBUDSMAN (TPO)

pensions-ombudsman.org.uk

Investigates and resolves complaints and disputes about pension schemes.