

# Compliance and enforcement policy for public service pension schemes

**Our compliance and enforcement policies are currently being reviewed to reference our new Pension Schemes Act 2021 powers and regulatory approach. However, they remain in full force until that update.**

For information on:

- gathering information for our investigations, please see the consultation on our draft information-gathering policy: <https://www.tpr.gov.uk/en/document-library/consultations/new-enforcement-policies-consultation> which is open until 22 December 2021
- decisions when we make a choice between use of our regulatory powers and our criminal powers, please see the consultation on our draft overlapping powers policy: <https://www.tpr.gov.uk/en/document-library/consultations/new-enforcement-policies-consultation>
- investigations and prosecutions on the new criminal offences of avoidance of employer debt and conduct risking accrued scheme benefits, please read the criminal offences policy: <https://www.tpr.gov.uk/en/document-library/strategy-and-policy/criminal-offences-policy>

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# 1. Introduction

The Pensions Regulator (the regulator) was established under the Pensions Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) as a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to regulate work-based pensions.

The Public Service Pensions Act 2013, together with the Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, introduces an expanded role for the regulator in overseeing the major work-based pension schemes for those working in the public services throughout the UK. Our expanded role includes regulating public service schemes in relation to the new governance and administration requirements introduced by those Acts<sup>1</sup>.

This policy sets out our approach to compliance and enforcement in relation to public service pension schemes, which are those principally covering civil servants, the judiciary, local government workers, teachers, health service workers, fire and rescue workers and members of police and armed forces. It describes our expectations for compliance with relevant legal requirements and how we will proceed in cases of non-compliance, including when we may use our enforcement powers.

This document sits under our approach to regulating work-based pensions and our public service regulatory strategy. We refer throughout to provisions of English law. References to provisions of English legislation which do not apply to Northern Ireland or Scotland should be read as references to the provisions of any corresponding Northern Ireland and Scottish legislation.

1  
The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 (in NI, the Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014) introduces new requirements about the governance and administration of public service pension schemes and extends our regulatory responsibility, including by making amendments to the 2004 Act (in NI, the Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 2005).

## 1.1 Approach to regulation of public service schemes

Our public service regulatory strategy sets out how we approach the regulation of public service schemes in light of our statutory objectives. We aim to ensure that all schemes meet the new governance and administration requirements as soon as possible.

Our primary focus will be on educating and enabling schemes to improve standards of governance and administration and comply with legal requirements. We will also be developing our own systems and processes to enable us to better monitor standards, assess where schemes are falling short and best direct our resources to enable them to improve standards and become compliant. We will share this information with the public service schemes to enable them to understand how they are performing alongside their peers.

Public service pension schemes have a total membership of around 13 million and there are approximately 25,000 participating employers spanning the public, private and third sectors. These reforms are significant and those involved with public service schemes face complex and challenging conditions. There are new governance and administration requirements and therefore there may be some scheme managers and pension board members who will fail to comply with the duties because they have not fully understood them. In these cases, we will focus on working with schemes in the early stages of the new regulatory regime to help them become compliant.

We expect those involved in the governance and administration of public service schemes to comply with the law and strive to deliver good outcomes for members, recognising that governance and administration standards and practices impact upon the overall service provided to members and other beneficiaries throughout their membership, including the payment of the correct benefits to the right people at the right time.

However, we are aware that there may be situations where some schemes do not fulfil their responsibilities. We regard failures to address poor standards and non-compliance with the law as unacceptable. Should a scheme manager or pension board member (or other person responsible for complying with legal requirements) fail to comply with their legal requirements under pensions legislation, we may select from one or more of our enforcement options. These range from statutory compliance notices and monetary penalties, to criminal prosecution.

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1.1 Approach to regulation of public service schemes continued...

We expect scheme managers, assisted by pension boards as appropriate, to:

- ▶ identify and understand the root causes of an issue which is resulting in poor standards of governance and administration and non-compliance with legal requirements
- ▶ develop an improvement plan which will address the root causes of that issue within a reasonable time period, and
- ▶ demonstrate implementation of their plan.

Most of our activities will be focused on educating and enabling schemes to improve standards of governance and administration – particularly in the early stages of the new regulatory regime as schemes reform and adapt to meet the new legal requirements. We will focus on:

- ▶ promoting the public service code of practice and educational tools for public service schemes
- ▶ surveying schemes to understand the extent to which they are meeting the standards and practices we expect
- ▶ engaging with schemes to understand how they are addressing poor standards and non-compliance through the development and implementation of improvement plans, focusing on key risk areas, and
- ▶ undertaking thematic reviews, focusing on key risk areas, to gather information in relation to a particular issue or set of issues and report back to our regulated community about best practice and risks.

Where scheme managers or pension board members fail to address poor standards resulting in non-compliance with the law, we may consider escalating our activities and taking enforcement action.

In considering whether to use our regulatory powers, including any enforcement action, we will take into account all of the circumstances and will act fairly and proportionately.

We will keep this policy under review and update it as required.

## 1.2 Who does this policy relate to?

This policy relates to public service pension schemes established under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, new public body pension schemes and other statutory pension schemes which are connected to those schemes. It is not relevant to schemes in the wider public sector which are not public service pension schemes within the meaning of section 318 of the Pensions Act 2004 or Article 2 of the Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 2005.

This policy is relevant to anyone who has legal requirements or responsibilities relating to the management or administration of a public service pension scheme, or where those responsibilities have been delegated or outsourced – for example scheme managers, pension boards and administrators. It is also relevant to anyone else who could be subject to any of our statutory powers of investigation and enforcement, such as employers and professional advisers.

## 2. Risk framework

### 2.1 Our approach to risk in relation to public service pension schemes

In this section, we explain how we will take a risk-based and proportionate approach. A key aspect underpinning our approach is how we will identify and respond to risks and prioritise our activities. In setting our strategic approach to regulating public service schemes, we are primarily guided by two of our five statutory objectives:

- ▶ To protect the benefits of members of occupational pension schemes, and
- ▶ To promote, and to improve understanding of, the good administration of work-based pension schemes.

All public service schemes must be governed and administered in accordance with the requirements of the law. Across all public service schemes, governance and administration standards and practices impact upon the overall service provided to members and other beneficiaries, including the payment of benefits.

Code of practice 14<sup>2</sup> provides practical guidance for schemes to support them in improving standards of governance and administration and complying with the legal requirements. In considering where to focus our resources on improving standards we will initially concentrate on the risks we have identified as posing the greatest threats to the effective governance and administration of public service schemes and legal requirements not being met, as well as the protection of member benefits where relevant.

We will ensure that any action we take is proportionate and evidence-based. While our key risk areas will be consistent across all public service schemes, what we consider to be tolerable at a particular point in time may vary. We will develop internal risk assessment processes, which will support our operational activity and ensure we are targeted and proportionate. We will ensure our approach to managing risk is proportionate and consistent by obtaining and analysing information from a variety of sources in order to maintain an informed strategic view across public service schemes. This will enable us to:

- ▶ swiftly detect patterns and causes of potential non-compliant behaviour, and
- ▶ establish and maintain effective risk assessment processes to direct and inform our activities.

<sup>2</sup> The Pensions Regulator is required to issue a code of practice relating to the following specific matters: i) Knowledge and understanding required by pension board members, ii) Conflicts of interest and representation, iii) Information to be published about schemes, iv) Internal controls, v) Scheme record-keeping, vi) Maintaining contributions, vii) Information to be provided to members, viii) Internal dispute resolution and ix) Reporting breaches of the law (section 90A of the 2004 Act).

## 2.2 Monitoring and reviewing our compliance activities

### Gathering information

In order to maintain an informed strategic view, we will identify, obtain and analyse information from a variety of sources, which may include:

- ▶ scheme returns
- ▶ enquiries and reports we receive
- ▶ media analysis
- ▶ horizon scanning
- ▶ intelligence reports
- ▶ internal and external research, and
- ▶ exchange of information with key parties.

We are required to maintain a register of scheme information which forms the bedrock of information about schemes. We will assist managers for new public service schemes which have arisen out of the new legislation, to meet the legal requirement to register with us and we plan to introduce a bespoke version of the statutory scheme return for all public service schemes. This will request 'registrable information'<sup>3</sup> (including information about the scheme, managers of the scheme and employers linked to the scheme) as well as other information which we may reasonably require to exercise our functions.

We plan to engage with schemes in the early stages of the new regulatory regime. While these interactions are primarily intended to enable schemes to raise standards of governance and administration and comply with the legal requirements, we will also gather information. This will be used to inform the risk-based prioritisation of our regulatory activities.

We will conduct an annual governance and administration survey with schemes to understand the extent to which they are meeting the standards and practices we expect. The first survey, which we plan to conduct in 2015, will comprise of a short online questionnaire. This will serve as an enablement tool for schemes and will help inform our risk assessment processes.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Registrable information' is certain information relating to a scheme specified in section 60 of the 2004 Act. Managers must provide this information when registering a scheme and keep it up to date. The regulator must ask for this information in scheme return notices and record it in the register of pension schemes.

## 2. Risk framework

### 2.2 Monitoring and reviewing our compliance activities continued...

Generally, we do not expect to specify how schemes should evidence any improvement activities, although we may seek or require information in a certain format on a case-by-case basis. Wherever possible, we will seek to make use of information that has already been gathered or reported by a scheme, to avoid duplication and unnecessary burdens. We will be proportionate in our activities, focusing on key areas that will help managers and others involved with public service schemes to improve governance and administration standards and comply with the law, and we will consistently work to minimise burdens on schemes.

#### Reporting breaches of the law

People involved in running or advising public service schemes are required by statute to report 'materially significant' breaches of the law to us under section 70 of the Pensions Act 2004. Those people include scheme managers, members of pension boards, anyone else involved in the administration of a scheme, employers, professional advisers and anyone who is otherwise involved in advising the scheme manager in relation to the scheme. Our public service code of practice provides guidance on how to assess 'material significance'.

We expect whistleblowers to follow our guidance on reporting breaches, which requires two key judgements:

1. Does the reporter have reasonable cause to believe there has been a breach of the law?
2. If so, does the reporter believe the breach is likely to be of material significance to The Pensions Regulator?

Receiving a report of a breach will not necessarily result in enforcement action. It may inform our education and enablement activities or the focus of a thematic review. In line with our risk framework, we will initially concentrate on the risks we have identified as posing the greatest threats to the effective governance and administration of public service schemes and legal requirements not being met, as well as the protection of member benefits where relevant. We will assess reports against a range of risk factors to determine the best course of action.

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## 2. Risk framework

### 2.2 Monitoring and reviewing our compliance activities continued...

Whistleblowing is an important component in our public service monitoring activity. We understand that when an individual provides information to us it may have a potential impact on the relationship between them and those to whom they report, particularly in the case of a scheme manager and member of a pension board. Individuals can always opt to report anonymously to us. However, having an individual's contact details is useful in case we need to ask for more information so we can investigate the concerns raised.

The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides certain protection for employees and workers making a whistleblowing disclosure to us. We will seek to protect a reporter's identity (if requested) and will not explicitly disclose the information except where lawfully required to do so. We will take all reasonable steps to maintain confidentiality, but we cannot give any categorical assurances as the circumstances may mean that the identity of a reporter becomes apparent during the course of an investigation, or we may be ordered by a court to disclose it. We will ensure that individuals who provide information have a specific point of contact and any witnesses are supported throughout our process.

## 2.3 Risk-based prioritisation

When undertaking risk assessment, we will focus on risks in the following critical areas:

- ▶ **Knowledge and understanding<sup>4</sup>**  
Members of pension boards must comply with the requirement to have the appropriate knowledge and understanding, to be able to assist their scheme manager effectively. Failure to do so is a breach of law.
- ▶ **Conflicts of interest<sup>5</sup>**  
Scheme managers must ensure that pension board members do not have any conflicts of interest. A failure to do so is a breach of the law and could, for example, result in the advice and/or decisions of the pension board being open to challenge and, ultimately, the ineffective governance of the scheme.
- ▶ **Records<sup>6</sup>**  
Legislation specifies the records that must be kept and failure to comply is a breach of the law. The completeness and accuracy of these records will be key to the effective and efficient operation of schemes, including ensuring that the right benefits are paid to the right person at the right time. This will be supported by operating appropriate internal controls.
- ▶ **Internal controls<sup>7</sup>**  
Scheme managers must establish and operate internal controls. Failure to comply with this requirement is a breach of the law and it may also result in schemes not being run in accordance with the law and/or risks not being identified, mitigated and managed properly.
- ▶ **Member communication<sup>8</sup>**  
The quality of the information provided to members in terms of accuracy, timeliness and clarity is an important factor in achieving good member outcomes. Failure to comply with disclosure requirements is a breach of the law and may indicate incomplete or inaccurate record-keeping and/or inadequate internal controls.
- ▶ **Dealing with internal disputes<sup>9</sup>**  
Where we become aware of matters that are raised under internal dispute resolution procedures, this can be an indicator of wider systemic issues which may impact the effective governance and administration of schemes.

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4  
As required under section 248A of the 2004 Act.

5  
Scheme regulations must require scheme managers to be satisfied that pension board members do not have a conflict of interest (section 5(4) of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013).

6  
Section 16 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and the Public Service Pensions (Record Keeping and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014 (in particular).

7  
Section 249B of the 2004 Act.

8  
Section 14 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, section 113 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993 and the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2013 (in particular).

9  
Dispute resolution procedures must be made and implemented in accordance with section 50 of the Pensions Act 1995.

## 2. Risk framework

### 2.2 Risk-based prioritisation continued...

In prioritising risk-based regulatory activities, we will consider factors such as schemes' ability and willingness to put matters right and the likely impact of the various types of intervention available to us.

We will adopt a 'test and learn' approach to investigations and regulatory action in relation to public service pension schemes. We plan to use a governance and administration survey, conducted in 2015, to baseline standards and monitor improvement in the following years. We will also learn through our early scheme engagements and feed that learning into the development of our risk-based approach.

## 3. Our activities to support compliance and enforcement

### 3.1 Education and enablement

In addition to Code of practice 14 providing practical guidance for schemes to support them to improve standards of governance and administration and comply with the legal requirements on how to comply with regulations, we will produce specific guidance for schemes through educational tools.

These will include e-learning modules aligned to the themes covered in code of practice 14, such as conflicts of interest, managing risk, internal controls and maintaining accurate member data.

We expect scheme managers and pension boards to make use of educational tools and products, whether they are products the regulator has provided, or others. This will help schemes address gaps in knowledge and understanding and assist in compliance. We will consider requests for us to attend training sessions for board members, although we will not lead these sessions.

The practical guidance in Code of practice 14 and the educational tools we have developed may also be used by employers and others to understand the legal requirements of the Public Service Pensions Acts and how their role may be relevant in helping scheme managers comply with them.

We will engage with scheme managers and pension boards to understand how they are addressing poor standards and non-compliance through the development and implementation of improvement plans, focusing on key risk areas.

We will encourage and facilitate those involved with different public service schemes to learn from each other via peer support, challenge networks and action learning sets. We will share best practice that we see as part of these engagements, working with scheme advisory boards, as appropriate, where they have a remit to promote best practice.

We plan to annually survey schemes to assess the extent to which they are meeting the standards and practices that we expect. We intend to publish the results of our surveys and encourage schemes to use the findings to review and refresh systems and controls, monitor risks and prioritise actions.

## 3.2 Thematic reviews

We will undertake thematic reviews, focusing on key risk areas, to gather information in relation to a particular issue or set of issues. The main purpose of these reviews will be to report back to our regulated community about best practice and risks. They will also improve our understanding of public service schemes and key risk areas, which will inform our activities and enable us to provide targeted and proportionate support.

Thematic reviews across all or part of the public service scheme landscape will be a particularly useful way for us to engage and communicate efficiently with the numerous scheme managers and pension boards of the locally administered schemes. Where appropriate, they will also enable us to engage and communicate with those to whom legal requirements or responsibilities relating to the management or administration of a public service pension scheme apply, or have been delegated or outsourced – for example, employers, administrators and professional advisers.

### Selecting a theme for review

We will select the theme for each review based on key risk areas and issues that are identified through different channels, including:

- ▶ educating and enabling activities
- ▶ enquiries and reports we receive
- ▶ horizon scanning
- ▶ intelligence reports
- ▶ information from key parties, which may include scheme advisory boards
- ▶ media analysis.

We may select a theme based on a particular risk area such as record-keeping or internal controls, in order to understand practices in a particular area and help us develop our ongoing regulatory work.

Alternatively, we may choose to focus a review on a particular segment of public service schemes – for example, funded or unfunded, locally or centrally administered schemes – or groups involved in the management or administration of schemes such as scheme managers, pension boards, employers or administrators.

### Participation in the review

Where we commence a review, we will expect scheme managers, pension boards and any other parties involved in the management or administration of public service schemes to respond to all requests for information or provide an explanation as to why they can't or won't supply the information. We expect to be able to gather the information on a voluntary basis, but if needed, we may also consider using our formal information-gathering powers under section 72 of the 2004 Act.

## 3.3 Enforcement

We may become aware of breaches of the law, or significant risks of breaches and a failure to address them, by any of the ways in which we gather information, as well as enquiries or reports we receive.

Actual or potential breaches may be identified via engagement with schemes, thematic reviews or reports. Where an actual or potential breach is identified, we will assess the risk and decide how to proceed.

We expect scheme managers, assisted by pension boards as appropriate, to:

- ▶ identify and understand the root causes of an issue which is resulting in poor standards of governance and administration and non-compliance with legal requirements
- ▶ develop an improvement plan which will address the root causes of that issue within a reasonable time period, and
- ▶ demonstrate implementation of their plan.

Generally, we expect to educate and enable scheme managers and pension board members, so they comply with legal requirements. However, where scheme managers or pension boards fail to address poor standards and non-compliance with the law within a reasonable time period, we will consider escalating our activities, undertaking further investigations and taking regulatory action where there has been a breach of pensions legislation. In certain circumstances we may consider it appropriate to go straight to enforcement action. Further information about how we undertake investigations, our powers and our decision-making process can be found in the Appendix on page 16.

A number of our powers extend to third parties such as employers, for example the power to provide information, education and assistance, or to issue third party notices when we believe a breach by a person is, wholly or partly, a result of a failure of another person.

# Appendix: Our regulatory powers and decision-making process

## Undertaking investigations

Where we investigate, we may need to make some further enquiries to gather evidence, including for those schemes where we have already made information requests as part of a thematic review. This could include assessing the individual circumstances, the context of any breach of the law, any factors which may affect a decision to take enforcement action and the form that enforcement action might take.

We may seek information, documentation or an explanation from scheme managers and/or pension boards or any other relevant person. A reasonable period of time will be allowed for a response to be provided, taking into account the complexity and amount of information requested and the breach to which it relates.

Before making decisions, we may ask scheme managers and/or pension boards to provide us with information or other evidence of compliance with legal requirements. This may include (but is not limited to) copies of:

- ▶ pension board meeting minutes
- ▶ pension board training plans or logs
- ▶ registers of interest
- ▶ risk registers
- ▶ third party contracts and service level agreements
- ▶ scheme-approved policies and procedures
- ▶ stewardship reports
- ▶ statements of assurance
- ▶ audit reports
- ▶ annual reports and accounts.

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Appendix continued...

Undertaking investigations continued...

We may also contact other persons or third parties if we believe they may be in possession of relevant information or documents. These parties may include:

- ▶ third parties giving advice or providing business services to scheme managers and/or pension boards, and
- ▶ participating employers.

We may gather information through written requests, telephone calls or face-to-face meetings.

All information and evidence gathered during an investigation which amounts to personal data will be held securely and disposed of in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. We will disclose information only where we can lawfully do so and in line with the 2004 Act<sup>10</sup> and the Data Protection Act 1998, which govern the disclosure of information we receive in the exercise of our statutory functions.

Any investigation activity will only be undertaken when it is proportionate and reasonable to do so. We will record our decision-making and the justification for our actions and we will assess the risk of each case to ensure the appropriate course of action is taken. Investigations will be conducted in line with our legal obligations including compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

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10  
Sections 82 to 87  
of the 2004 Act.

## Statutory information-gathering powers

While we expect to be able to gather information on a voluntary basis, where a person fails to respond to information requests without explanation, or we otherwise consider it necessary, we may consider using our formal information-gathering powers.

Under section 72 of the 2004 Act, we can require any person to provide information, or produce any documents in the manner, place and period as specified in the notice.

If we consider it necessary and to be a reasonable and proportionate way of obtaining the relevant information we need during an investigation, we can enter premises at any reasonable time (potentially including those of an employer or other third party) and conduct an inspection for the purpose of investigating whether scheme managers and pension boards have not complied, or are not complying, with certain legislative provisions, as set out under section 73(2) of the 2004 Act.

We may conduct an inspection where we have reason to believe the information could not be obtained under a section 72 request as the information or documents may be destroyed or altered. In these circumstances, we may decide to inspect premises without prior notice and arrive at premises unannounced.

Where a person does not have access to the documents or the information requested in the section 72 notices or they require a longer period in which to locate or gather together the requested information, they should tell us, otherwise sanctions may be imposed for non-compliance with the notice<sup>11</sup>. We will not refuse reasonable requests for an extension of time without good reason.

Where there is a failure to comply with a section 72 notice without reasonable excuse, we may consider criminal prosecution under section 77, or if false or misleading information is provided, under section 80 of the 2004 Act.

We may also consider the use of a 'Skilled Persons' report under section 71 of the 2004 Act. Provided the appropriate conditions are met, we may also use our powers to apply for a warrant under section 78 of the 2004 Act.

11  
Section 77 of  
the 2004 Act.

## Deciding whether to take enforcement action

Once we have completed our investigations, we will determine what, if any, action should be taken in relation to a particular breach of the law, including enforcement action where there has been a breach of pensions legislation. Where enforcement action is undertaken, we will follow our case team and Determinations Panel procedures<sup>12</sup> which describe how determinations on cases are made and how they can be appealed.

In deciding our approach and whether to take enforcement action in relation to a breach of pensions legislation, we will take into account factors such as the immediacy and materiality of the risk or issue, or the reaction of the parties involved. We will focus on the outcome that the action would provide.

The factors we will consider when deciding whether or not to take enforcement action will vary on a case-by-case basis. However, a key factor will be the extent to which scheme managers, assisted by pension boards as appropriate, have taken steps to:

- ▶ identify and understand the root causes of an issue which is resulting in poor standards of governance and administration and non-compliance with legal requirements
- ▶ develop an improvement plan which will address the root causes of that issue within a reasonable time period, and
- ▶ demonstrate implementation of their plan.

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12  
Available at: [www.tpr.gov.uk/procedures](http://www.tpr.gov.uk/procedures)

Deciding whether to take enforcement action continued...

Some general examples of other factors are provided below. These examples are not exhaustive, nor are they prescriptive or weighted in any way:

- ▶ The number of members affected.
- ▶ The extent to which there is a systemic problem.
- ▶ The financial impact on individual and/or groups of members.
- ▶ The severity and duration of the breach.
- ▶ Whether the breach could have easily been prevented.
- ▶ The degree to which practices relating to the breach in question are inconsistent with Code of practice 14.
- ▶ Whether the scheme manager or pension board has deliberately sought to conceal their non-compliant behaviour by giving false or misleading information to members and/or us.
- ▶ Whether members of pension boards are able to demonstrate that they have adequate knowledge and understanding and have training plans in place.
- ▶ Reaction of the scheme manager and pension board once the non-compliance has been brought to their attention. For example:
  - the speed and co-operation shown to resolve any issues brought to their attention
  - whether they accept responsibility for the non-compliance or demonstrate negative/non-compliant entrenched behaviours, and
  - willingness to engage and co-operate with us.
- ▶ The track record of the scheme manager and/or pension board in complying with their duties and obligations, and
- ▶ Evidence of dishonesty or wilful failures to comply.

## Deciding what enforcement action to take

Our enforcement options derive from legislation. We may select from one or more enforcement options, which range from statutory compliance notices and monetary penalties to criminal prosecution.

Our enforcement powers can variously be applied to scheme managers, members of pension boards, employers or third parties such as administrators. We will ensure that we act in accordance with all our legal obligations, including those contained within the Data Protection Act 1998 and Human Rights Act 1998.

### Statutory notices

If we believe that a breach of pensions legislation has occurred (as defined in section 13 of the 2004 Act) and that a statutory remedy is needed to secure compliance, we can issue statutory notices to scheme managers, pension board members or third parties, such as participating employers or outsourced payroll providers.

There are specific rules governing the use of different statutory notices. They may be used to direct a person to take, or not to take, specific actions within a specified timeframe. We will consider the circumstances in each case when deciding the most appropriate course to achieving compliance. We may consider the following interventions:

- ▶ Under section 13 of the 2004 Act, we may issue an Improvement Notice requiring specific action to be taken within a certain time, if a person has contravened pensions legislation. An Improvement Notice may direct compliance with a code of practice and will be preceded by a Warning Notice under section 96 of the 2004 Act.
- ▶ Under section 14 of the 2004 Act, we may issue a Third Party Notice requiring specific action to be taken (or to be refrained from being taken) within a certain time. This notice may be issued when we believe a contravention of pensions legislation is, wholly or partly, a result of a failure of another person (as defined in section 13 of the 2004 Act) and will be preceded by a Warning Notice under section 96 of the 2004 Act.

Non-compliance with a statutory notice may result in a penalty.

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## Civil penalties

We may impose a penalty under section 10 of the Pensions Act 1995. The maximum amount of a penalty in relation to each breach is £5,000 in the case of an individual and up to £50,000 in any other case.

## Other statutory powers and orders

We have a variety of statutory powers, which include the following:

- ▶ **Power to recover unpaid contributions**  
If an employer does not make a contribution payment towards an occupational or personal pension scheme on or before the due date, we may, on behalf of the scheme manager, exercise such powers as the scheme managers have to recover that contribution payable under section 17 of the 2004 Act.
- ▶ **Power to appoint a skilled person**  
Under section 14A of the 2004 Act, we can assist a pension board in the discharge of its functions where we consider it desirable for the purpose of ensuring compliance with pensions legislation (within the meaning given in section 13 of the 2004 Act). The pension board must have regard to the advice of the skilled person and their costs will be met by the scheme manager.

## Publishing the outcome of activity

We may publish reports of our regulatory activities in order to encourage learning and show lessons learned through our work. A decision to publish a report (under section 89 of the 2004 Act) will be taken on a case-by-case basis in line with our publication policy. We will usually engage with those directly involved in advance of publication.

Publishing the outcomes of our regulatory activities is an important way of encouraging improved standards and practices. Publication also raises awareness of the risks to the good governance and administration of schemes and should assist others in avoiding problems.

Publication also enables third parties to understand how their actions may have an impact on schemes. We put great emphasis on preventing problems from occurring, providing guidance to build good practice in collaboration with the regulated community.

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[www.pensionseducationportal.com](http://www.pensionseducationportal.com)  
Free online learning for those running public service schemes

## Compliance and enforcement policy for public service pension schemes

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