Sponsored by:

Pensions Age Northern Conference: Meeting the challenges of a new pensions world

The new Pension Schemes Act, the push towards megafunds, the role of private markets, the journey to endgame, decisions around surplus, pensions adequacy challenges, and the arrival of dashboards – these were just some of the hot topics on the agenda at this year's Pensions Age Northern Conference

The popular Pensions Age Northern Conference returned once again this year, providing a valuable forum for insight, debate and knowledge-sharing at one of the most dynamic times in UK pensions history. A record number of trustees, scheme managers, consultants and providers gathered at the Park Plaza Leeds to hear from industry experts, participate in Q&A sessions, and connect with colleagues and peers from across the pensions sector, with hot topics including pension reform, endgame strategies, pensions adequacy and dashboards all up for discussion.

Among the highlights were the opening and closing keynote addresses delivered by The Pensions Regulator (TPR) director of trusteeship, administration and DB supervision, David Walmsley, and Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) industry principal, Chris Curry. The diverse agenda also featured contributions from leading industry associations, interactive audience discussions, real-world case studies, fireside chats, and expert analysis from consultants, trustee firms and investment specialists who all play a pivotal role in shaping the UK pensions landscape.

Association of Pension Lawyers chair, Matthew Swynnerton, did an excellent job of chairing the conference, encouraging lively discussion and debate throughout the day.

We extend our sincere thanks to our chair for taking the time to steer the event, to our sponsors and speakers for their involvement, and to all those who attended and contributed to the day's success. We look forward to welcoming the industry once again later this year to the Pensions Age Autumn Conference, taking place in London on 17 September, at London's Waldorf Hilton.

Opening the conference, TPR director of trusteeship, administration and DB supervision, David Walmsley, provided an overview of the latest developments in pensions policy and regulatory practice, reflecting on the implications of the new Pension Schemes Act and broader market trends.

L&G private markets asset allocation investment specialist, Rebecca Burgess, and senior business development director, Paul Gilbertson, took part in a fireside chat, sharing insights, client experiences and case studies on how L&G is making private markets investments more accessible and effective for DC members.

LCP partner, Jonathan Griffith, focused on DB surpluses, exploring how surplus is being shared between members and sponsors, where and how it is being released, and the commercial and governance tensions shaping those outcomes.

Pensions Policy Institute deputy director, Dr Suzy Morrissey FCA, focused on the significant megafunds reform, requiring multi-employer DC pension schemes to have £25 billion of assets in their default arrangement by 2030; as well as the requirement for schemes to introduce guided retirement solutions for their clients.

Sponsored by:

Arc Pensions Law

British Business Bank

JUST.

LCP powering possibility

Just Group senior business development manager, Ross Breckon, revisited the topic of endgame and the associated risks, while also focusing on the emerging innovation in the insurance market, and how these innovations are supporting higher standards and improving member outcomes.

British Business Bank deputy CIO and managing partner, BBB Investment Services Limited, Ian Connatty, explored the investment opportunities emerging from the UK's innovation ecosystem and discussed how the British Business Bank is helping pension funds gain exposure to these opportunities through new routes into venture capital.

Arc Pensions Law associate, Clare Pollard, and partner, Robert Walker, considered the package of potential protection options available to trustees in the context of buyout and wind-up, and looked at how early consideration of these options could help shape the overall journey.

Sponsored by:

Pensions UK head of DC, master trusts and lifetime savings, Philip Brown, used his session to explore the growing challenge of pension adequacy, hot off the heels of the Pensions Commission's interim report.

In this interactive session, Vidett professional trustees, Clare Routledge and Ben Salmons, asked the audience to help navigate them through the challenging world of regulatory change, and reflected on the added value that professional trustees can bring.

PDP and Money and Pensions Service (Maps) industry principal, Chris Curry, closed the conference with an update on pensions dashboards, with insights from recent user testing of the MoneyHelper dashboard. He covered the latest progress on scheme connection and outlined the practical steps that Maps and the wider sector could take to prepare for implementation.