# Is your administrator dashboards-ready?

**To be ready in time for the pensions dashboards connection deadline, there is a lot schemes must do to meet their obligations. XPS client services director, James Peel, discusses XPS's delivery plan for schemes. This includes how they are collaborating with their Integrated Service Provider (ISP), ITM, on the outputs members will receive, and future dashboards administration – with contributions from ITM chief innovation officer, Maurice Titley**

As the pensions dashboards deadline gets closer, trustees and their administration providers must make critical decisions to ensure successful connection. To help achieve this, industry guidance has identified five core topics, which closely align with the work that we've done with ITM. Together, we have created this case study to explore our progress to date and highlight what schemes should expect from their administration provider.

## Governance

There's a lot of work involved for schemes to get connection-ready for dashboards.

And although trustees can have competing priorities with other ongoing projects such as preparation for buy-in or buyout, preparing for dashboards connection now will be advantageous as we get closer to the statutory deadline of October 2026.

We have collaborated with ITM on a delivery plan that's aligned with guidance from The Pensions Regulator (TPR) and the Pensions Administration Standards Association (PASA). Our approach aims to help schemes get their data in order and be prepared for all aspects of dashboards.

PASA's guidance has helped shape our schemes' timelines, and we highly recommend that trustees use this valuable resource. Although the final statutory deadline for connection is October 2026, schemes should target their specific deadline, which will be set out in DWP's connection guidance and timetable.

The graph below shows the spread of our estimated staged connection deadlines for over 250 of our schemes within scope for dashboards. It demonstrates the short timeframes administration providers will have to help their trustees achieve compliance, and the need for early engagement.

It could take schemes 12 to 18 months to get connection-ready. So, to connect in line with DWP regulations and guidance, trustees must commit to assessing and cleansing scheme data, and starting preparation work at least 12 months ahead of their staging timeline connection date.

We've separated our clients' dashboards journey into three stages: Review, prepare and connect. This journey requires schemes to begin reviewing dashboards-related actions up to 18 months in advance, and ensure these actions are completed 12 to three months before their connection deadline.

## Matching

Every time a saver searches for pensions using a pensions dashboard, they'll trigger a Find Request. If their pensions are found, they will see their pensions data and have a positive experience.

**Estimated staging dates for XPS schemes**
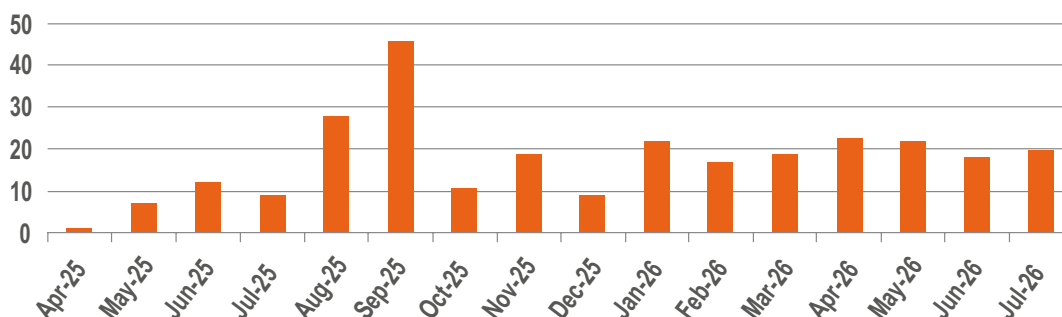
However, finding those pensions is reliant on matching infrastructure, specialised technology, well-researched policies and extensive data assessments.

To achieve this, ITM analysed our member data. This data was compared with the Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP)'s defined data elements used for matching. To complete this assessment, ITM compared our data against external sources, using advanced algorithms to highlight discrepancies between data elements like forename, surname and date of birth.

We then devised an initial Matching Approach. We considered each assessed data field, to create a set of tests that would establish a pension being found, called a 'Successful Match', and a set of tests to provide a 'Possible Match' response, where a Successful Match isn't achieved. The aims were to maximise Successful Matches and to provide well-targeted Possible Match responses.

ITM then carried out a Matching Effectiveness Assessment (MEA) using their ISP Pension Fusion's matching tool. The tool predicts user inputs and uses the personal data assessment results to test how the initial Matching Approach would perform across our schemes. The MEA estimates the percentage of members per scheme who would be unable to achieve a Successful Match.

We are now working with each scheme to review where personal details data can be improved prior to their dashboards connection. In conjunction with ITM's results, we will identify where a scheme's matching approach would need to be refined as a result of the MEA.

### Pension values
Once a member matches to a scheme record held for them, they can view or request information about their pension entitlement. As well as membership and employer data, this information covers accrued pots, annualised pension amounts, and details of estimated retirement pots and incomes.

When value data isn't available via dashboards, schemes will have short timescales to return this information. To avoid the risks of missing these deadlines, and additional work for administration providers, we're working to ensure that schemes' value data will be available to dashboards.

DC values can be drawn from the data provided on annual SMPI statements and uploaded to Pension Fusion. To provide DB values, annual benefit statement amounts could be used for active members of schemes.

Deferred pension updates will likely need to be calculated in bulk on an annual basis for DB deferred members. To ensure this is possible, we are helping clients understand the accuracy of their source data and asking trustees to ensure benefit specifications have been reviewed and signed off. XPS and ITM are working to ensure appropriate tools are in place for calculating deferred pension updates where existing automation does not meet the requirements.

Values for AVC benefits will also need to be available on dashboards in line with main scheme data. We're liaising with AVC providers to consider reconciliation processes and how this data can be made available.

### Technology
Every pension provider requires connection technology to interact with pensions dashboards and comply with TPR's and PDP's connection guidance.

XPS selected ITM's ISP, Pension Fusion, as our connection solution. Pension Fusion was the first PDP Alpha Partner to test dashboards infrastructure in 2022 and is now a PDP Early Participant. It can also link easily to any pensions administration platform. With the ever-evolving nature of dashboard requirements, XPS believed that the value of an ISP having tested the relevant aspects of the PDP ecosystem's infrastructure was the right solution, against developing our own technology.

ITM's installation of Pension Fusion and configuration of our data flows and formats was seamless and we are now proceeding to implement our schemes on Pension Fusion.

This involves testing matching approaches against real data using Pension Fusion's 'mock dashboard'. This will ensure configuration aspects are applied and related processes are functioning correctly ahead of connection. This period of stable live running will give trustees the confidence that their scheme is ready to connect to dashboards.

### Administration
Once connected, there will be further work to ensure continued compliance with the regulations:

• We will continue to work with trustees to ensure that the matching policy they have set remains appropriate.

• Queries around member data held in dashboards will be handled by our administration teams, and Possible Matches will be dealt with by our dedicated contact centre.

• Management Information (MI) will be included in governance reporting.

• We will ensure value data remains up to date and accurate.

### Conclusion
XPS plans align closely with guidance from PASA and TPR, and we will continuously monitor the regulations for any updates. Working with ITM we will ensure that Pension Fusion adapts to new requirements, so we can provide the best possible experience for members when they use dashboards.

> **Written by XPS client services director, James Peel, and ITM chief innovation officer, Maurice Titley**

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