

## Understanding diversity of representation within the LGPS

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### **Executive Summary**

This report presents findings from a survey conducted by the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) to understand the diversity of representation within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The survey was distributed to all pension fund managers and received responses from 38 funds.

#### Key Findings

49 per cent of responding funds have a formal Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy, with small funds more likely to have one than medium or large funds.

Only 19 per cent of funds collect gender data on Pension Committee and Board members; 11 per cent publish it. Even fewer collect data on age (8 per cent) and ethnicity (6 per cent), with only 3 per cent publishing it.

Despite low current collection rates, many funds expressed willingness to publish demographic data if required.

Privacy and consent were the main concerns for those reluctant to publish. Some funds questioned the value of publishing demographic data, citing limited control over appointments and existing regulatory burdens.

Chairs of committees and boards are significantly more likely to receive allowances, which vary widely across funds. Pension Boards show greater stability than Pension Committees, with longer average tenures and lower turnover.

#### Conclusions

There is a clear gap between willingness and action in demographic data reporting. Aggregated and anonymised reporting could address privacy concerns and encourage broader participation. Clarifying the purpose and benefits of publishing diversity data may help overcome resistance and promote transparency.

Consider incorporating demographic reporting into statutory guidance to encourage consistent practice. Provide templates or best practice examples for anonymised data collection and reporting.

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## Introduction and aims

The statutory role of the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) is to promote best practice amongst Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) administering authorities and make recommendations to Secretary of State on how to improve the Scheme. A current task of the SAB is to review the existing fund governance guidance, which may include reviewing current practice on the holding or reporting of information on the diversity of governing bodies.

It is widely recognised that local councillors should reflect the diversity of the communities they represent. The Local Government Association has taken [various initiatives](#) to support this. The Pensions Regulators General Code is also clear that it is good practice for pension scheme governing bodies to have regard to the diversity and representativeness of their composition. They see benefits to this in having a diverse spread of members with varied technical skills and experience.

The Board has received [legal advice](#) confirming that [its statutory public task](#) can be a lawful basis for collecting and analysing personal data provided by scheme managers, but that where possible it should try to collect anonymised or aggregate data. We understand that administering authorities own public sector equality duties provide them with a legal basis for collecting data about the characteristics of current post-holders.

With this survey, we aimed to collect data about current scheme practices and use these to understand diversity of representation within the LGPS.

## Method

This survey was sent to all pension fund managers using the Pension's Team contact list. The survey was open for responses from 14<sup>th</sup> August to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025. A total of 38 pension funds responded to this survey – a response rate of 44 per cent.

## Findings

### Demographic data collection

The findings provide a snapshot of current practice, highlight gaps between policy and implementation, and suggest areas where progress could be made.

Just under half of the funds (49 per cent) that responded said that they have a formal EDI policy. When broken down by fund size, 75 per cent of the small funds reported having a policy, compared with 47 per cent of medium funds and 44 per cent of large funds.

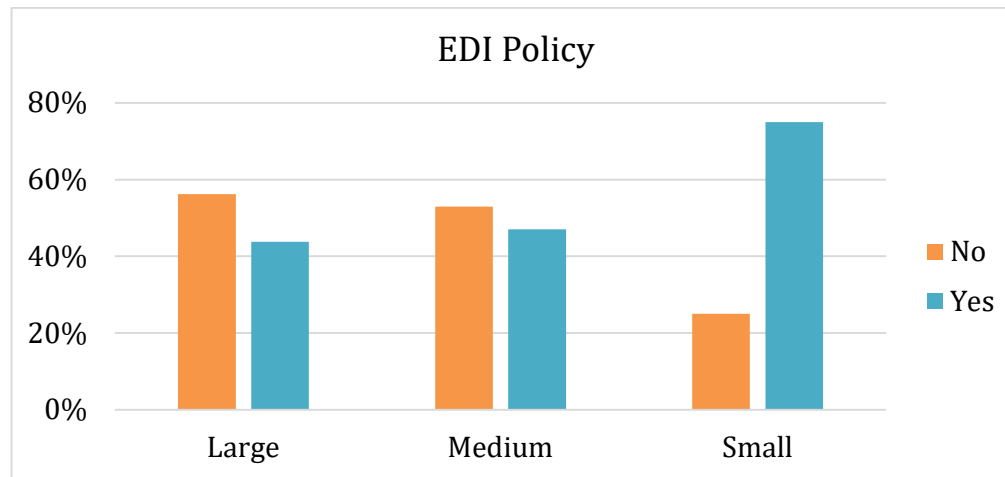
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\* Small fund – less than £2.5bn assets

Medium fund - between £2.5bn--£5bn assets

Large fund - above £5bn assets

Only 19 per cent of the funds that responded to the survey said they collect data on the gender of Pension Committee and Pension Board members, with even fewer (11 per cent) publishing this information publicly. Despite this, 84 per cent of respondents said they would be willing to publish this information if they were required to.

Even less funds said they collect data on age (8 per cent) and ethnicity (6 per cent), with 3 percent publishing this data publicly. Again, despite this 75 per cent of respondents said they would be willing to publish their age data and 78 per cent said they would be willing to publish their ethnicity data if required to.

Respondents were asked to explain the reason for their willingness to publish this information in their annual report. Most funds noted that *“if it was mandatory”* they would be happy to comply *“if required under statutory guidance”*. Even if they do not currently collect this data, they *“could easily provide this if required”*.

Many also mentioned the benefits they think this could have in encouraging *“a broader demographic of members”*, as well as helping *“to promote transparency, accountability, and help stakeholders to understand the composition of senior leadership”*. One fund noted *“we feel that transparency in the fund in all aspects is important so would be happy to publish this information if it would be beneficial”* and another said that would be happy to publish *“on the basis it can help to drive diversity, promote innovation, and ensure better decision-making and wider representation”*.

Those who said they would not be happy to publish this information cited concerns over privacy and consent. One fund maintained that gender, age, and ethnicity are *“protected characteristic[s], so we would only publish with the individual’s consent”*, others responded that they would publish this information *“provided data is presented in aggregated form to protect individual privacy”*. One fund suggested that *“age bandings”* and ethnicity groupings could help anonymisation.

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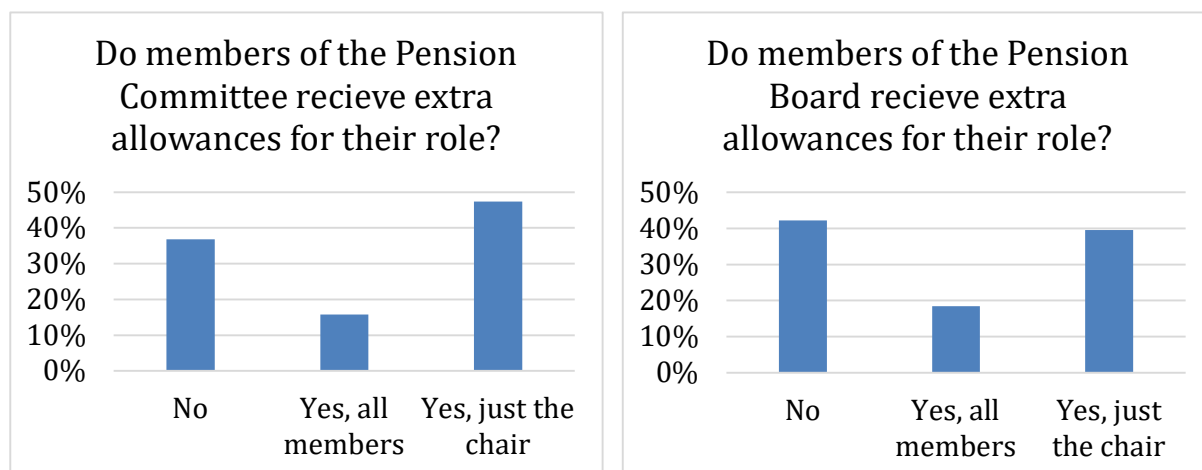
Another issue that arose from the survey was funds being unsure of what publishing this data would achieve. One funds said they have “*no problem publishing such data. But what is the point? Yet another bureaucratic requirement for reports which already contain too many regulatory requirements*”. Some funds made the point that “*it is important to recognise the limitations in achieving full diversity due to the nature of appointments. Pension Committee members are elected councillors, and their selection reflects the political composition of [the local area]. As such, the pool of candidates is limited, and appointments are primarily based on relevant knowledge, experience, and understanding. Similarly, for the Local Pension Board, we select from individuals who apply, aiming to ensure representation across employer types and membership categories, prioritising expertise and engagement*”. Having to “*adhere to political balance requirements*” means that appointments are “*something for each political group’s consideration rather than something we [the fund] can control*”.

A clear takeaway from these questions is the gap between willingness and action. There is a high willingness to comply with mandatory reporting of demographic information of Committee and Board members with many funds reported being happy to report this if required despite not currently doing so. Reporting should be aggregated and anonymised to ease privacy concerns. It is also important to “*suggest the reasons as to why you would this information in your annual report are clear and what this achieves*”.

Only one fund said that they collect any other information about the protected characteristics of their Committee and Board members. This fund said they collect information about the religion, disability status, and sexual orientation of their members.

Contrary to expectations, no significant patterns were found between fund size or presence of an EDI policy and the likelihood of collecting demographic data.

### Remuneration



Remuneration patterns are consistent across committees and boards — in both, the chair is far more likely to receive allowances than other members. Where payments

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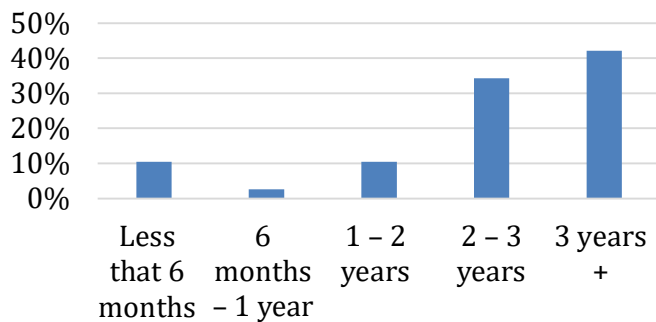
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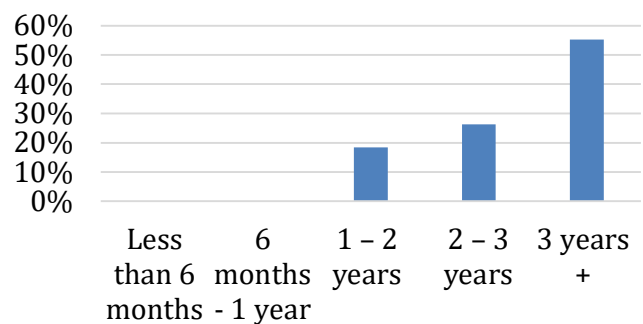
are made, they vary significantly ranging from modest travel and training expenses through to annual allowances of between £2,000 and £15,000 for chairs and vice-chairs.

### Tenure and turnover

Average length members of the Pension Committee have been in their role



Average length that members of the Local Pension Board have been in their role



From the responses, Pension Boards appear more stable than Pension Committees, with longer tenures and less turnover. For example, 42 per cent of Pension Committees members have been in their role three plus years compared to 55 per cent of Local Pension Board members. Additionally, 14 per cent of Pension Committee members have been in their role less than one year while none of the respondents answered that any of their Local Pension Board members have been in their role less than one year. It is however important to caveat a recent local election in some areas across the country.

In addition to this, from the pension funds that responded, turnover was reported to be higher in Pension Committees than Local Pension Boards.

When exploring whether turnover varied according to fund size or remuneration no strong patterns emerged.

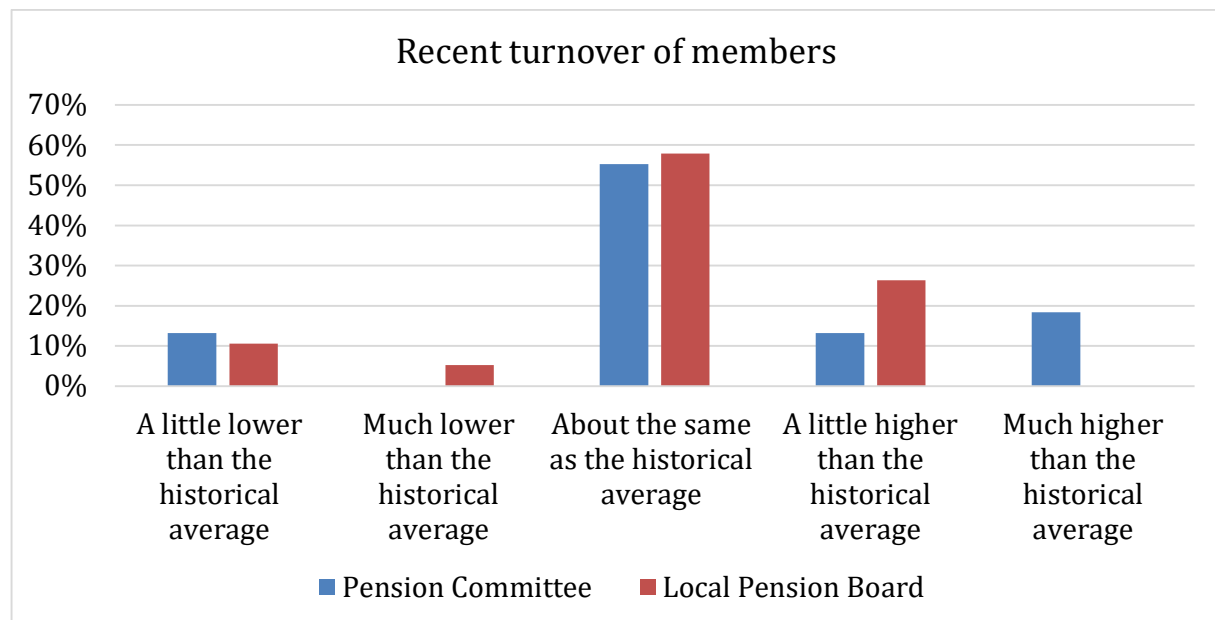
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### Conclusion, key takeaways, and next steps

Overall, the survey highlights that while only a minority of funds currently collect or publish demographic data about Pension Committee and Pension Board members, there is a strong willingness to do so if required. The gap between policy and practice is clear, with many funds recognising the potential benefits of greater transparency and representation but also citing privacy concerns and limitations on candidate pools. Funds also expressed the importance of making sure this data is reported anonymously. Remuneration and turnover show consistent patterns across funds, with chairs typically receiving allowances and Pension Boards demonstrating greater stability than Pension Committees. No significant differences were observed by fund size or the presence of a formal EDI policy.

### Next steps

- *Encourage funds to move from willingness to action by developing clear statutory guidance on what demographic information should be collected and published. This should include a standardised approach to data collection, using aggregation and anonymisation to address privacy concerns.*
- *Support funds with practical tools and templates to explain the purpose and benefits of diversity reporting in their annual reports.*
- *Explore opportunities to share good practice across funds, including how to encourage applications from a wider demographic pool while recognising structural limitations.*
- *Explore the possibility of monitoring diversity reporting over time.*

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## Peer Support Survey

### Introduction and Aims

The Scheme Advisory Board is exploring the establishment of an LGPS specific peer support offer. It has set the following initial objectives for what it could aim to achieve:

- Allow LGPS administering authorities to gain external assurance or support for its governance activities.
- Share, promote and increase good governance practices.
- Facilitate access to an expert network of LGPS peer members

The Board is aiming to follow in a proportionate way the principles of the LGA's valued improvement and assurance tool offer to councils. Further resources on peer support are available on the LGA website for those seeking more detail on how it works in a council context.

As part of scoping work to further shape the peer support offer, the SAB created this survey which aimed to gather feedback on how peer support is currently understood, where it could add value and what involvement will look like in practice.

### Findings

The survey was distributed to all pension fund managers and received responses from 38 funds, a response rate of 44 per cent.

When looking at familiarity with peer support networks, most of the respondents (80 per cent) reported that they are already aware of what peer support is, with over a third being very familiar and already actively involved in peer support networks. Only one respondent said that they hadn't heard of peer support networks at all.

Respondents were asked what they believe to be the main benefit of peer support in the LGPS. Responses can be seen in the table below. Most respondents (66 per cent) said they believe the main benefit to be sharing knowledge and best practice. Only one respondent said "building confidence in complex or changing areas" and one answered that they were not sure of what peer support is.

Peer Support Benefit	Count	Percent
Sharing knowledge and best practice	25	66%
Strengthening consistency and compliance across the scheme	8	21%
Learning from others' experience	3	8%

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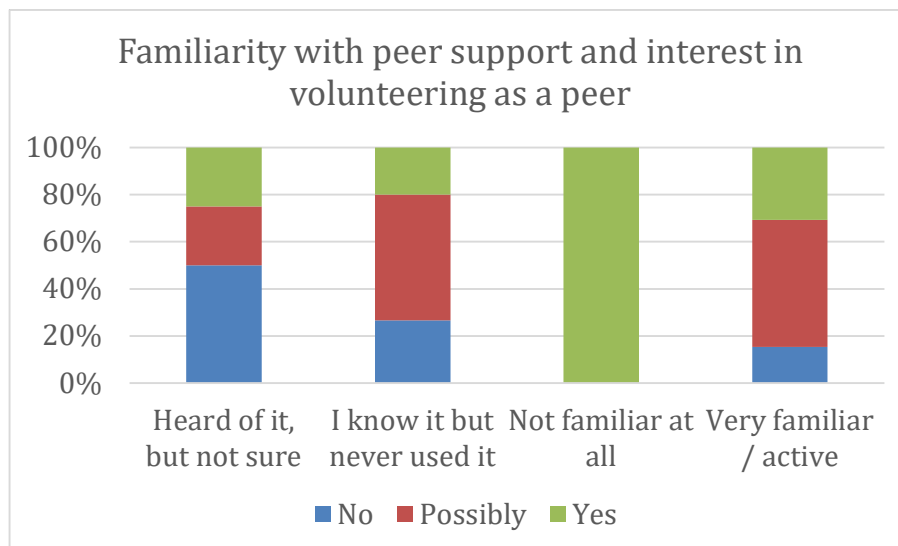
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Building confidence in complex or changing areas	1	3%
I'm not sure what peer support is	1	3%

There was a lot of interest from respondents in finding out more about volunteering as a peer. Just over a quarter (26 per cent) said “yes” to finding out more about volunteering as a peer in their role, almost half (47 per cent) said “possibly”, and just over a quarter (26 per cent) said they were not interested. In addition to this, there was also lots of interest in funds volunteering as part of a pilot scheme – 80 per cent of respondents said yes or possibly, with 20 per cent saying that their fund would not be interested.

There is a pattern between familiarity with peer support networks and interest in finding out more about volunteering as a peer. Among those who are very familiar and actively involved in peer networks, the majority (11 out of 13) expressed interest, either answering “yes” or “possibly.” Those who know what peer support is but have never used it lean heavily toward “possibly” (8 out of 15), indicating openness but also uncertainty. Respondents who have only heard of peer support but are unsure what it involves were more likely to say “no” (4 out of 8), and only two said “yes”.



31 per cent of the large funds and 29 per cent of the medium funds that responded said that they would be interested in volunteering as a peer, while none of the small funds that responded said “yes”. This suggests that resource constraints or capacity concerns may influence smaller funds’ decisions.

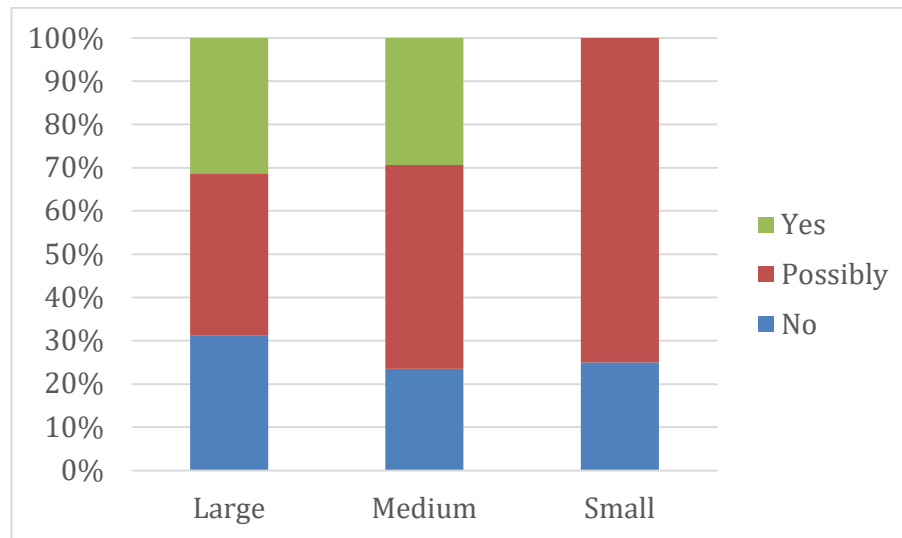
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### Conclusions

To be caveated with a small sample and a short survey, the results show strong awareness of peer support across LGPS funds, with most respondents familiar with the concept and many already engaged. Sharing knowledge and best practice is seen as the main benefit, reinforcing the value of a collaborative approach and well suited to the whole scheme aim of improving governance.

While interest in volunteering and pilot participation is high, uncertainty remains about what involvement entails. Familiarity strongly influences willingness to volunteer, and medium and large-sized funds appear the most engaged overall, Small funds lean towards “possibly,” suggesting resource concerns and wanting to understand more about what the role would entail.

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