



University of Edinburgh Staff Benefits Scheme Member Newsletter – April 2026



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



Welcome to your 2026 newsletter. The first part of this issue is a statement about the Scheme’s financial position. We carry out a full valuation of the Scheme every three years, with annual updates in the intervening years.

The rest of the issue covers recent developments affecting the Scheme and the world of pensions more generally.

It is hard to escape the fact that we are living through uncertain times. The economic climate continues to be very unsettled and that has a direct impact on the Scheme. However, your pension is not directly affected by changes in the Scheme’s funding level, and you can be confident that it remains well able to pay all pensions as they fall due.

We have included some items about being aware of scams and how to stay safe when using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in relation to your pension.

Later this year we will be writing to you about a forthcoming vacancy on the Trustee Board, which will give you an opportunity to help with the running of the Scheme. To help you learn more about the role Khush Joshi has shared a short Q&A on a day in the life of a trustee on page 5.

We want to ensure that you stay up to date about your Scheme and this newsletter is one way of doing that. We also encourage you to register for and use the Scheme’s web portal, PRISM. It provides easy access to a range of useful documents about the Scheme. Further details can be found on page 8.

We do hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter. If you have any questions or comments please get in touch using the contact details on page 8.

Julia Miller
Chair of the Trustee

How does the Scheme work?

As a member of the Scheme, you are entitled to receive benefits when you come to retire that are set out in the Scheme's rules. These benefits are based on your pensionable salary and how long you've been a member of the Scheme. They are financed by contributions paid by the University and by you, the members and the returns earned on those contributions once they are invested. The fund covers the payment of benefits to Scheme members and your dependants. It also meets the costs of running the Scheme.

Understanding your newsletter

What does this word mean?

Pensions have a language of their own – terms that carry specific meanings and are often used as 'shorthand' when talking about pensions. Here is an explanation of some of the words we use in this newsletter.



Assets

This is all the money building up in the Scheme as investments, bank balances and any money owed to the Scheme



Funding level

This is the assets divided by the liabilities. If the value of the assets was equal to the liabilities, the funding level would be 100%.



Liabilities

This is everything the Scheme owes now, and the expected value of benefits it will have to pay to members and their dependants in the future.



Scheme Actuary

A professional appointed by the trustees to assess the financial sustainability of the Scheme and provide actuarial advice.



Surplus

If the Scheme has more assets than liabilities, it has a surplus.



Shortfall

If the Scheme has more liabilities than assets, it has a shortfall.

Your Summary Funding Statement

This statement describes how the Scheme's financial position has changed since your previous newsletter. As Trustees, we are responsible for monitoring the Scheme's financial health and reporting on its financial position to you, the members, through this Summary Funding Statement.

The Scheme's financial position

At the date of the most recent formal actuarial valuation of the Scheme (31 March 2024), the Scheme Actuary found:

The Scheme had assets of	£411.2m
The amount the Scheme needs to provide benefits was	£406.3m
This gave a surplus of	£4.9m
This is the same as a funding level of	101%

How has this changed?

The Scheme's financial position is estimated at least once a year. At 31 March 2025, the Scheme Actuary estimates:

The Scheme had assets of	£391.5m
The amount the Scheme needs to provide benefits was	£371.9m
This gave a surplus of	£19.6m
This is the same as a funding level of	105%

The funding level has changed since March 2024 because the value of the benefits has decreased by more than the value of the assets over the year. These movements were a result of an increase in bond yields over the year.

What if the Scheme started to wind up?

One of the checks the Scheme Actuary carries out is what the funding level of the Scheme would be if it were wound up and no further contributions were received. **This is the Scheme's full solvency position.**

If the Scheme had closed at its last formal actuarial valuation and the liability for all benefits earned up to that date had been transferred to an insurance company, the Scheme would have needed an extra £107.3m to cover benefits in full. This is equivalent to a solvency funding level of 79%.

We have to estimate this figure to get a complete picture of the Scheme's financial health, but there are no plans to close it or to wind up and transfer benefits and assets to an insurance company. If the Scheme did start to wind up and the University was not able to pay in enough to secure members' benefits in full, the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) might step in and pay compensation to members. The PPF is not intended to replicate each member's pension in full. It typically covers around 90% of most members' pension earned if they are below normal pension age, and 100% of most pensioners' benefits. Increases are also calculated differently.

Information about the PPF can be found at www.ppf.co.uk. You can also email information@ppf.co.uk or call 0345 600 2541, from 9.00am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Statements about the Pensions Regulator's involvement with the Scheme

We confirm that the Pensions Regulator has made no modifications to or directions on the Scheme.

We confirm that the Regulator has not imposed a Schedule of Contributions on the Scheme.



Payments to University

There have been no payments to the University out of Scheme funds in the period since last year's Summary Funding Statement.

Our work on climate change

We continue to monitor our investment strategy and take whatever steps are needed to protect the Scheme's current strong funding position. We aim to incorporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors in our investment decisions. The long-term health of the Scheme depends not only on financial performance but also on responsible investing.

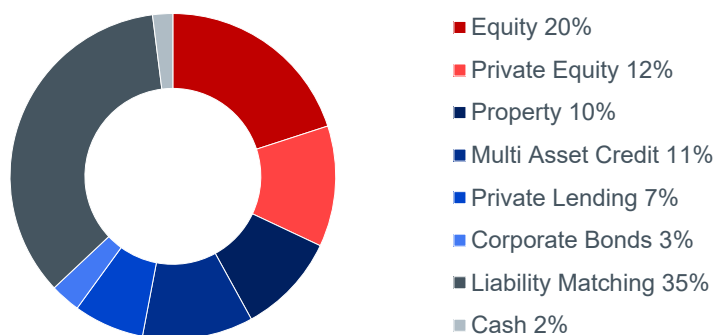
The Trustee reviewed progress over the year towards the Scheme's objective to be Net Zero by no later than 2050. The Scheme's carbon intensity reduced over the year and remains on track relative to its target.

The Trustee also reviewed the engagement activity undertaken by the Scheme's investment managers, focusing on how their stewardship and climate related actions align with the Trustee's Net Zero ambitions.

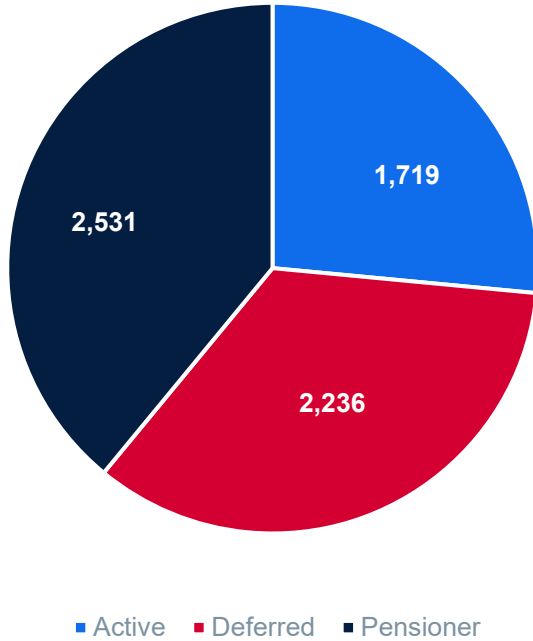
How is the fund invested?

During the year the Scheme's investment managers have invested the Scheme's assets in a range of funds with the aim of increasing their value over time and providing income. The Trustee sets the overall investment strategy followed by the managers, which is described in our Statement of Investment Principles.

As at 31 March 2025 the assets were broadly invested as shown below. Over the year, the Scheme restructured its equity portfolio to achieve a more diversified approach, while also reducing overall costs.



What is the membership of your Scheme?
At 31 March 2025 the Scheme had 6,486 members.



Active member	A member of the Scheme who is at present accruing benefits earned from current service
Deferred member	A member who has left employment but not yet retired
Pensioner	A member who has retired and is receiving their pension benefits

Who are my Trustee Directors?

The Trustee is responsible for the efficient and effective running of your Scheme.
The Trustee Directors that make up the Scheme's board are:

Julia Miller of Capital Cranfield Pension Trustees Limited (Chair of the Trustee)	Professional Independent Trustee appointed by the University
Ashley Shannon	Employer-appointed Trustee
Doreen Davidson	Employer-appointed Trustee
Kathryn Graham	Employer-appointed Trustee
Khush Joshi	Member-nominated Trustee
James Hardacre	Member-nominated Trustee

Who are your Scheme professional advisers?

The Trustee delegates some of its day-to-day responsibilities to professionals and takes advice from experts when making decisions. The Trustee's advisers are:

Scheme Actuary	Susan McIlvogue FIA C. Act, Hymans Robertson LLP
Administrators	Hymans Robertson LLP
Investment advisers	Hymans Robertson LLP
Legal advisers	Shepherd & Wedderburn LLP

For more information

If you would like more information about anything in this statement, please contact your scheme administrator using the details on the final page of this newsletter.

Your Trustee Directors

Khush Joshi has been a committed and valuable member of the Trustee Board since 2014 and has helped the Scheme reach important milestones with members' best interests at its core. Our Member Nominated Directors (MND) are only able to serve a maximum of two terms, so Khush will be stepping down as a MND in September 2026. We will be very sorry to see him go and take this opportunity to thank him for all he has done for the Scheme over that time.

Khush's departure does open up a vacancy, and we will be inviting applications for the role later this year. It is an interesting and varied role and offers the opportunity to have a direct voice for the membership in how the Scheme is run.

Khush, you have been a Member Nominated Director for a good few years now, can you tell us about the Trustee Board and how you work?

I've really enjoyed my time as a Trustee Director - it's a role which has allowed me to make a positive difference in securing people's retirement benefits. There's a lot of responsibility involved, and a fair amount of learning is needed, but there is always plenty of training and support whenever you need it.

We attend full Trustee Board meetings at least four times a year, usually face to face, and shorter Investment Sub-Committee meetings, also four times a year. There are sometimes extra calls, but we get plenty of notice for those, which are usually held virtually.

How do you manage the time commitment alongside your job at the University?

Our meeting schedule is set well in advance (as much as 12 months ahead!). Meeting papers are also sent in advance to help us balance our commitments to work and to the Scheme. You're also given time off from your work to attend meetings and keep up-to-date with Scheme matters and training.



What's the Trustee Board's focus this year?

This year we do not have a full valuation. We have also done a fair amount of work on investment strategy recently so there are no major projects to tackle. It will be a year of consolidation and making sure that the Scheme is well governed and stable. That should make it a very good time for a new Trustee Director to join the Board and get comfortable in the role well before the next full valuation is due.

What impact can a Member Nominated Director have?

You can raise questions that matter to members and provide a valuable link between the membership, the Trustee Board and the University. You can also learn or develop skills that you can transfer into your job. This role can also give you an insight into how the broader legal, regulatory and higher education backdrop can affect University and Trustee Board decisions.

What would you say to someone who is thinking about standing for selection?

Think about why you want to stand and be realistic about your existing time commitments. If you care about how the Scheme is run and want to make an impact, the role is thoroughly rewarding and worthwhile.



Staying safe from scams

There has been a huge increase in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) recently, with tools like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Meta AI all gaining in popularity.

AI can provide quick and efficient access to information, help streamline processes, and provide personalised experiences. However, we need to act with extreme caution when it comes to making decisions about our pensions. The way AI tools work means that they are likely to offer oversimplified answers to complex questions without taking your personal circumstances properly into account. **There is also a risk when sharing personal financial information and you should never put into an AI tool any personal information you want to keep private.**

Financial advisers must complete extensive training to understand the intricacies of pension schemes and financial options before they can become registered to provide financial advice with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

Unfortunately, criminals are also making use of AI tools to create highly realistic and convincing email and online scams. Pension funds are a common target for fraud, and the impact can be significant. **In 2024, known losses from pension fraud totalled £17.5 million, with an average loss of approximately £34,000 per individual***. The real figure is probably far higher as it may take years before a victim is even aware that they have been targeted.

Our Scheme administrator does all it can to protect your pension, but some do get through, as a scammer will usually approach you directly. A scam could seriously affect your financial security and retirement plans, and it is especially hard to replace savings built up over many years later in life.

*Action Fraud, NFIB 2024



Staying safe from scams

You can take these simple steps to make sure that any contact you receive about your pension or other financial matters is genuine:

1. Check the sender's email information e.g. the email address and phone number

Fraudulent communications often look similar but may include small changes, such as extra letters, misspellings, a .uk address when it should be .ac or .org.

2. Is the contact unexpected?

The Government has banned cold calling by phone about pensions. Legitimate pension providers are highly unlikely to contact you out of the blue about your pension (unless your Normal Retirement Age is coming up). You should end the call immediately and alert Report Fraud (www.reportfraud.police.uk) or by calling 0300 123 2040.

3. Have you checked who you're dealing with?

The FCA's website (www.fca.org.uk) has a Financial Services Register you can check to make sure that anyone offering you advice or services is authorised to do so. ***You should always consider taking professional advice before making any financial decisions.***

4. Stop and think

Are you being pressured to act quickly in case you miss out? You would never be rushed into making a decision about your pension by a genuine source.

5. Trust your instincts

If something doesn't feel right or it seems too good to be true, it probably is. You should always contact the Scheme Administrator if you are unsure whether a communication is genuine. You can find their contact information on the final page of this newsletter.



Latest pension news

Increase in Normal Minimum Pension Age

From 6 April 2028, the normal minimum pension age will increase from 55 to 57. This is the earliest age most people can take pension benefits. The change applies across all UK pension schemes and reflects longer working lives and later state pension ages.

If you will already be 57 by April 2028, you can take benefits as planned. If you are younger, you may need to wait until age 57 to access your pension, even if you previously expected to do so from age 55. Some members may still be able to take benefits earlier, for example if they retire due to ill health.

This change does not affect your Normal Retirement Age.

Pension Dashboards are coming

The whole of the pensions industry is preparing for the introduction of the free-to-use online Pensions Dashboards platform, backed by the UK Government. The Dashboard will enable people to view information about their unclaimed state, private and workplace pensions securely in one place. It will help reunite people with forgotten funds and allow people to plan their retirement with greater confidence.

The Trustee has been working closely with Hymans Robertson to prepare for the full launch of the Pension Dashboard. As a Scheme we are already connected but you will not be able to get access to the Dashboard until it is launched, probably next year.

Your pension anytime, anywhere

PRISM is your personal pension portal, giving you instant access to all your Scheme information. You can view and update your personal information, contact preferences, update your nominated beneficiaries, and submit general enquiries at a time that suits you. There's also more you can do depending on where you are on your pension journey.

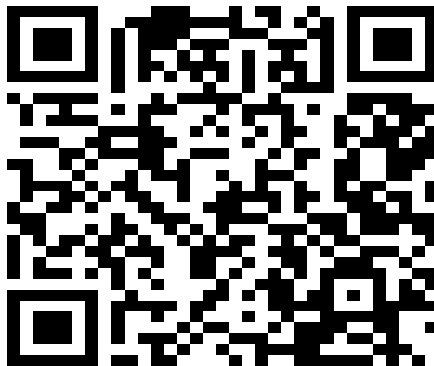
If you haven't taken your pension, PRISM lets you:

- View your pension amount from when you stopped contributing to the Scheme
- View your estimated pension value at your Normal Retirement Age
- Explore transfer values and create illustrative retirement quotes using the Pension Planner tool*

If you're already receiving your pension, PRISM enables you to view and print payslips and P60s and review your pension in payment.

**You should always consider taking professional advice before making any financial decisions.*

**Not yet registered for PRISM?
Scan the QR code to get started:**



For more information

www.gov.uk for Government information and public services, including workplace pensions and State benefits.

moneyhelper.org.uk is the new one stop service for Government-backed guidance, bringing together the support offered by The Money Advice Service (MaPS), Pension Wise and the Pensions Advisory Service. MoneyHelper aims to make your money and pension choices clearer; to cut through the jargon and complexity, explain what you need to do and how you can do it. It is free to use and provides impartial guidance and can recommend further, trusted support if you need it.

You can ring MoneyHelper free on 0800 011 3797, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Getting professional help

Making decisions about your pension can feel overwhelming. If you want some help deciding what to do next, you may benefit from speaking to a financial adviser. If you want more flexible options for your pension benefits and are considering transferring to another scheme. **It's important to know that if your transfer value is more than £30,000, the law says you will have to take regulated financial advice first.**

You can choose a regulated financial adviser in your area by visiting <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/> and clicking on the 'Pensions and Retirement' tab on the homepage.



Help from the administrator

If you have a question about your membership record or an administration issue, please contact the scheme administrator:

Hymans Robertson LLP

**2/1 20 Waterloo Street
Glasgow
G2 6DB**

0141 566 7807

UoE@hymans.co.uk



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH