

Progress update report

December 2024

Introduction

I am pleased to present the tenth Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) progress update report covering our recent work towards making pensions dashboards a reality. PDP is responsible for delivering the technical solution to enable dashboards and help in-scope pension providers and schemes connect to the dashboards ecosystem. In this report, we provide details of the work undertaken and the achievements made over the last 6 months that have helped us move ever closer to this goal.

This report comes at a time of great momentum for the programme, as we work on connecting the first of our volunteer participants to the dashboards ecosystem, continue to refine and issue updated standards, and develop plans for user testing of the live service with our MaPS colleagues. We have also confirmed GOV.UK One Login as the [identity service provider](#) for the dashboards service.

October 2024 saw the issue of a [written ministerial statement](#) by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), in which the government confirmed its commitment to pensions dashboards and highlighted the good progress PDP is making. The Minister for Pensions also announced the MoneyHelper dashboard will be made publicly available before commercial dashboards are launched to obtain better insights into customer behaviour, and ensure greater confidence in a range of areas including operational delivery, security and consumer protection.

This public demonstration of support for dashboards and update on the delivery plan is not just a vote of confidence in the programme, but a reminder of the opportunity we have to help people improve their financial wellbeing. It is testament to the enormous efforts I have seen go into the programme across industry, government and the regulators, and I remain grateful to all parties for the hard work and collaborative spirit shown in undertaking such a complex and unprecedented task.

On 6 November, PDP hosted a webinar to discuss this latest progress update in more detail. We were joined by guest speakers from GOV.UK One Login, DWP, The Pensions Regulator (TPR) and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). A recording of the session and the accompanying slides, along with a list of answers to questions posed by attendees, can be found [on our website](#).

Chris Curry – Principal, Pensions Dashboards Programme

Volunteer participant connection

PDP has been working closely with a group of over 20 ‘volunteer participants’, made up of pension providers and schemes, third-party administrators, and integrated service providers (ISPs). These organisations are building direct routes to connection with the dashboards ecosystem. As part of our delivery plan, volunteer participants have been preparing to connect.

In August, as planned, the first volunteer participants began their connection work as part of a phased approach to volunteer participant connection. Six organisations have started their connection journey to

the ecosystem, and the first 2 volunteer participants have successfully completed integration testing. This will allow PDP to test and refine the process for connection and will generate insights for other organisations due to undergo connection. It is PDP's intention to invite all remaining volunteer participants to start the connection process by mid-December.

Connection in guidance

PDP continues to work towards the [connection timetable](#) set out in guidance by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in March 2024. According to this timetable, the first cohort of pension providers and schemes is expected to be ready for connection to the ecosystem in April 2025. All providers and schemes in scope must have completed connection by 31 October 2026.

While the connection deadline provides certainty for industry and ensures connection remains mandatory, the staging timetable in guidance provides a phased approach to connection. This way, the volume and flow of connections can be managed to help ensure all pension providers and schemes connect to the ecosystem on time. It also helps support the pensions industry to manage onboarding in a stable and staggered way.

Ensuring providers and schemes are ready for connection in line with the staging timetable will support extensive user testing sooner. In turn, it makes it possible to launch the service to the public as early as possible.

PDP expects the connection of pension providers and schemes in guidance to begin as planned from April. However, due to the agile way the programme is working with volunteer participants, there remains some uncertainty about when all the volunteer participants will have completed the connection process. The guidance-based approach is designed to be flexible to recognise this potential uncertainty. Therefore, while providers and schemes must have regard to the connection timetable in guidance, if they have appointed an integrated service provider (ISP) which is not able to connect them by their date in guidance, they can be reassured that they do not need to reconsider their route to connection. PDP will work closely with the volunteer participants to reschedule connection slots if this becomes necessary. All providers and schemes will be able to connect far in advance of the mandatory connection deadline of 31 October 2026.

Pension providers and schemes should be working towards their readiness date as set out in the DWP guidance, whether they are connecting directly or through their administrator or ISP. For those connecting directly to the ecosystem, PDP has published guides on how to connect and on testing in the [connection hub](#) on the PDP website.

Providers and schemes need to prepare and cleanse their data so that it is accurate and up to date. Legislation requires trustees and managers to also decide on their criteria for data matching.

It is important that pension providers and schemes utilise existing resources such as Pensions Administration Standards Association (PASA) [data matching guidance](#) to develop their data matching criteria and decide the approach. In general, it is important to stay up to date with the latest legal and regulatory requirements.

Written ministerial statement

On 22 October 2024, the Minister for Pensions provided a [written statement](#) to Parliament confirming the Government's support for pensions dashboards and updating on the programme's good progress. The Minister also clarified that the MoneyHelper pensions dashboard, being developed by the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), will be made available to the public before commercial dashboards become operational.

Ensuring the right requirements are in place for commercial dashboards, and preparing for their connection, is a complex and unprecedented task. It is important PDP, the Government, regulators and industry get this right to create a service which the public has faith in.

Prioritising the MoneyHelper dashboard will provide an opportunity to obtain better insights into customer behaviour and ensure greater confidence in operational delivery, security, and consumer protection before facilitating the connection of commercial dashboards. It will also ensure that a dashboard becomes publicly available as early as possible.

The Government remains committed to commercial dashboards. PDP will be working closely with potential dashboard providers, DWP and the regulators on a pathway for the development and implementation of commercial dashboards.

The decision for when the MoneyHelper dashboard will be publicly available will be informed by factors such as whether the service is safe, secure and reliable, monitored by DWP, MaPS and regulators. MaPS remains committed to providing sufficient notice of the date for launching the MoneyHelper dashboard.

Delegated access

The legislation for dashboards provides the option for PDP to enable dashboard users to delegate access to their dashboard to a financial advisor. Further investigation into the user need for delegated access will take place, but this function is not in scope for the launch of the MoneyHelper dashboard. This will enable PDP to remain focused on connecting pension providers and schemes and ensuring that users are able to find and view their pensions.

Standards

It is a top priority for the Government to ensure the safety, security and positive experience of pensions dashboards for users. PDP has been given authority, from the Pension Schemes Act 2021 and the pensions dashboards regulations, and delegated by MaPS, to set dashboard standards.

Standards are a set of rules and controls that those connecting to the dashboards ecosystem must follow to remain connected. This includes pension providers and schemes, or administrators or ISPs doing so on their behalf. For example, they make sure the service is safe, and that people are being signposted towards guidance.

The standards comprise the [data standards](#), [technical standards](#), [reporting standards](#) and the [code of connection](#). There are also the [design standards](#) that dashboard services firms will need to adhere to, which sit alongside and complement the [FCA's rules for dashboard services](#), as well as the requirements set out directly by DWP's regulations.

In 2022 and 2023, PDP held consultations on draft versions of the pensions dashboards standards. The feedback was invaluable to help the programme clarify and refine these documents. Work has been ongoing to finalise updated versions of standards that will support connection testing and wider industry staging. This includes engaging with volunteer participants on drafts and utilising their feedback in refining the documents.

In April, PDP published an updated version of the data standards, soon after the publication of the staging timetable in guidance. In August, an updated version of the code of connection was published, closely followed by an updated version of the technical standards. In November, further iterations for the data standards and code of connection were published alongside the reporting standards, which have undergone testing and validation with volunteer participants.

These can all be found on the [standards page](#) on the PDP website. Further work is also ongoing on refining design standards.

Identity service

The [identity service](#) for dashboards is an integral part of the ecosystem. It will ensure people must prove their identity before they can access confidential pensions information. This will reduce the likelihood of bad actors being able to access people's pensions data displayed on a dashboard.

PDP has confirmed GOV.UK One Login will be the identity service provider for anyone using the dashboards service. Provided by the Government, GOV.UK One Login will make the service secure as well as easier for those who have previously registered with it for other Government services. GOV.UK One Login ensures users only have to prove their identity once and can use this proof to access other [government services](#), saving time and effort.

The identity service will verify certain attributes to confirm users are who they say they are, and help them find their pensions information. Pension providers and schemes may wish to consider which attributes the identity service verifies as this can help in determining their data matching policy. Data items that are verified by the identity service are first name, last name, date of birth, email address and mobile number (if used for 2-factor authentication, but may not be provided if the citizen chooses to use an authenticator app).

Users' addresses included in find requests are provided by the identity service. UK addresses are checked to exist, and, through credit records, demonstrated as having an association with the user. The address is not verified to be the user's current address. More information is available on the [identity service page](#) on PDP's website.

Industry engagement

Throughout the last 6 months, PDP has continued to attend external speaking engagements to raise awareness of programme progress and industry duties, giving presentations and speaking at panel discussions.

Chris Curry and others have given presentations at conferences hosted by Professional Pensions, the Pensions and Lifetime Savings Association (PLSA), Heywood and Pensions Age, and at events for organisations including the Pensions Management Institute, Bravura Solutions, the Pension Trustees Circle and the Association of Professional Pension Trustees. MaPS CEO Oliver Morley also spoke on behalf of the programme at the First Actuarial Client Conference.

Looking ahead for the rest of 2024 and into 2025, PDP will be attending and hosting a number of speaking engagements. On 2 December, the programme hosted a 'town hall' event, bringing together representatives from industry, the Government and regulators to explore how connection is progressing. Sessions will also be taking place with industry to look at the opportunities and areas of further work required for commercial dashboards. PDP will also continue attending external working group meetings, as well as hosting its connection forum, dashboards forum, connection delivery group and communications working groups.

MoneyHelper pensions dashboard update

In July 2024 the MoneyHelper pensions dashboard, as well as elements of the user journey delivered by PDP, underwent an Alpha Assessment as part of the GOV.UK Service Standard Assessment (SSA) process, a rigorous process that is designed to ensure new government services are user-centered, well-designed and ready for development or delivery. The [MoneyHelper pensions dashboard Alpha SSA](#) saw 13 out of the 14 points rated green, with one point rated amber. This means that the MoneyHelper pensions dashboard can progress to the next stage, known as 'Private Beta', with the outstanding amber point rectified within an agreed period. It should be noted that the end-to-end journey for consumers was assessed which included the find and ID part of the journey as well as the view aspects of the service.

We want to ensure the MoneyHelper pensions dashboard meets the diverse needs of potential dashboard users, including those with a range of access needs and digital skill levels. With that in mind, we are developing comprehensive plans to involve pension providers and schemes in end-to-end testing of the MoneyHelper pensions dashboard and hope to be able to begin this process from spring 2025. We are taking a collaborative approach with industry to developing the plan for testing and plan to share this within the next few months.

Pensions dashboards advisory group update

As part of the review of its ways of working, PDP reconstituted its previous steering group as the pensions dashboards advisory group (PDAG) with a revised terms of reference and expanded membership.

The expanded membership was felt necessary as we transitioned from planning to delivery and implementation, and so required further expertise from industry with technology, provider and scheme experience.

Pensions dashboards have 3 clear phases:

1. Building the ecosystem and onboarding thousands of schemes and providers of all types of UK pensions. The backbone of this is the State Pension itself.
2. The design and delivery of the MoneyHelper dashboard. This service will be prioritised ahead of commercial dashboards to generate valuable insight which will be instrumental in shaping the future iterations of all dashboards.
3. Commercial pensions dashboards, where a consistent and FCA-regulated approach will be applied to all potential dashboard operators. Many intend to embed a dashboard into their own apps and web portals which their customers already use on a regular basis.

Throughout the year, PDAG has been involved in advising on PDP's progress. The group has played a vital role in fostering coordination between industry and regulatory bodies, sharing ideas for user testing and industry preparedness.

PDAG's work and engagement with PDP has included advice and suggestions in relation to:

- identity verification, data security, scams, and the need for a robust liability chain – this has involved minimising friction for consumers while demonstrating a robust approach to data protection
- ensuring broad participation in user testing, beyond just pension experts – feedback and suggestions have been given directly to the MoneyHelper team
- critical feedback on the design and development of the MoneyHelper dashboard – this included suggestions on improving pension valuation clarity and handling pensions with different payment dates
- driving more engagement with regulators, particularly regarding communication of new permissions and authorisations required to ensure commercial pensions dashboards become a reality as soon as possible after the MoneyHelper dashboard goes live
- once a clear route to commercial dashboards authorisation is made public PDAG have made representation to PDP to ensure financial advice and guidance services should be integrated to ensure seamless user guidance without users needing to leave (and re-enter) their chosen dashboard environment
- to ensure consistent and clear messaging on dashboards developments to provide clarity for industry at the same time
- deepening collaboration between the Government, regulators and industry to get dashboard live and then continue to unlock future benefits for savers
- looking ahead PDAG will support the future dashboards development to safeguard savers while supporting the need for post view services

PDAG recommends all pension providers and schemes make every effort to be ready for their connection dates in guidance. Any organisations with queries should not hesitate to get in touch with PDP or any

PDAG members. While progress has been made, it is critical regulators, organisations and the various industry groups collaborate to ensure the success of pensions dashboards.

Updates from partners

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

The Government supports the delivery of pensions dashboards which will be a game changer for retirement planning, promoting greater engagement which in turn could lead to better outcomes for savers.

The Government is committed to the existing timetable for the connection of pension schemes and providers to the pensions dashboards ecosystem, expected to begin from April 2025, with an overall connection deadline of 31 October 2026. It is crucial for the pensions industry to continue preparing for connection, and DWP continues to encourage industry to follow the timetable set out in guidance.

A Written Statement, tabled by the Minister for Pensions, set out plans to prioritise the launch of the Government-backed MoneyHelper Pensions Dashboard. This approach will provide an opportunity to gain better insight into how customers use the platform and ensure greater confidence in areas such as the user experience and consumer protection, before facilitating the connection and launch of commercial dashboards.

It remains too early to confirm a launch date for public use of the MoneyHelper Pensions Dashboard or the subsequent launch of commercial dashboards. Launching pensions dashboards is a new endeavour and it is vital to have confidence that the service is safe, secure, operationally reliable, and that it offers a positive experience for users.

DWP is committed to providing the pensions industry with sufficient notice to aid preparations before making pensions dashboards available to the public and will set out further information on how we will measure and report on the PDP's progress in the coming months.

Facilitating the launch of pensions dashboards is a complex and challenging task, but the Government is dedicated to their successful delivery and to unlocking the potential benefits they will offer to future pensioners.

The Pensions Regulator (TPR)

In September, TPR published their [pensions dashboards compliance and enforcement policy](#), providing information to occupational pension schemes in respect of their duties under the Pensions Dashboards Regulations 2022.

TPR also published a blog post with more details on how trustees and scheme managers are expected to comply with their pensions dashboards duties and the action TPR will take if they do not, entitled '[Act now on pensions dashboards so we don't have to](#)'.

Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)

Pension providers

The FCA remains committed to supporting pension providers to:

- prepare for their dashboard obligations set out in [COBS 19.11 of the FCA Handbook](#)
- connect to MaPS ahead of the October 2026 connection deadline, having regard to the timetable set out in [DWP guidance on connection](#).

Pensions dashboard operators

On 7 November, the FCA published [Policy Statement 24/15](#) which sets out its:

- final rules on the regulatory framework for pensions dashboard operators
- response to feedback received on its two consultations ([CP22/25: Proposed regulatory framework for pensions dashboard service firms](#) and [CP24/4: Further consultation on the regulatory framework for pensions dashboard service firms](#)).

The FCA will open the gateway to receive applications only when it is possible for a firm to show that it is ready, willing and organised to undertake the new activity of operating a pensions dashboard service. This means the FCA will open the gateway when the Government and PDP have produced all the information necessary for a firm to design and build a PDS.

The FCA will give industry adequate advance notice of the gateway opening, accompanied by the finalised application forms.