

## ***GROUP CIRCULAR 983***

**To: Branches, Groups and Executive Council**

**February 2026**

**Dear Colleague**

### **Group and Branch Updates**

- 1) Civil Service Pension Scheme Administration / Capita (Member Survey)
- 2) Digital Exclusion: Update on the Digital Landline Switchover
- 3) New CSPA Campaign: Who are Civil Servants?
- 4) WASPI Campaign Update
- 5) New Deputy General Secretary
- 6) Group & Branch AGM Elections and Accounts
- 7) Reports (Annual and AGM)
- 8) Volunteers wanted: CSPA Newsletter of the Year judging panel
- 9) Reminder: Regional Meeting attendees

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### **1) Civil Service Pension Scheme Administration / Capita**

The new scheme administrators and the Cabinet Office continue to attract scrutiny and pressure from CSPA, the unions, MPs and the media (including the BBC) due to ongoing issues, Capita's lack of communication with scheme members, and the huge backlog of cases. The GS, DGS and Pensions Manager are currently having weekly online meetings with the Cabinet Office to represent and resolve members' issues, and to establish what action is being taken in the background to improve Capita's service delivery.

The significant reported backlog of 8,500 pensions not yet paid applies mainly to those who retired recently, mainly from November 2025 onwards, and does not impact the majority of CSPA members who already have their pensions in payment, apart from in a few individual cases. However, the reported backlog of correspondence and unopened emails will likely affect those members who have recently notified MyCSP or Capita of changes in circumstances, contact and bank details, or other pension queries.

On Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> February, a Westminster Hall [debate](#) was brought forward by Lorraine Beavers MP on the administration of the Civil Service Pension Scheme. The debate exposed the widespread failure of Capita to manage the transition, as well as questions over the awarding of the contract, and the steps necessary to ensure that retired civil servants received the funds they are entitled to. MPs present brought forward constituents' cases highlighting the hardships being experienced by those affected.

The Cabinet Office have implemented a scheme to offer transitional support loans for those experiencing hardship because of delayed pension payments. These are available from Departments for those who retired under 12 months ago, and via Capita for those who left the service before that. The Cabinet Office have now also provided CSPA officers with guidance so we can assist members seeking to access this support.

CSPA Pensions Manager, David Luxton, is currently assisting between 30 and 40 members awaiting delayed pension payments due to the backlog. Some of these members have recently received their lump sum payments, but few have had their monthly pension payments released. We are pressing the Cabinet Office to ensure that interest is paid on late payments, and we have intimated that further down the line we may press for compensation, particularly for those who have been worst affected by the chaotic transition to the new administrators.

We are assured that work to restore the service continues apace, in accordance with the Recovery Plan published by the Cabinet Office on 9<sup>th</sup> February. This sets out 3-week “Sprints”, intended to focus Capita’s and Civil Servants’ joint efforts, as Angela Macdonald’s team of 150+ staff from HMRC assist Capita towards a ‘business as usual’ (BAU) situation by June 2026. [Civil Service Pension Recovery Plan Update - 9 February 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

Angela Macdonald has recently posted an update on the Scheme website, which you can read on the link here - [Article](#) *A copy is also attached to this circular for your reference.*

### **Public Accounts Committee Oral Evidence Session on 12 February 2026**

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP, Chair of the influential parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC), gave Capita Public Services representatives, Richard Holroyd, Chief Executive Officer, and Chris Clements, Managing Director, a grilling about the state the administration of Civil Service pensions was in, and the reasons for it, on the 12<sup>th</sup> February. The Chair wanted to know why Capita had been unaware of the scale of the issues at MyCSP prior to the ‘go-live’ date on 1 December 2025, asking searching questions around their due diligence.

The GS made representations to the Chair of the PAC in a letter in early January, setting out CSPA members’ concerns following on from the written evidence provided to the PAC’s inquiry into service levels at MyCSP and concerns raised about the transition to Capita in June 2025.

In response to the PAC’s questions, Capita’s Richard Holroyd apologised from the outset, saying that Capita had inherited a service with corrupted and incomplete data, along with a case backlog twice the size they had

expected (86,000 cases instead of 37,000). However, he went on to emphasise that Capita now “owns the issues” and is committed to resolving them. He noted that Capita had anticipated a reasonable backlog (~200 unread emails), but not the actual volume (~16k unread emails and 30k items of unopened post), suggesting that MyCSP may have directed customers to “call back on the 1<sup>st</sup> December”, contributing to the surge. *You can read a summary of the PAC proceedings, prepared by Connect, attached or access the full hearing here -*

[12 February 2026 - Public Accounts Committee - Oral evidence session - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

The PAC Chair said MPs would continue to scrutinise the administrator’s performance and would expect Capita to appear before the Committee once again in April, to account for their performance against the commitments they’d made. Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown was interviewed on BBC Radio 4’s ‘Moneybox Live’ on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February in response to BBC viewers and listeners complaints about issues with their Civil Service pensions.

The Cabinet Office have said that they have imposed contractual penalties on Capita for failing to meet Key Performance Indicators in December, over and above those imposed for failing to meet key milestones across the 2-year transition.

### **CSPA Member Survey on Capita Service Levels**

On 3 February 2026, approximately 8,000 CSPA members were sent emails inviting them to share their views on the current service they’re receiving from the new pension administrators, Capita. Members were asked to indicate the reasons they’d contacted Capita, how they’d made contact, how long they’d waited for a response and whether their issue had been satisfactorily resolved. We also asked them about the impact of any delayed payments, whether they’d had to change their plans, borrow money, or were experiencing financial hardship as a result.

By the 10<sup>th</sup> February, we’d had responses from 295 members. The initial *findings are set out on an attachment to this circular*. The GS has shared this information with the Cabinet Office and will also be writing to Capita and the Chair of the Civil Service Pension Board in this regard.

### **Caller Waiting Times**

Caller waiting times at the Capita contact centre continue to be excessive (2 to 3 hours still being regularly reported by members), but Capita have made some improvements to their online contact form and will be implementing a new, online ‘Track My Case’ facility on the members’ portal (website) later in March, which they hope will offer improved access to information and case

status indicators. The Cabinet Office hope this will reduce caller numbers and incoming online queries substantially, but that Capita are to keep staffing numbers in their Contact Centre raised for the foreseeable future.

### **CSPA in the press**

- 1) CSPA, along with PCS, has been referenced in an article (9 Feb 2026) on Martin Lewis's influential [moneysavingexpert.com](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com) website, covering the issues around the transfer of the CSPA to Capita and rising backlog of cases. You can read the article on the link below.

[Civil Service Pensions scandal: Thousands hit by payment delays](#)

- 2) The case of a CSPA member, currently being supported by the Pensions Manager, was quoted in an article in the iPaper on 10 February, with the GS being quoted at length. A PDF of the *article is attached to this circular*, or you can access it on the link below.

[I worked for the Home Office – pension delays mean I borrow money to pay my bills](#)

## **2) Digital Exclusion: Update on the Digital Landline Switchover**

### **The Digital Landline Switchover: What You Need to Know**

The UK is retiring the old analogue landline network (PSTN) and switching all customers to digital landlines by January 2027. Digital services are more reliable, easier to maintain, and support the move to full fibre broadband. The CSPA continues to monitor progress through national stakeholder meetings and BT's Digital Voice Advisory Group.

### **Why the Change Is Happening**

Many countries have already moved to digital landlines. The UK is following suit to modernise communications and improve call reliability. Instead of travelling through copper wires, calls will use Voice over IP (VoIP) via broadband, though the experience for users will feel largely the same.

### **Where the Switchover Stands Now**

BT restarted largescale migrations in 2025. Around 80% of BT customers are now on Digital Voice. Transitions for vulnerable people and those using telecare equipment are being handled more cautiously to ensure safety and continuity. Voice only customers without broadband, often older or offline, will be switched with additional support. BT and other services providers will be increasing migrations in 2026, and services could be impacted if customers ignore important 'call to action' communications.

### **Will it cost me more?**

Switching to digital won't cost anything and you won't pay more than your current plan, unless you've chosen to upgrade your service.

### **What will this mean for me?**

For most people, the switchover will make little practical difference. Your phone will work much as it does now. However, some equipment that depends on analogue lines may need checking, including telecare alarms, health pendants and some security or alarm monitoring systems. Devices may require updates to work on digital lines. Digital phones can also stop working during power cuts unless you have a backup option.

#### **If You or Someone you support:**

- is vulnerable
- relies on a landline for health or safety
- uses telecare equipment
- or is concerned about the switchover

**Your landline provider is the first place to turn.** They can identify your needs and put support in place well before any changes take effect. With the right guidance, the transition does not need to be disruptive. Staying informed and checking that friends and family understand the changes will make the process far smoother.

### **3) New CSPA Campaign: Who are our Civil Servants?**

- This campaign aims to challenge the misconceptions of what a civil servant is and address assertions that all Civil Servants earn high salaries and have 'gold-plated pensions'.
- Our Digital Campaigns Manager, Verity Morrish, will be looking for member case studies and interviews with members, upon which to base news articles and promotional resources detailing CSPA members' many and varied careers, showing the full breadth of the Civil Service.
- The campaign is to be launched in the summer, with input from Connect, to bring it to a wider audience.
- Members can assist with this initiative by responding to the attached survey questions on paper and returning them to CSPA HQ in the post. Alternatively, they may wish to complete the survey online using this link - <https://www.cspa.co.uk/mycareer/>
- We will also be emailing all CSPA members we have email addresses for to encourage them to complete the survey online.

### **4) WASPI Campaign Update**

Group Circular **GC 982/26** promoted a petition which called for '*Government to deliver a fair, timely, fully transparent apology that reflects all evidence based on what we (WASPI) think constitutes maladministration and discrimination; and addresses the financial, emotional and personal hardship experienced by 1950s women caused by pension changes*'.

The petition came after Work and Pensions Secretary, Pat McFadden, told Parliament on 29<sup>th</sup> January that he accepted that individual letters about changes to the State Pension age could have been sent earlier and apologised for that maladministration in the House of Commons. He said that a targeted compensation scheme would not be practical, arguing that most 1950s-born women were already aware of the changes through public information campaigns, and that a flat-rate scheme could cost up to £10.3 billion, which they deemed an "unjustifiable use of public money."

This comes despite a 2024 report by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) suggesting compensation of between £1,000 and £2,950 should be paid to those affected. A Government response was issued on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026, saying:

"We apologised for not sending State Pension age letters sooner. Deciding not to pay compensation and the Ombudsman's report relate to that, not the petition's "hardship caused by pension changes".

It goes on to say that "the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) investigated the way State Pension age changes were communicated to women born in the 1950s and whether within a specific time period there was maladministration and injustice and if so, whether it warrants compensation. They did not examine the "financial, emotional and personal hardship experienced by 1950s women caused by pension changes" that the petition focuses on and which relate to the decision, first taken by Parliament in 1995, to equalise the State Pension age for men and women, nor that to accelerate the increases in 2011, taken by the Conservative/Lib Dem Coalition.

The Ombudsman found that the Department's communications met expected standards between 1995 and 2004, but that between 2005 and 2007 there was a 28-month delay in sending personalised letters to women affected and that this was maladministration. Many backbench MPs have criticised the Government for their handling of the WASPI case and for not accepting the PHSO report and compensation amounts. CSPA has supported the WASPI campaign alongside many other organisations, and will continue to call for compensation, keeping members informed.

The full Government response to the petition can be found on this link: [Government apology and compensation for 1950s Women affected by pension changes - Petitions](#)

The Secretary of State response from 29<sup>th</sup> January can be found here: [Government response to Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Investigation into Women's State Pension age communications and associated issues - GOV.UK](#)

## **5) New Deputy General Secretary**

We were pleased to welcome Jonathan Safir as our new DGS on 9<sup>th</sup> February, following David Luxton's move to the part-time, Pensions Manager role after Christine Haswell's departure. Jonathan has a background in the public and third sectors, having previously worked for a local authority before moving to the National Pensioners' Convention (NPC), where he worked for over 7 years. At the NPC, Jonathan's work focused on several of key campaign areas, from pension adequacy and social care to digital exclusion, cost-of-living pressures and wider age-sector inequality. As much of Jonathan's career has involved policy, advocacy, and organisational change, he is looking forward to using this experience at CSPA, with a strong sense of purpose and member-led focus. Jonathan is keen to meet active CSPA members in Groups and Branches and he will be engaging with our partner organisations on campaigns to take CSPA's work on behalf of members forward. Jonathan will also be supporting the work of Regional Representatives and the EC's Organisation and Recruitment Sub-Committee, as well as taking responsibility at Lead Officer on matters of governance, including GDPR compliance, insurances and property and other contracts.

## **6) Group and Branch AGM Elections and Accounts**

Groups and Branches are reminded to update CSPA Head Office about their Committee Postholders after their AGMs have been held, to ensure that our central records remain accurate. We also need confirmation of the name of the person designated to receive posted copies of circulars, and the numbers of copies they will need. Please send the information to Katrina Hicks, our Membership Co-ordinator, by emailing [katrina.hicks@cspa.co.uk](mailto:katrina.hicks@cspa.co.uk) or by post.

We can add Group and Branch Committee members to our electronic circulation lists for circulars or alternatively remove the names of people who no longer wish to receive these communications, upon request.

Group accounts, once audited/examined, should be copied to the National Treasurer within two months of the date of the group AGM. They can either be emailed to [M.Sparham@cspa.co.uk](mailto:M.Sparham@cspa.co.uk) or posted to him at Head Office.

## **7) CSPA Reports (Annual and AGM) and Elections**

At the 2024 AGM, rule amendments were carried allowing the EC to consider how the Annual Report (including the Statement of Accounts), AGM agenda and AGM report should be circulated in the future. These documents had previously been sent to all members as supplements in *the Pensioner*, with each supplement costing about £4,000 in printing costs.

In 2025, the summer issue supplement (containing the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts) and the winter issue supplement (containing the

AGM report) were instead printed at HQ and sent to Groups, Branches and the small handful of members who requested copies. These documents were also shared with members via the website. As we did not receive any adverse comments from members in this regard, we plan to do this again in 2026.

The June 2026 issue of *the Pensioner* will once again include an introduction by the General Secretary to the Annual Report, and a summary by the National Treasurer of the Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet.

The December issue of *the Pensioner* will once again contain an overview report of the AGM, but not a detailed report and record of proceedings.

This year, we propose to issue the AGM agenda centrally as well, avoiding the cost of yet another magazine insert. The AGM agenda booklets will be compiled and printed at CSPA HQ, with 2 copies being sent to all Groups and Branches under cover of a Group Circular in early September. The September magazine will provide members with an overview of the 2026 AGM within the General Secretary's Report.

Following the 2025 AGM's agreement to the trial of all-member ballots to elect national EC members, voting packs are to be distributed with the September issue of *the Pensioner* (if there are contested posts). The candidates' election statements ('pen pictures') will be printed in the main magazine, encouraging members to participate by casting their votes (either online or by returning the accompanying paper ballot forms).

The usual Group Circular calling for nominations, motions and constitutional amendments will be circulated to Groups and Branches in late April. The March issue of *the Pensioner* is to include an invitation to members not in a Group or Branch to contact CSPA HQ to request these 'nomination packs'.

## **8) Volunteers wanted: CSPA Newsletter of the Year judging panel**

The EC re-instated the 'Newsletter of the Year Competition' and it was successfully run in 2025, on a zero-cost basis, with the winner and runners up being announced at the AGM dinner. We are once again calling upon Groups and Branches to nominate volunteers to a small judging **panel of 3 members** to select the best Group or Branch Newsletter for 2026.

The membership of the panel of judges will be confirmed by the Executive Council at its meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> June. The criteria for selection of the winning Newsletter will once again be determined by the judging panel, which will meet on-line, to consider the merits of Group and Branch newsletters published on the website since the 2025 AGM. The selected Group or Branch winner will then be presented with a Certificate at the 2026 AGM dinner on the 7<sup>th</sup> October.

**All active Groups and Branches are invited to nominate one member to the judging panel** by sending an e-mail to: [jonathan.safir@cspa.co.uk](mailto:jonathan.safir@cspa.co.uk) headed

**“Newsletter Competition 2026”** to arrive no later than **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June**. The selected members of the judging panel will be notified after the 16<sup>th</sup> June and their names will thereafter be confirmed in a Group Circular.

### **9) Reminder: Regional Meeting attendance**

Circular **GC 981/26** asked Groups and Branches to confirm their representatives’ attendance at the Regional Meetings planned to consult members on CSPA’s status **by Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026**, providing the following information:

- 1) The Date and Venue of the Meeting they will be attending
- 2) The Number of Representatives attending from the Group/Branch
- 3) The Name/s of the Group/Branch/EC attendees
- 4) Any Dietary or Accessibility Needs to be accommodated

An Expense Claim Form is being prepared and will be sent to Group and Branch representatives prior to the meetings.

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The above circular includes live weblinks to be used to access further information. If members wish to do so, but do not have access to the internet, they are more than welcome to telephone CSPA HQ and request printed copies to be sent to them by post. If you have any questions or require any further information about the matters covered by this Group Circular, please don’t hesitate to contact me, either by email at [sally.tsoukaris@cspa.co.uk](mailto:sally.tsoukaris@cspa.co.uk) or by telephone on **020 8688 8418 (Office)**.

Yours sincerely

*Sally*

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