

GROUP CIRCULAR 986 / 26

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

April 2026

Dear Colleague

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1) Civil Service and State Pension Increases

Civil Service Pension Increases

Civil Service pensions will be adjusted on the 13th April (first Monday after the 6th April) to reflect an increase of **3.8%** in line with the September CPI, and the Cabinet Office has confirmed that around 730,000 pension increase packs were being printed and posted to scheme members from the beginning of April. The March issue of the CSPS pensioner newsletter has also been made available, which again includes an advert for CSPA in the Trusted Partners section.

Pensioners who were in the Scheme before 6 April 1997 may also have some **Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP)**, which is subject to different increases for those whose State Pension Age (SPA) was reached before 6 April 2016. Further information about how GMP payments are due to increase provided on the printed payslips being mailed out, or via the website here –

www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/pensions-increase

Pension Scheme members **may not all be entitled to receive the full increase**, possibly for one of the following reasons:

- 1) Payment date** – pensions are paid in arrears, so the full increase may not be received until the following month, depending on the pay date.
- 2) Retirement part way through the year** – those who retired part way through the previous year will receive a pro rata increase based on their retirement date.

The communication also asks Scheme members to expressly “opt out” of the default to all future communications being digital (issued via the website’s

secure portal), either by completing and submitting the 'Contact Us' form on the website or by telephone on **+44(0)20 4639 2597**.

The GS wrote to The Telegraph in response to an article they printed on the 24 March entitled "*Gold plated public sector pensions face review over £57bn hit to taxpayers*". They didn't print the letter, but it is being promoted via the LLA website and can be accessed here - [When 'Gold-Plated' Doesn't Match Reality](#) - or read the printed copy attached to this circular.

State Pension Increases

From the 6th April, over 12 million pensioners received an increase of 4.8% in their **State Pension**, as both the Basic and "new" State Pensions rose in accordance with the Triple Lock. For those on the full, "new" State Pension (applied from April 2016 onwards), their pensions will increase by £575 per annum. Many pensioners will not receive as much as this, as around two thirds of pensioners (approx. 8.1 million people) are still on the lower, Basic State Pension, with around 6.9 million of these people due to receive the Additional State Pension.

The Government says it has already delivered above-inflation increases worth up to £395 in real terms over this Parliament. By its end, pensioners' annual incomes are expected to have risen by up to £2,100 - boosting financial security for millions.

The GS was quoted, as a representative of LLA, in articles run by Birmingham Live and The Daily Star on the 24th March, in defence of the Triple Lock and highlighting the impact of the ongoing freeze on the Personal Tax Threshold on pensioners, who are being dragged into paying tax in great numbers each year through fiscal drag. *Copies of the articles are attached.*

Pension Credit will also rise by 4.8% and will be worth an average of £4,300 a year, unlocking further support including help with housing costs, council tax and free television licenses. There are still approximately 760,000 people eligible for Pension Credit who aren't claiming it.

Between 2026 and 2027, the government will provide a £6 billion boost to spending on State Pensions and pensioner benefits. Minister for Pensions Torsten Bell said: "After a lifetime of work and contribution, people deserve a decent retirement. Raising the State Pensions faster than prices, ensuring it is a pension they can rely on, is how we make that a reality for millions."

The phased increase in the **State Pension Age** (SPA), from 66 to 67, has started. New pensioners born after 6 April 1960 will be affected in monthly increments. You can read about it on our website here - [The Quiet State Pension Age Change - CSPA](#)

The rise will save the public purse £10bn a year by the end of this parliament, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies thinktank.

Rachel Vahey, head of public policy at AJ Bell, said: "This is very much the beginning rather than the end of this story." Vahey warned a future government may "need to bring this forward – and possibly set out plans to increase the age further still". LLA made a submission to the current State Pension Age Review setting out arguments against further increases to the SPA and opposing bringing the rise to 68 forward as we have not seen recent improvements in the health of those in later life, since it declined post COVID, resulting in many people being unable to continue to work well into their sixties due to chronic health conditions or the need to care for others. *Copies of LLA's submission on the SPA are available from CSPA HQ on request.*

Under current plans, the state pension age will rise again to 68 between 2044 and 2046. You can read more about it on our website here - [Campaign focus: State pension age - CSPA](#)

2) Update on the Civil Service Pension Administration

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) had senior Capita executives appear before them for a second time on 26th March, after CSPA had worked with PAC Deputy Chair, Clive Betts MP, to provide evidence based on CSPA member cases. The PAC highlighted Capita's serious failures and, whilst acknowledging that some progress had been made, they stressed that Capita's performance still remained well below expectations. Capita were asked to report back to the Chair of the Committee on a monthly basis until contractually required service levels have been achieved. Capita have said this will be by the end of June.

During the session, Clive Betts MP explicitly thanked CSPA for its work in support of members affected by the administration failures. You can read more about the PAC session and access a video clip of what Clive Betts said about CSPA here - <https://www.cspa.co.uk/news/public-accounts-committee-scrutinises-capita-over-civil-service-pensions-failures/>

Second Permanent Secretary Angela MacDonalld has released her 5th Civil Service Pensions Taskforce update a week early, in response to an incident which occurred on the 30th March, when Capita was loading the 2024/25 Annual Benefit Statements (ABS) to the member portal.

During a 35-minute window, 138 Scheme members had their ABS data inadvertently shared with other CSPS members due to a technical error. The breach was identified and shut down very quickly, and no members' data was shared externally. Nevertheless, the incident has been taken seriously,

and a full investigation is underway. The ABS functionality will not 'go live' online again until they are certain that the errors are fixed and no further breaches will occur. All members of the Scheme whose data was shared have been contacted by Capita directly, so if you haven't received a communication in this regard then you weren't impacted.

You can access a copy of the Taskforce Update here - [Member Knowledge Article](#) and read what Civil Service World had to say about it here - [Civil Service Pension Scheme: Capita confirms data breach](#) and here - [Civil Service Pension Scheme retirement modeller delayed](#) or request digital or electronic copies from CSPA HQ if needed.

3) LLA 2026 Elections Toolkit

Elections for the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments, and a number of English local elections, are fast approaching on the 7th May. You may have already had candidates knocking on your door.

An LLA Elections Toolkit has once again been put together to help members identify where elections are taking place, who to write to and how to promote the asks of the LLA Budget for Later Life to those standing for office, including helpful templates, links and tips on the use of social media to get the message across.

You can access the Toolkit on the LLA website here - [2026 Elections Members Toolkit | Later Life Ambitions](#) or refer to the *copy attached to this circular*.

4) Carer Poverty Coalition Open Letter – Need to reform Carers' Allowance

Sunday 12th April 2026 will mark 50 years since the introduction of Invalid Care Allowance, now known as Carer's Allowance. We want to use this milestone to call for a comprehensive review of Carer's Allowance, to ensure it provides carers with sustainable and meaningful financial support.

As well as looking at changes to the rate and eligibility criteria of Carer's Allowance that the Carer Poverty Coalition has advocated for since 2024, we believe this review should examine how caring intersects with employment, social security, and poverty more broadly.

CSPA has signed an open letter to the Secretary of State of Work and Pensions calling for this review, which was sent on the day of the 50th anniversary. *A copy of the letter is attached to this circular.*

Update on Carer's Allowance overpayments

Following the publication of the Independent Review of Carer's Allowance overpayments, Carers UK has been working to analyse the recommendations

made by the Review and monitoring Government developments in response. Their full [policy briefing](#) outlines the Review's findings and Carers UK's response. Liz Sayce OBE, Chair of the Independent Review, also gave evidence to the [Work and Pensions Select Committee](#) about her findings, along with Carers UK and Carers Trust.

5) Website Update: Group Hubs in the Members' Area

The members area of the website currently has a dedicated page for each region and branch - we now want to create something for each group. An area where groups can share contact information, details of upcoming events and any other relevant information. The below has already been created for the Birmingham group and gives an idea of how the hub pages will work. <https://members.cspa.co.uk/birmingham-and-district-group/>

Details of these pages will be sent via post and email to all new joiners within the group (and neighbouring areas for those in no groups). These are a good way to reach new, and existing members with information and events relevant to them and help to boost engagement in your local group.

To get this set up please could you send the following information to Verity Morrish, our Digital Campaign Manager, via verity.morrish@cspa.co.uk by the 30th April 2026.

Information required:

1. Name of group
2. Names and contact details of Group Committee (whatever you're happy to share)
3. Paragraph of information about the group - why people should come to meetings
4. If meetings are held regularly - where and when they take place
5. Any photos of meetings, outings or group members
6. Details of upcoming meetings and group newsletters will automatically be added.

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 or by telephone on **020 8688 8418 (Office)**.

Yours sincerely



Sally Tsoukaris

General Secretary, **Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance**