



By Teveye Markson

29 Apr 2026

PAC and PACAC join forces to investigate civil service pensions crisis

Cabinet Office leaders asked to attend joint scrutiny session as Angela MacDonald notes members of the scheme are "increasingly frustrated" with communication issues



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Two of parliament's watchdog committees have announced they will jointly scrutinise the administration of the Civil Service Pension Scheme, which was **plunged into a state of crisis** following the transfer from MyCSP to Capita in December.

The announcement comes amid a warning from recovery taskforce chief Angela MacDonald that members of the scheme are "increasingly frustrated" with communication issues around the efforts to get the scheme back on track..

The Public Accounts Committee and the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee have been separately probing what went wrong and what is being done to turn things around, holding oral evidence sessions and gathering written evidence from Cabinet Office officials and ministers, and bosses at Capita and MyCSP.

The chairs of the two committees, Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (PAC) and Simon Hoare (PACAC) said they have now agreed to "meet concurrently for the purposes of further investigating" the scheme's administration.

In a letter to the minister for the Cabinet Office, Nick Thomas-Symonds, they said the committees will come together on 7 July, ahead of parliament's summer recess on 16 July, for a joint session to "take stock of the urgent work your department is undertaking, with Capita, to address current problems with the scheme".

The letter asks Thomas-Symonds to attend the session alongside senior officials and to reply to this invitation by parliament's return after this week's prorogation. It notes that it is "imperative that there is accountability on the issues ahead of the summer recess for the many thousands impacted by the failures".

The session will "help us better understand the problems your department is facing with the CSPS, whether the deadlines set in the Cabinet Office/Capita 'urgent recovery plan' have been met, and the future of the scheme", the letter says.

"As we know you agree, loyal and dedicated civil servants (and their families) should not be faced with the difficulties thousands now have been when trying to draw on and collect what is rightfully theirs," the chairs added.

In the letter, the duo also noted Thomas-Symonds' announcement last week that the government would **terminate Capita's Royal Mail pension scheme** contract. They said this is "welcome" but raises further questions about Capita's ability to return the Civil Service Pension Scheme back to acceptable service levels, as well as the government's role in this process.

'Confidence knocked'

In the latest update on the Civil Service Pensions Taskforce's work to get the scheme back on track, published on 23 April, HM Revenue and Customs second permanent secretary Angela MacDonald, who is leading the taskforce, said there had been "a number of recent issues that have understandably knocked peoples' confidence" about the recovery programme.

"I receive emails daily from colleagues whose lived experience does not match the recovery details that I give in these updates," she said. "I acknowledge that with so many varied situations and individual circumstances in the outstanding workload, it is difficult to succinctly communicate in a way that is right for everyone. We will work harder to be more specific where there are caveats to the information provided."

MacDonald previously told members that everyone who had submitted a request for a quote before 1 December 2025 would be contacted by 10 April.

"Whilst this is what I agreed with Capita, unfortunately, this is not what happened," MacDonald said in her latest update. "What should have been relayed to me and to members was: by 10 April, Capita would contact those who submitted a quote before 1 December 2025, had a last day of service before 1 December 2025, and needed to clarify some retirement information. For members with retirement dates after 1 December, it has been assumed (by Capita) that you still wish to proceed and remain in the work queue. This lack of clarity has led to much confusion and caused further upset for members who are increasingly frustrated."

MacDonald said the key issue for many members now is pension quotations, with more than 23,000 in the queue, "and the plan is to process these by the end of June".

"By processing, I mean ensure Capita has the correct employer data and your pension record is accurate so a quotation is issued," she said. "This does not mean that all those cases will be in payment by the end of June."

MacDonald said that, for example, if you asked to retire in February 2026 and receive your quotation at the end of May 2026, take some time to review your options and return the paperwork in June, Capita will process the retirement into payment in July and then you should expect to receive your payments in August 2026, including back payments of your monthly pension from February to August 2026.

To get through the 23,000 quotes in eight weeks, MacDonald said Capita will be processing them in batches, and some batches may move faster than others, such as if more data is required from current or previous employers. She said this approach may mean that Capita doesn't issue all quotes in strict retirement date order.

"Please do not be concerned about that," MacDonald said. "Capita will be accelerating the pace with which the quotes are worked through so everyone's quote will be processed. We are very focused on the end of June commitment."

MacDonald also noted that there had been a deterioration in contact centre performance following last month's data breach which saw call waiting times peak at 47 minutes in mid-April. She said the increase was a result of "the knock-on effects of the data breach, removal of 2024/25 Annual Benefit Statements from the portal, 2026 pensioner mailing and end of tax year queries".

"This is regrettable considering call waiting times were improving," MacDonald said. "Whilst Capita is mobilising further resource, unless your enquiry is urgent, I request that you do not call the contact centre to escalate your case."

She acknowledged that "all cases are urgent", but noted that "we need to maximise the resources working on the cases".

MacDonald added: "As many of you experience when speaking to the contact centre, they are unable to make any commitments as to when processing will happen and are only able to take your escalation. This is very frustrating for you and does not in reality make the caseload shift faster given the volume of escalations now held."