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# Mature pension schemes – onwards and forwards

Summary of the Running Off Mature Schemes Working Party's analysis to date

Costas Yiasoumi FIA (Chair) and members of the Working Party
Presentation by Nick Sparks, Affiliate IFoA, BMO Asset Management

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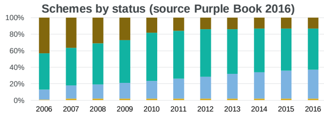
## Working party's deliverables

- A strategic framework for the management of mature schemes
- The start of an easy reference manual, for future development
- Identify areas for future focus and recommendations
- A paper, in the form of this slide book, that is easily accessible for all stakeholders across the pensions industry

**Schemes by status (source Purple Book 2016)**




Few of these schemes in scope

Many of these schemes are in scope today. Most will be in scope within the next 10 years

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## Recommendations (1)

The industry should adopt a standard industry measure or measures of maturity to facilitate communication and analytics

Legislation/regulation should be adapted so as to more easily accommodate the needs of mature schemes

Schemes should develop comprehensive journey plans mapping out their intended run-off approach

It would be advantageous for there to be a framework for separation of schemes from sponsor employers, in some circumstances

Key industry bodies should identify what skills base and expertise are needed to efficiently service scheme run-offs

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## Recommendations (2)

Most mature schemes would benefit from having a professional trustee appointed

Industry standardised member data and benefit formats should be developed

Schemes should focus resources to lock down their benefits (i.e. data and benefit cleansing)

Reserving for future expenses should be a norm for mature schemes

Adoption of the practices highlighted in the slide book may spotlight the benefits of some consolidation and prompt activity, whether that is taking advantage of outsourcers for selected services, master trusts or bulk annuity buyouts

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## Why does it matter?

- **Members:** Millions of individuals. Maximising the likelihood that their benefits are delivered in full is key to meeting the retirement expectations they've worked towards

- **Employers:** Hundreds of billions of GBP of exposure. Sub-optimal management could impact business activities with a knock on impact in employment creation and the economy

- **Trustees:** Unenviable task of overseeing transition of schemes into increasingly mature schemes that, often, have lower margins for error. Require advice and services tailored to these new circumstances


- **Actuaries:** A situation in which schemes are on a relentless path to maturing introduces challenges and opportunities. Actuaries well placed to deliver successful outcomes to all stakeholders

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## What is a mature scheme?

A scheme where the bulk of the liabilities have already accrued, and that is anticipated to run-off for a number of years.

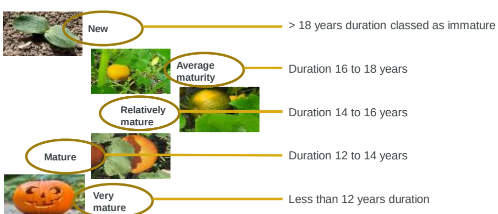
| Key behavioural characteristics driving scheme management |
|---|
| **1. There is a real end point** |
| **2. Benefit cashflows are known** |
| **3. Plausible time horizon to which to work towards** |
| **4. Key financial and operational risks could be locked down within a decade** |
| **5. Cashflow becomes king** |
| **6. Scheme becomes less relevant to employer** |

## How do we measure maturity?

- We all know a mature scheme when we see one … or do we?
- We can all agree how a super-mature scheme looks … or can we?
- There is no right approach, but an approach is better than no approach




## We selected duration as a measure for maturity






## The Working Party assessed 12 different areas of pension practice

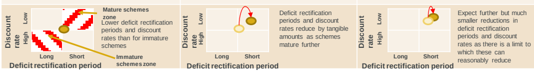
1. Pace of funding
2. *Covenant*
3. *Contingent assets*
4. *Liability management*
5. *Cashflow matching (incl. hedging)*
6. Asset allocation
7. Outsourcing
8. Locking down the benefit liabilities
9. Bulk annuities
10. Journey plans
11. *Employer relationship/governance*
12. Expense management

**Let's take a look at some of these**

## 1. Pace of funding

**Dashboard – what we'd expect**

| Relatively mature | Mature | Very mature |
| --- | --- | --- |




- **What we found:** Data showed very little correlation between maturity and deficit rectification periods, but that discount rates do reduce
- **In future:**
  - A trend towards 'self-sufficiency' or "buyout" TPs
  - More attention to the non-discount rate aspects of the TP assumptions

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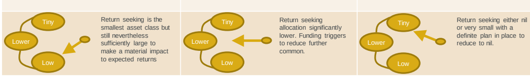
## 6. Asset allocation – introduction

**Dashboard – what we'd expect**

| Relatively mature | Mature | Very mature |
| --- | --- | --- |



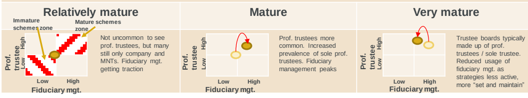

- **What we found:** More mature schemes have lower return seeking assets – but not a lot lower (40/60 vs 60/40)
- **In future:**
  - Increased focus on short recovery horizon
  - Increased focus on cashflow matching
  - Increased focus on synthetic solutions and liquidity management



## 7. Outsourcing

**Dashboard – what we'd expect (professional trustees and fiduciary mgt.)**

| Relatively mature | Mature | Very mature |
| --- | --- | --- |




- **What we found:** Increasing take-up of fiduciary management (460 schemes with "full" version) and c20% of schemes now with professional trustees
- **In future:**
  - Member experience philosophy shifts from "excellent service" to "sufficient service"
  - Professional trustee or sole trustee the norm
  - Outsourcing of non-exec operations continues e.g. fiduciary mgt.

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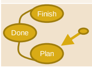
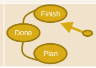
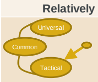
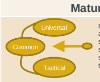
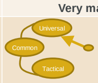
## 8. Locking down the benefits

| Dashboard – what we'd expect | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Relatively mature** | **Mature** | **Very mature** |
|   If data and benefits haven't yet been validated / audited then it is within the scheme's calendar of future activities |   Data and benefits have been validated and audited. However, proportionality will apply so scope may have been restricted |   Data and benefits fully validated including resolving how to deal with "known unknowns" |

- **What we found:** No correlation found between maturity and data quality. But an apparent correlation between proximity to de-risking and data quality
- **In future:**
  - The norm for mature schemes to have locked down their full detailed benefit provisions and data as a matter of course
  - Industry standards for recording that information will be an ingredient for future "soft" or "hard" consolidation



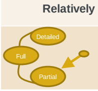
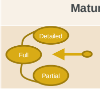
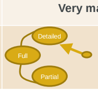
## 9. Bulk annuities

| Dashboard – what we'd expect | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Relatively mature** | **Mature** | **Very mature** |
|   Bulk annuities not uncommon. Generally purchased as seen as offering good value vs alternative asset opportunities |   Bulk annuities common as part of a deliberate strategy to de-risk with scheme termination in say 10 years being targeted |   Trapped surplus issues greater. Longevity highly uncertain except for large schemes. Bulk annuity usage universal – most trustees have an objective to wind up via a buy-out |

- **What we found:** No data linking maturity with bulk annuity purchase. Anecdotal evidence is that buyout prevalence not strongly linked to maturity
- **In future:**
  - Lack of economies of scale will encourage all smaller schemes to aim for buyout or for DB master trusts or other non-insured consolidation vehicles
  - Continued use of bulk annuities and longevity insurance to manage risks

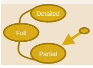
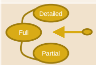
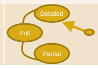


## 10. Journey plans

| Dashboard – what we'd expect | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Relatively mature** | **Mature** | **Very mature** |
|   The focus is primarily around managing funding and the path for de-risking assets as maturity and funding increase |   Journey plans now also cover operational aspects relevant to run-off and with end game targets now being definite rather than aspirational |   Detailed plans that cover in depth the timing and process for run-off and termination |

- **What we found:** An increasing prevalence of long term planning but generally focusing on funding / assets rather than true journey planning
- **In future:**
  - Clearer articulation of de-risking philosophy
  - More thoughtful choices of target dates
  - Improved understanding of "what will it be like when we arrive?"

## 12. Expense management

| Dashboard – what we'd expect | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Relatively mature** | **Mature** | **Very mature** |
|   Focus on expense control commences in conjunction with increased outsourcing of services. Too many future uncertainties for proper reserving |   Full analysis of future expense reserve undertaken. Aligned with scheme journey plan |   Detailed expense reserve including analysis of expense risk. Expense mgt. influences journey plan e.g. does a bulk annuity now make sense? |

- **What we found:** Remains normal to exclude an expenses reserve in TPs. Yet expenses are c3% to c11% of TPs for schemes of 100 to 5,000 members
- **In future:**
  - Expenses reserving will become prevalent with increasing maturity
  - Schemes will also start looking at expenses risk e.g. plausible stress
  - Visibility of expenses will inform journey planning



## A framework for mature scheme run-offs

**VISION**

**Meet member benefit expectations as far as possible whilst avoiding a disproportionate impact on the sponsoring employer(s) business**

**STRATEGY**

1. **The run-off plan**
2. **Creating and maintaining a shared understanding**
3. **Taking opportunities**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

1. **Pace of funding**
2. **Covenant (incl. separation)**
3. **Contingent assets**
4. **Liability management**
5. **Cashflow matching (incl. hedging)**
6. **Asset allocation**
7. **Outsourcing**
8. **Locking down the benefit liabilities**
9. **Bulk annuities**
10. **Journey plans**
11. **Employer relationship/governance**
12. **Expense management**

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## The three strategy components

**1. The run-off plan**
- A strategic vision for the scheme embracing all the implementation features
- Identify the most important steps
- The discussion may be more important than the written plan

**2. Creating and maintaining a shared understanding**
- Sponsor and trustees should debate and understand commonalities of interest and the continuing tensions
- Develop a broad timeline around when it would no longer be sensible to run the scheme in its current form
- Members should be told about what is likely to happen and when

**3. Taking opportunities**
- Better placed schemes should have a clear sense of direction but the flexibility to adapt
- This means having the governance to react rapidly and strategically
- Be prepared to take big decisions

## Example: Assessing + managing maturity
## Matching behaviours to metrics

| Operation area | Current state | Change target | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Pace of funding | Immature | 2030 | End of recovery plan |
| 2. Covenant | Mature | N/A | Direct topco covenant already in place |
| 3. Contingent assets | Immature | 2030 | Security to buyout level to be added |
| 4. Liability management | Mature | N/A | Exercise completed 2014. Ongoing program in place |
| 5. Cashflow matching (including hedging) | Rel. mature | 2020-25 | Derivative overlay covering 70% liabilities |
| 6. Asset allocation | Immature | 2020-25 | Current 60% return seeking with de-risk triggers in place |
| 7. Outsourcing | Mature | 2034 | TPA in place – viable down to 100 members |
| … | … | … | … |
| 12. Expense management | Immature | 2025 | Target switch from employer PAYG to a funded reserve |

| Metric | Current | Maturity gate | Date at gate | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Duration | 18 yrs | 14 yrs | 2028 | |
| Number of members | 267 | 100 | 2034 | No longer viable below 100 members |
| % deferred pensioners in TPs | 51% | 25% | 2032 | |
| Covenant | CG2 | CG3 | 2023 | Sponsor in long term decline |
| Benefit cashflow % liabilities | 2.6% | 5.0% | 2027 | |



## And finally, some other key observations

- Getting the governance right – essential to success
- Covenant – a critical, if not the most critical, factor in setting strategy
- Scheme separation – an inevitable outcome for many?
- Expense reserving will result in lots of management actions which would otherwise not have happened
- Consolidation will happen directly (bulk annuities, superfunds etc.) or indirectly (fiduciary management, professional trustees, TPA rationalisation etc.)

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## Questions

## Comments

The Working Party is aiming to publish its analysis in 4Q 2017

**Running Off Mature Schemes Working Party members**

- Costas Yiasoumi (Chair), Legal & General Assurance Society
- Graham Wardle, Legal & General Investment Mgt.
- John McAleer, Aon Hewitt
- Mike Walsh, Just
- Nick Sparks, BMO Global Asset Mgt.
- Nigel Jones, 2020 Trustees and Mitchell Consulting
- Tim Keogh, independent

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