

PENSIONS BRIEF



THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY GROUP OF THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY PENSION SCHEME

WELCOME

TO THE LATEST ISSUE OF *PENSIONS BRIEF*



This is the 80th edition of the Group newsletter since it was first issued to members back in 1994.

A NEW GROUP WEBSITE

This year, we've been working to move the Group website to a new provider and platform. I am pleased to say that the transition has taken place. You can access the new site at

www.ngeg.nationalgridpensions.com

If you have previously registered with the Group website, please register again with the new site on your first visit. This is a simple process which is set out in easy steps on page 2. You'll be pleased to hear that you can now reset your login details yourself if you ever forget them. If you've not yet registered to use the Group website, we would really encourage you to do so.

MORE ONLINE SERVICES

Moving the website to a new hosting platform is the first step in our plans to further develop our online services during 2020. In the new year, there are plans to enhance the look and feel of the website with a refresh of the Group brand and colours. The new design will extend to *Pensions brief*. We're also aiming to make information available to active and deferred members about their retirement options. The pension administrator, RPMI, is developing a new online service called PenNet, which in time will allow members to log in securely to view and update aspects of your own pension records.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

To improve our service, we would like your views on the information you currently receive from the Group Trustee. In early 2020, we plan to survey contributing, deferred and pensioner members to find out the sort of information you are interested in, and how you prefer to access this. Your input will feed directly into the Group Trustee communications strategy, and we'll share the results with you in a future issue of *Pensions brief*. Look out for the survey in January.

There's a lot going on with the Group next year including the valuation results and the start of the 2021 Group Trustee elections. On page 5, there's a calendar of what is taking place and when.

Finally, on behalf of the Group Trustee Directors, I would like to wish you season's greetings and all the very best for the new year.

Jon Carlton

Chairman of the NGE Group

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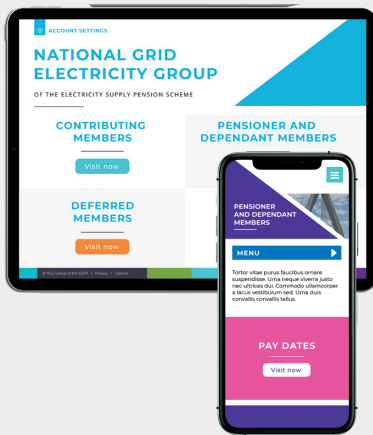
www.nationalgridpensions.com

GROUP PENSIONS NEWS

A new-look Group website

Over the past few months, we've been working to refresh the look and feel of the Group website and move it to a new host and platform.

We've brought the site up to date to make it simpler for members to navigate their way around, focusing on the pages which are of most interest to you and making them easier to find from the homepage. You can still access the Group website from www.nationalgridpensions.com or directly from: www.ngep.nationalgridpensions.com



HOW TO REGISTER AND LOG IN

If you have previously registered with the Group website, you will need to register again with the new site on your first visit. You only have to register once.

- Type in your name and National Insurance number.
- You'll then be asked to set up a new Username and Password.
- For your Username, please use your personal email address (not a work email address).
- Make sure you choose a strong password to protect your pension details.
- You'll need to use your Username and Password each time you log in.
- If you forget your Password, you can reset it at any time automatically from the login page.

The new website is scheduled to go live around 12 December 2019. If you have previously registered to access the site, we'll email you when the new site is available for you to re-register.

Tell us what you think

Help us by taking part in the 2020 communications survey

Back in 2016, the Group Trustee undertook a survey asking members for their views on the communications you received from the Group. The response was excellent and you shared some extremely useful feedback and opinion.

At that time, most people said that they preferred to receive information in paper format, but with technology advancing, more functionality available online, and people of all ages now routinely accessing information on the internet, we'd be interested to hear your latest views. We're also keen to understand what topics you're interested in learning more about and how you prefer to access information from the Group.

A short survey will be posted to contributing, deferred and pensioner members early in 2020 with a return pre-paid envelope (and you'll also have the option to take part in the survey online). This is an opportunity to provide feedback and influence how the Group's communications are strategically developed in future.

We'd really appreciate your help in taking part.

Group valuation results due in 2020

Every three years, the Group is required to undertake a valuation of the funding position and update members on the outcome. In the interim years, we provide you with a Summary Funding Statement. A valuation of the Group's assets is currently taking place. Once the work has been finalised, the results will be reported to you during 2020 on the Group website and in a special valuation update issue of *Pensions brief*. The Group Trustee is also considering running a focus group event, where members can discuss the results with the Group Trustee and ask questions.



Freedom and Choice – making the right choice for you

In April 2015, the Government introduced changes designed to give members of pension schemes greater flexibility in how they use their pension savings to provide for their retirement.

Known as 'Freedom and Choice', most of these changes apply to defined contribution (DC) pensions, but some potentially apply to members of defined benefit (DB) pension arrangements such as the NGE Group.

One change introduced is around financial advice. If a member of a DB arrangement is looking to transfer their benefits to a DC arrangement so that they can take advantage of the Freedom and Choice flexibilities, they will need to take financial advice.

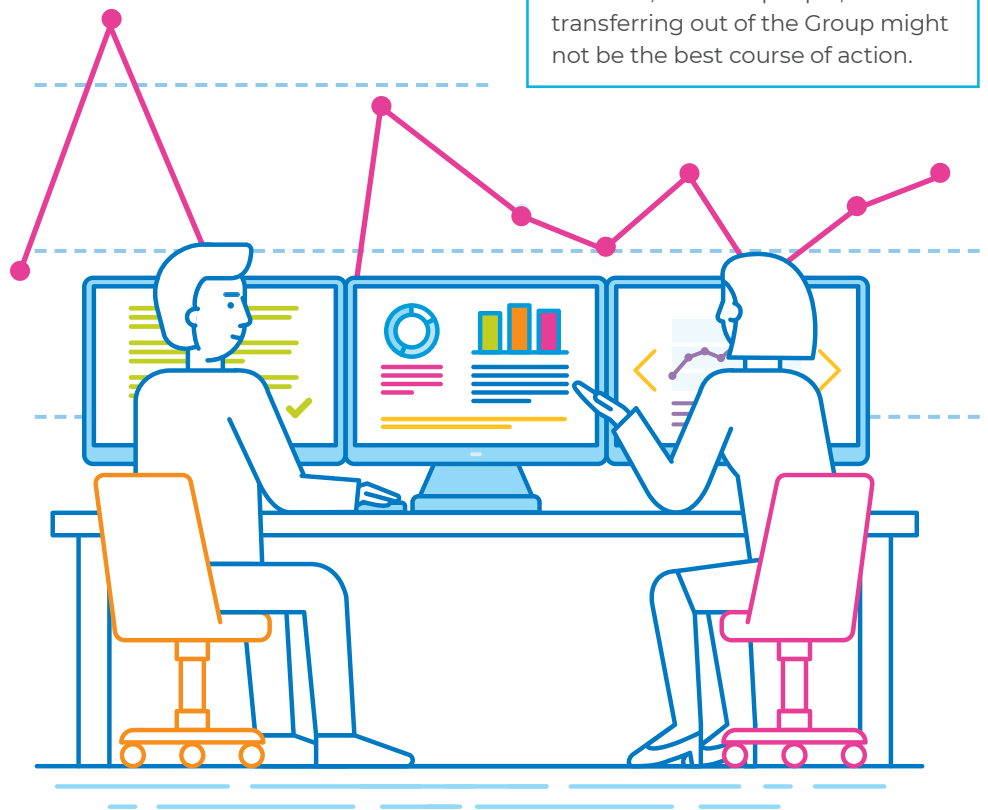
This kind of transfer was already an available option under the Group Rules, but the difference now is that members with transfer values over £30,000 need to take advice from an impartial, authorised financial adviser before the transfer payment can be made. However, the rise in the number of people accessing their pension savings has brought about an increase in pension scams by unscrupulous companies who encourage people to invest in inappropriate, risky investments while paying high charges, which could result in them losing all or significant amounts of their pension.

If you are interested in exploring alternative options outside of the Group, it's important that you fully

understand the implications and take proper advice from legitimate professional advisers who understand defined benefit pension arrangements such as the Group.

The Group Trustee has been considering how it can support members to make decisions that are based on good quality, impartial financial advice. During 2020, more information will be made available to contributing and deferred members as they approach retirement.

The Group provides a pension backed by National Grid, a strong sponsoring employer. This is a guaranteed income with built-in increases that will last for the rest of your life, and the Group also provides a pension for your dependants after your death. There are other options you can explore outside of the Group, and there are advantages and disadvantages to these, depending on your personal circumstances. However, for most people, transferring out of the Group might not be the best course of action.



Pensions increase 2020

National Grid Electricity Group pensions will increase by **2.4% from 1 April 2020**, in line with the Retail Prices Index for September 2019.

This rate also applies to spouses' and dependants' pensions, and pension benefits other than those that are a replacement for State benefits, e.g. Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP). The GMP part of your pension, if you have one, gets a different increase, set by the Government. GMP increases are applied to pensions of male members over age 65 or female members aged 60+, and to spouses of all ages.

Proportionate increases will be applied to any pensions that came into payment on or after 2 April 2019. The **2.4%** increase also applies to children's allowances, whether or not they have been in payment for more than a year as at 1 April 2020.

GMP equalisation – an update

Back in October 2018, the High Court made a decision that requires occupational pension schemes to adjust certain members' benefits to remove inequality caused by Guaranteed Minimum Pensions (GMPs) earned from 17 May 1990 up to and including 5 April 1997.

There is still a lack of clarity across the pensions industry about how GMP benefits will be equalised or the effect it might have on members' benefits. The Group Trustee continues to work with its advisers to consider how this judgment affects the Group. If you are affected your benefits may need to be adjusted when they come into payment or in future, although please note that any top-up is expected to be relatively small and the results will not be known for some time.

This is a complex process for all affected occupational pension schemes and may take considerable time to complete. We will update you as and when we can, so please continue to check the Group website from time to time.

Don't let a scammer enjoy your retirement

We would like to remind members to continue to be vigilant about pension scams. Scammers can be articulate and financially knowledgeable with credible-looking websites, testimonials and materials that are hard to distinguish from the real thing.

In January 2019, the Government introduced a ban on cold calling about pensions. If someone contacts you out of the blue, it is best simply to hang up.

The Pensions Regulator's advice says:

- > reject unexpected offers
- > check who you are dealing with
- > don't be rushed or pressured into making a decision
- > get impartial information and advice.

You can find out more at www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart

Your data and privacy

The Group Privacy Notice sets out the types of personal data the Group Trustee holds, how it uses that information and with whom it is shared. The Privacy Notice also sets out your rights around the personal data held about you by the Group Trustee, and who to contact if you want to exercise those rights or simply have any questions. The Privacy Notice is updated from time to time and you can see the current version on the Group website at www.ngeg.nationalgridpensions.com

Keep in touch

If you are a deferred member, please remember to keep RPMI updated if you move house or change your address. It's important that we can contact you as you approach retirement to ensure that your Group benefits are paid when they are due. Contact details for RPMI are on the back page.



Group Trustee elections

The next Group Trustee election campaign will take place in 2020/2021 when three Member Nominated Trustees (MNTs) will be elected/selected for five-year terms with effect from 1 April 2021. More information about the election will be provided closer to the time.

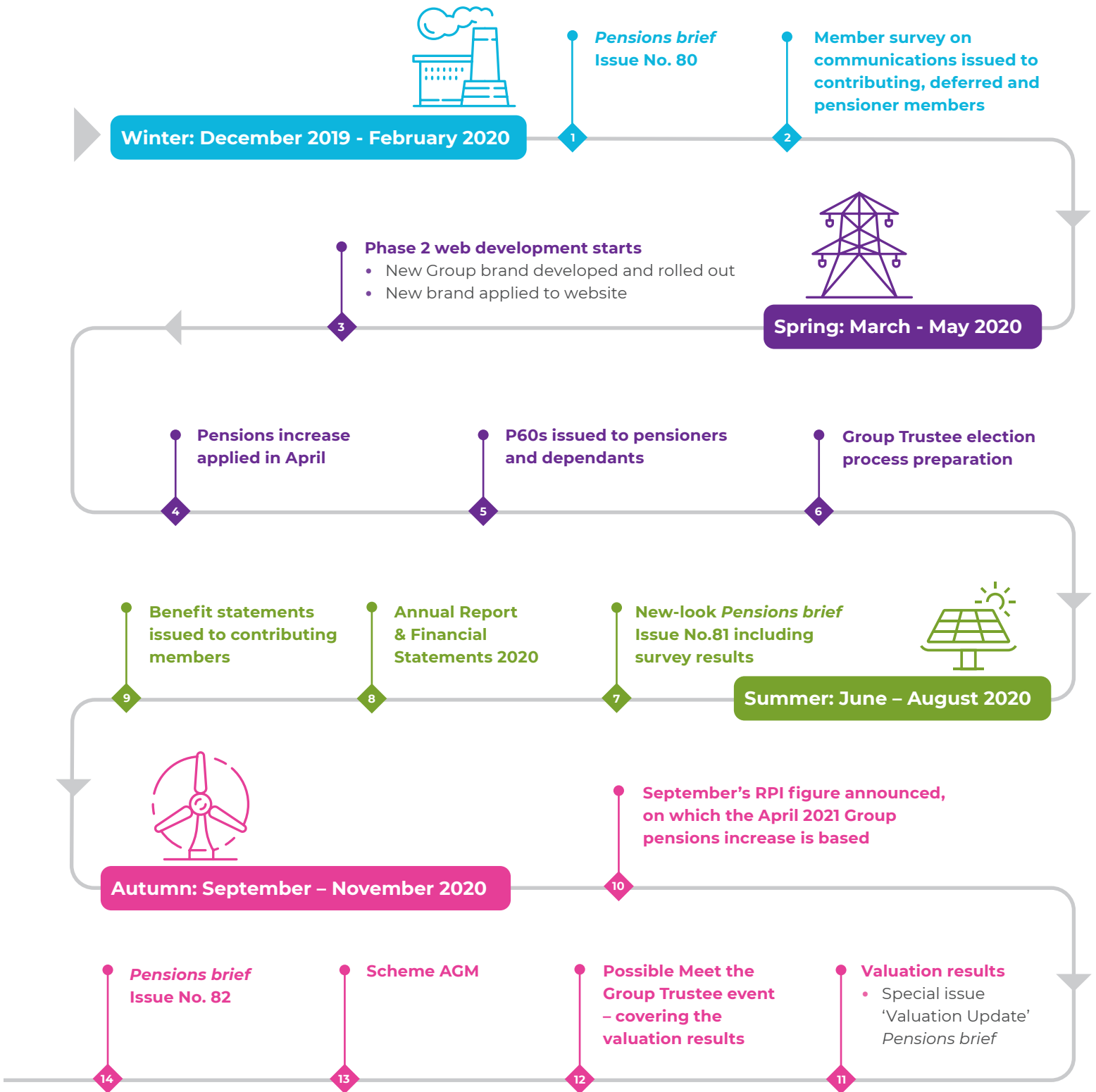
December 2019 pay date for pensioners and dependants

This year, pensioners and dependants of the Group will be paid their pension on **Monday 16 December 2019**. This is earlier than usual to allow for Christmas.

B-R-E-X-I-T

As we are all aware, the UK's exit from the European Union (EU) has been delayed until possibly 31 January 2020, following numerous withdrawal agreements being rejected by Parliament. Since the referendum in 2016, the Group Trustee has kept the situation under review and taken advice on possible impacts on the Group's investment strategy and risk management and will continue to do so.

GROUP CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2020



ANNUAL GROUP REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018/19

Group membership statistics



Contributing members
931



Dependants
1,543



Pensioners
4,727



Deferred pensioners
1,522

Total members 8,723

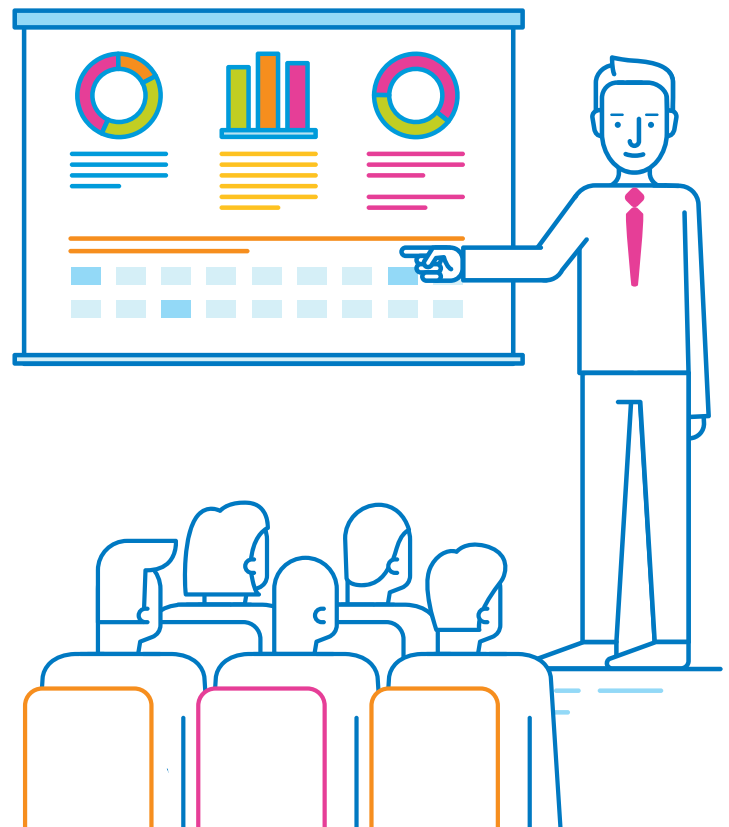
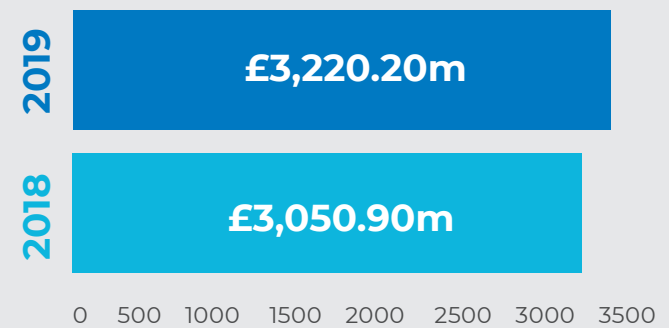
What came in

	£ million
Members' contributions	1.0
Employers' contributions	99.8
Transfer values received	1.7
Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs)	0.2
Net increase on investments	234.2
TOTAL	336.9

What went out

	£ million
Pensions and dependants' benefits	101.3
Commutation and lump sum retirement benefits	25.4
Lump sum death benefits	0.2
Taxation where Lifetime or Annual Allowance exceeded	0.2
Payments to and on account of leavers	39.1
AVC purchase of annuities	1.4
TOTAL	167.6

Statement showing the value of Group assets



How to get a copy

The Group's Annual Report and Financial Statements are produced as at 31 March each year and made available on the Group's website annually from September. Paper copies can be obtained from RPMi upon request.

A LOOK AT INVESTMENTS

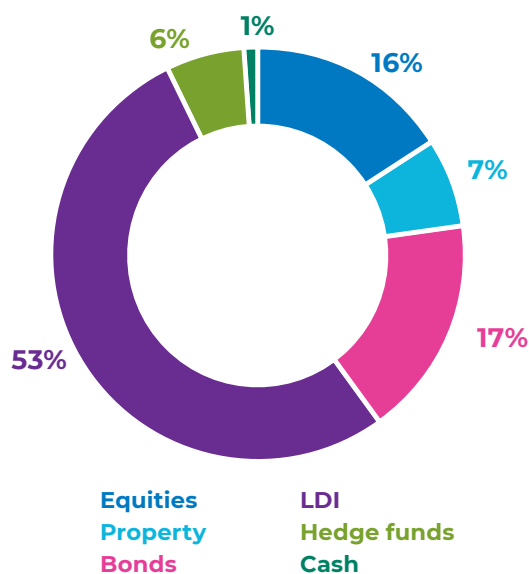
The current position

The Group's investments (the funds held in order to be able to pay member's benefits as they fall due) are generally held for two reasons:

- › to provide some protection against changes in future interest and inflation rates, and people living longer than expected; and
- › to achieve growth to help ensure sufficient funds are available to pay benefits now and in the future.

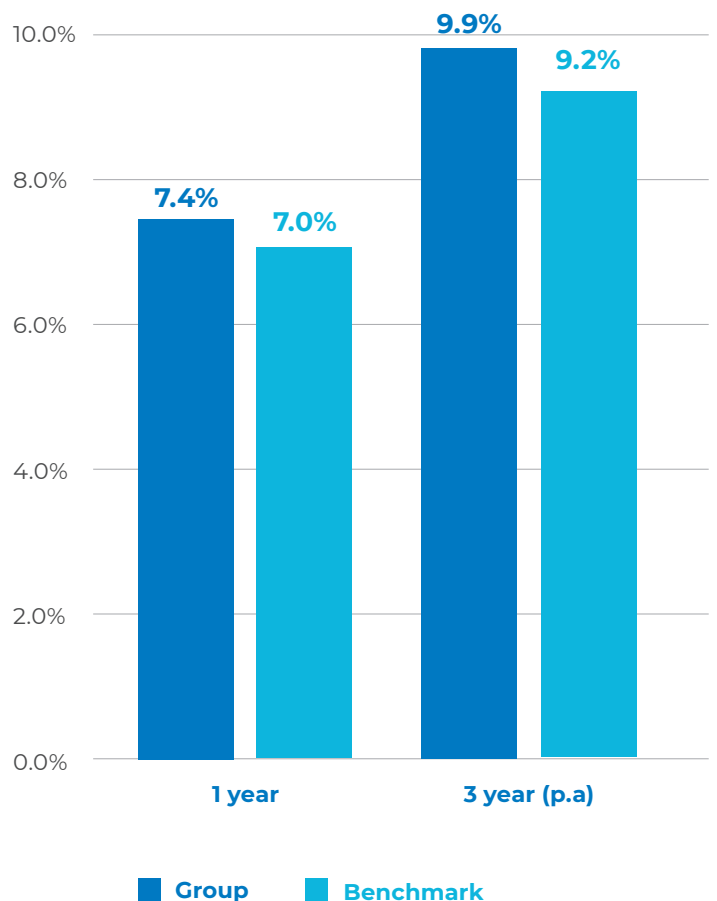
The Group Trustee decides the split of funds between different types of asset classes, based on advice from its investment adviser.

At 31 March 2019, the Group's assets of £3,220m were invested as follows:



Fund performance

The Group Trustee tracks the performance of the funds, and those managing each one, on a regular basis by comparison to a benchmark (or target). As you can see, the Group's investments have outperformed their benchmark over the one and three-year periods to 31 March 2019.



Investment changes over the last year

Over the course of year, the Group Trustee made some changes to the way it invests the Group funds:

- › PIMCO was appointed as an additional bond manager
- › Legal and General was put in place as the sole AVC provider for all ongoing contributions
- › The investments in equities managed by Newton were redeemed.

These changes were made to provide stability, reduce investment risks, and provide increased certainty in the long-term cost of the pension scheme.

The investment strategy will be reviewed in detail next year, following the conclusion of the Group's triennial actuarial valuation as at 31 March 2019.

Further detail on the above can be found in the Group Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2019, available on the Group website.



GROUP TRUSTEE 2019 KEY PRIORITIES

Governance & effectiveness

Ensuring good governance that is effective and efficient is essential to the obligations of the Group Trustee Board and paramount in managing the pension scheme. This includes the maintenance of a robust governance framework which includes integrated risk management to ensure compliance with legislative, Scheme and regulatory requirements.

Member experience

The Group's communications strategy is set by the Communications Committee, who work closely with Communications Adviser (and editor of *Pensions brief*), Helen Taylor, to deliver information to members.

The Committee believes it is important to effectively engage with all members of the Group to ensure they are aware of their pension benefits, the Group's funding position and that necessary information is available to all.

The Committee also considers the processing and retention of member data and ensures that members are aware of their data protection rights.

Investment & funding

The Investment Committee is working to develop an appropriate long-term approach to funding for the Group, following the 2019 actuarial valuation and the Group's drive towards full funding. This includes considering the long-term options available to the Group and mitigating risks to ensure the Group reaches full funding.

Risk management

The Board believes a strong governance framework with integrated risk management is vital to running a pension scheme appropriately. It is important to meet the trusteeship standards set out by the Pensions Regulator and to this end, the Board has been reviewing its controls and processes and considering its risk appetite.



THE WORK OF A GROUP TRUSTEE: RAY ARROWSMITH



Name: Ray Arrowsmith

Role with the Group: Member Nominated Group Trustee Director

Last role with NG: Telecommunications Engineer. Ray retired from National Grid in March 2015.

Number of years as a Group Trustee: 11 years, Ray was first elected in 2008.

Why did you decide to take on the role of a Group Trustee?

I had experience working as a Trade Union representative with Prospect – in fact, I was President of Prospect for a while. I was interested in the role of pension trustee for the same reasons I'd become a TU rep: looking after the interests of people.

Which aspects of being a Group Trustee do you most enjoy/is the most personally fulfilling?

For me, as I said, it's all about looking after the interests of the Group members and their beneficiaries, now and for the full term of the Group.

Which do you find the most challenging part of the Group Trustee role?

There's a huge amount of continual learning and being an engineer, I like to know how things work. There's also a terrific amount of jargon. Sometime the same acronym can

crop up in pensions language and in investments terminology and mean completely different things to me! The investment side is incredibly specialised. Ideally, you need a sound financial background and the training is extensive. You have to know a lot in order to be able to ask the right questions.

Which committee do you sit on?

Currently, I sit on the Investment Committee, but I've previously sat on the Discretions Committee (which deals with discretionary payments to members and various appeals) and the Communications Committee (which is responsible for all the communications that go out to members from the Group Trustee).

What qualities are best needed for the Group Trustee role?

A willingness to learn and ambition to look after the members to the best of your ability.

What are the primary issues that the Board faces today?

Uncertainty in world economics particularly can cause volatility in share prices. We've worked hard to ensure the financial security of the Group and we've also mitigated as much as we can to ensure that any negative effects on the Group's funding levels are managed effectively.

“ I was interested in the role of pension trustee for the same reasons I'd become a TU rep, looking after the interests of people. ”

What are your hopes for the Group in the future?

Full funding as soon as possible!

What are your interests outside of work and being a Group Trustee?

Spending time with my grandchildren, walking, real ale and travel. I've spent time working and travelling in South America, and I love Scotland. I've got a holiday home in Devon and spend about a third of my time there, usually when it's out of season and nice and quiet.



COMPANY NEWS



2019: the year zero-carbon energy overtook fossil fuels

2019 marks a turning point in Britain's reliance on fossil fuels as an energy source. For the first time since the Industrial Revolution, more of Britain's electricity production will come from zero-carbon energy sources than fossil fuels.

Annual power generation data from the last decade shows that Britain's reliance on cleaner energy sources (wind, solar, nuclear, hydro power and storage) will overtake fossil fuels (coal and gas-fired power generation) this year. This marks an historic achievement in Britain's journey towards the UK Government's target of net zero emissions by 2050, demonstrating leadership in addressing a global challenge.

Reaching this point in Britain's clean electricity generation has been achieved following a decade-long revolution in our power sources:

Electricity generation sources	Fossil fuels (coal and gas)	Zero carbon (wind, solar, nuclear, hydro and storage)	Coal	Wind
2009 total	75.6%	22.8%	30.4%	1.3%
Jan – May 2019	46.6%	47.9%	2.5% (-93%)	18.8%

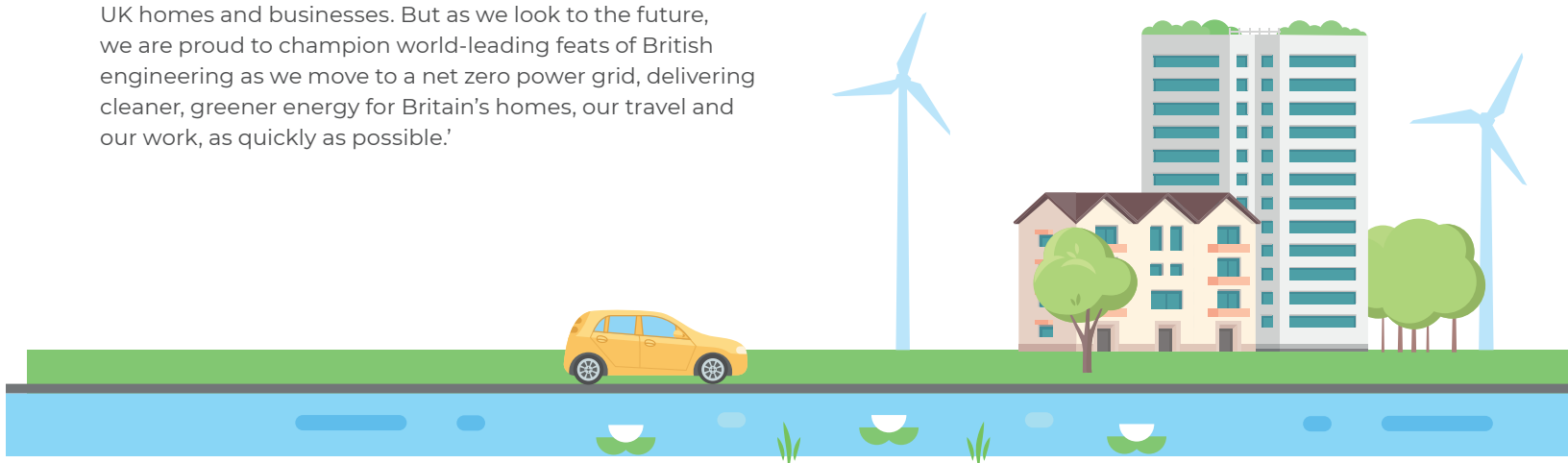
NB: Percentages in the table above only relate to the energy sources cited (fossil fuels: coal, gas; zero carbon: wind, solar, nuclear, hydro and storage). Contributions from biomass are not represented as it is neither zero carbon nor fossil fuel. Contributions from imports are included in 2019 data.

In May, Britain clocked up its first coal-free fortnight and generated record levels of solar power for two consecutive days, powering more than a quarter of the country's daily electricity consumption.

John Pettigrew, CEO of National Grid, said: 'The incredible progress that Britain has made in the past 10 years means we can now say 2019 will be the year net zero power beats the fossil-fuel-fired generation for the first time. Having reached this landmark tipping point, the question is what are we doing today to get to net zero as quickly as possible?'

'We take our responsibility to run the UK's electricity and gas energy systems, in accordance with our licence obligations, extremely seriously. We seek to maintain the integrity of these systems whilst keeping energy costs down for UK homes and businesses. But as we look to the future, we are proud to champion world-leading feats of British engineering as we move to a net zero power grid, delivering cleaner, greener energy for Britain's homes, our travel and our work, as quickly as possible.'

Britain's energy system is in the midst of a rapid and complex transformation, and National Grid is playing a key role in the change. The continued move to a clean power system will require significant upgrades to the transmission network, and National Grid is investing around £1.3bn each year to support this transition. Huge strides are also being made in areas such as carbon capture and storage and investing over £2bn in new interconnector projects. Several significant achievements have helped zero carbon beat fossil fuels so far this year, including the fact that 64.5% of electricity imported to Britain through underwater interconnectors has come from zero-carbon sources.





Climate change and climate anxiety – tackling the issues

As Britain powers towards a new era of clean energy, public concern about climate change is at an all-time high. New research commissioned by National Grid found that 'climate anxiety' is exacerbated by a perceived lack of urgency around addressing the problem and the impact this will have on future generations.

Nearly 69% of people in Britain who are concerned about climate change said it was because they believe it's not being addressed urgently enough.

Unaddressed, 38% of young people said their concerns about climate change would drive them to join a protest, and 18% of 18-24 year olds said they are prepared to skip school or work to do this.

The research also identified a demand for clearer information on what action is being taken to reduce emissions.

56% of people who are worried about climate change stated that more information from the Government and businesses about what action is being taken would help address their concerns.

49% would like regular reporting on Britain's progress in tackling climate change.

To help, National Grid is publishing data that sets out Britain's transition to a cleaner energy mix through a new website: www.nationalgridcleanenergy.com

REA CONTACTS

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BYGONE DAYS

BY JOE HIRST

Joe's career with the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) took him from Huddersfield Power Station to Pelaw House, which later merged with Becca Hall. He then moved to National Control – System Coordination, and later to work for Systems Economics. He left the business shortly after privatisation to work for Powergen. This extract of his story covers the period 1958 – 1969.

Like many, I left school at 16 and in 1958, I joined the CEGB as a Student Apprentice based at Huddersfield Power Station. My first weekly wage was £2.3s.6p. Not much, but a welcome contribution considering my father's wage was £10 a week and my mother's noticeably less.

Huddersfield Power Station was a range-station with eight chain grate boilers. It had started life as the town's incinerator, burning rubbish and producing electricity. Two 20MW machines were built adjacent to the incinerator in the 1930s and became the LP end of the power station. In the early 1950s, two HP 30MW generators were added.

I was sent to college to study for the Ordinary National Certificate (ONC) in electrical engineering. Whitehall Road Power Station had a student's workshop and here we were taught how to employ different engineering techniques and use a variety of machines. We made apprentice pieces, fashioning every little screw and bolt to a standard I now find amazing. I treasure all the pieces I made back then and often think I should put them on display, although I doubt anyone would be interested!

One thing I remember was the comradery of the maintenance staff. I'd just turned 18 and had been given a letter from the office asking if I wanted to join the CEGB's superannuation scheme. What on earth was superannuation? I knew my parents would be in the dark, so I asked one of the welders, a man well respected by his peers. He closed the door of his cabin and refused to open it again until I signed the form. How thankful I became for that small act in later life!

I passed the ONC and continued my studies. Four years later, having passed the Part 3 entrance examination of the Institute of Electrical Engineers, I was considered ready to start working in a power station. Now aged 22 and a General Assistant Engineer, I was included as the relief on the Station Control Engineer's rota.

Night shifts could drag and so on cold winter nights, when the doorbell rang, you would welcome the local bobby on the beat in for a chat and warming cup of tea. But things changed after one enthusiastic officer, on leaving, booked the shift charge for parking without lights in Gasworks Street!

The control room was also responsible for switching area board circuits. Every Monday at about 9am, one circuit would trip. The best technical brains were called in to solve the mystery. It turned out the circuit in question had an over-sensitive trip relay, which was being triggered by an over-enthusiastic cleaner polishing the parquet floor. The technical solution? Paint a white line on the floor in front of all the panels and tell the cleaner not to polish beyond the white line.

What made me feel most empowered was nothing to do with generating electricity but, along with all the other panels, there was one dedicated to the trolley bus supply. That tripped regularly and now I had the power to bring central Huddersfield to a halt!

A small power station, a small control room and one control engineer per shift. One time I had the call of nature but wasn't able to raise the Assistant Shift Charge Engineer to stand in. What could go wrong if I left the generators to themselves for a few minutes? Well, in those few

minutes, the system frequency fell, the machines responded and when I returned, all the machines were now 0.8 lead. Thankfully, these old alternators were so copper rich that they remained surprisingly stable, but it was a lesson well learnt.

In 1964, a vacancy came up at Pelaw House Grid Control Centre. This was a perfect introduction to System Operation, a small area covering County Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland. Alan Storey was the System Operation Engineer and I was appointed a Third Assistant Engineer, working for Ron Boydell. Six months later, I was promoted to Second Assistant as a Loading Engineer and left to get on with it. I was on my own with no one looking over my shoulder. By far the best way to learn.

One night, I was on shift with a colleague and all was quiet. While not the best practice, I had to admit I was dozing at the loading desk while he was laid out on the floor under the switching desk. I was awoken at 5am by the sound of a circuit breaker alarm. My colleague stirred as his phone, which was strategically placed on the floor beside him, started ringing. It was the power station engineer asking if he could close the breaker and restore the tripped 132kv circuit.

My colleague duly obliged but immediately went back to sleep. I was delayed in leaving the next morning as my replacement failed to show. At 10am, my back up arrived. As I was preparing to leave, I was confronted by Gladys, one of the girls in the office. She discreetly hinted that there was something wrong with the overnight log and I have to admit, we weren't the neatest of writers.

Each morning, the girls would type out our notes for the engineers to sign the next time they were on shift. I soon realised the typists knew more about the system than the engineers, because they always knew when the log didn't make sense and usually took it upon themselves to correct it, but this time, there was a gap and Gladys couldn't work out what was missing.

When I read the log, I realised there was no mention of the circuit tripping in the middle of the night or the instruction to restore it! I immediately guessed what had happened. I asked the chap who was now sat at the switching desk, to move aside, and Gladys and I got down on our hands and knees to look at the linoleum under the desk. Sure enough, my shift colleague had written his notes directly on the floor. Gladys added it to the log and it all now made sense.

Not long after, the move from Pelaw House to Becca Hall commenced. It all went surprisingly smoothly with few hiccups, despite a clash in culture one Saturday lunchtime over fish and chips. It didn't turn into a major crisis and normal service was quietly resumed. Thankfully in 1969, I was on shift with Tommy Owen on the February night my son was born. No paternity leave in those days. As my wife went into labour, I called the midwife and as soon as she arrived, I shot off for work. At 2am, I got the phone call announcing the birth of my son. Tommy said he would cover and allowed me to set off home in the driving snow to see my wife and son, provided I was back at my desk in time for the morning pickup, which I just made.

Late in 1968, I applied for the post of Assistant National Control Engineer in Bankside House and followed the likes of Colin Snowball to London.

We were given three days' paid leave with expenses to find a house. Not that easy when you have an 18-month-old toddler and a heavily pregnant wife. So where do you start? Colin helped and suggested I look south of the river as it had the better train service. Due south is Croydon so we started there and, as luck would have it, we chose the first house we saw. My start date was delayed as I wanted to wait until after my child was born in Yorkshire – after all, it could be a son and he might turn out to be a talented cricketer! I started at National Control on 1 March 1969, three weeks after my son was born.

We hope to cover the next instalment of Joe's memoirs in the next issue of *Pensions brief*.

MEMORIES OF THE LATE FRED ROBINSON



Frederick 'Fred' Robinson, a former Foreman of the Overhead Linesmen based at Rayleigh, Essex, sadly passed away in July. His wife Stella wrote in with this memory of how Fred was awarded the Queen's Award for bravery.

Fred joined the CEGB as a boy in Romford, eventually moving to Rayleigh when the Company became National Grid.

On 23 December 1989, Fred was on call and was duly called in to work. He was radioed and given the number of an electricity tower where there was an urgent situation and told to head towards the M11. In doing so, he found himself caught up in traffic caused by the emergency.

A young lad who was in care had climbed an electricity tower on Fred's watch and was threatening to jump. The police managed to locate Fred in the traffic and took him onto the hard shoulder to explain the situation. Fred went with the police to the field where the tower was to try to help diffuse the situation and talk the boy down.

Fred climbed the tower and stayed with the lad for over six hours, talking to him, reassuring him and giving him hot drinks until, eventually, the boy was willing to come down. Fred was awarded the Queen's Award for bravery.

He retired in 1995 and although he suffered with Parkinson's disease for the last 20 years, he had a wonderful life. Many of Fred's former colleagues attended his funeral and spoke highly of him, which, says Stella, was 'extremely touching'.



NEWS FROM RETIRED FORMER COLLEAGUES



The Old Leeds OHL Central Line Gang at John Cracknell's retirement celebrations and reunion in November. The linesmen pictured range in age from 28 to 92

The Old Leeds OHL Central Line Gang – reunion and retirement party

In November, 30 former OHL staff and their partners met with old friends and former colleagues at The Irish Centre on York Road, Leeds. The event was the chance for everyone to get together and mark the retirement of John Cracknell, who was the SAP OHL at Skelton Grange Leeds until his retirement last February. Charlie Pickles led the tributes to celebrate the occasion for John and the former team of dedicated men based in Leeds who were known as the Central Line Gang.

Graham Commons, Group Trustee and former Condition Monitoring Technician, writes, 'Formed in the late 1950s as part of the CEGB North East Region, the Central Line Gang were a group of specialist linesmen who carried out all types of maintenance on 132kv, 275kv and later the 400kv high voltage overhead line network in what was then the Yorkshire Division. Recruitment for the group came from all walks of life. All new recruits gained basic training at the National Overhead Line Training School and hands-on site experience as part of a dedicated team of linesmen. Staff numbers varied over the years, reaching a peak of over 40 in the late 1970s through to the late 1980s.

'Major reorganisation occurred following nationalisation of the industry and the gang was divided up and posted to different report centres in the newly formed National Grid. The days of the Central Line Gang were over. The event on 9 November was a chance for us all to remember old times, mark John Cracknell's retirement and help him celebrate. John was the last of that original Gang to retire. Happy memories to you, John, and all those who enjoyed times past.'

The Off Griders

Since spring this year, an informal group of retired former colleagues, nicknamed 'the Off Griders', who hail from ex National Grid House and the surrounding area, have been meeting up regularly.



The Off Griders enjoy a walk in the Malverns

Ian Cartledge, former Safety Improvement Manager, writes, 'Just over 25 of us meet at 10am every first Tuesday of the month at the Touch Down cafe at Wellsbourne Airfield to catch up and discuss what's next on our agenda of things to do. Already this year, activities have included a visit to the Morgan car factory, canoeing the Wye Valley, narrow boat trips and a walk in the Malvern Hills. We endeavour to hold an event each month and have a long list of activities waiting to be planned! The group has the usual social media accounts and if you're interested in joining us, getting involved or finding out what's on this month, please contact Dave Wells at davidw66@btinternet.com.'

NGCCREA – a tour of Tower Bridge

Secretary, Mike Evans writes, 'For our September event a total of 18 members and their guests visited London's Tower Bridge. The visit started with a river cruise from the Embankment at Waterloo down to the Tower of London. We then had an enjoyable pub lunch before taking our guided tour of Tower Bridge. The highlight for some was the walk across the glass floor, some 41 metres above the Thames.'



Members of NGCCREA and guests enjoy a tour of London's Tower Bridge

WITH REGRET

We are sorry to inform you of the death of the following National Grid Electricity Group members.
Our condolences to their families and friends.

ALLEN Bernard Sidney, Bedford, Pensioner, aged 85
ALLIN Betty, East Sussex, Pensioner, aged 100
ALLISON Maureen, Leeds, Widow, aged 89
ASHMEAD Jean Elizabeth, Devon, Widow, aged 91
ATKINS Colin, Bristol, Pensioner, aged 74
AVERY David John, Bristol, Pensioner, aged 86
BARBER Arthur Richard, Surrey, Pensioner, aged 91
BARCLAY Doris Alicia, Hampshire, Widow, aged 86
BARNETT Richard George, Hertfordshire, Pensioner, aged 81
BARTLETT Victor Naylor, Lincolnshire, Pensioner, aged 90
BENTON Clarence John, Staffordshire, Pensioner, aged 85
BIGGS Joyce, Worcestershire, Pensioner, aged 80
BIRTLES David Alfred, Leicester, Pensioner, aged 72
BOULT Lucy Edna, Crewe, Widow, aged 95
BRADLEY Pamela, Surrey, Widow, aged 87
BROWN Peggy May, Surrey, Widow, aged 94
BRYON Terence Norman, Kent, Pensioner, aged 87
BURDETT Claude Cecil, Cornwall, Pensioner, aged 93
BURNETT Lionel Francis, Surrey, Pensioner, aged 79
BURNS Anthony Frederick, West Yorkshire, Pensioner, aged 82
CAINES Margaret Lilian Esme, Devon, Widow, aged 79
CARR John William, East Sussex, Pensioner, aged 84
CARR Joan Winifred, Lancashire, Widow, aged 97
CARROLL Trevor, Wiltshire, Pensioner, aged 93
CARVER David, Croydon, Pensioner, aged 91
CAVE-HAWKES Ellen Edna, Isle Of Man, Pensioner, aged 100
CHARLTON Norman, West Yorkshire, Pensioner, aged 89
CHEUNG Chak Hang, Surrey, Pensioner, aged 64
CHILTON Alice, West Yorkshire, Widow, aged 91
CLABON Patience Nellie, Hertfordshire, Widow, aged 97
CLARKE Joy, West Sussex, Widow, aged 61
CLIFFORD Thomas George, Bristol, Pensioner, aged 82
COX Loveda Mary, Bristol, Widow, aged 78
CROWLEY Leonard, Australia, Pensioner, aged 77
CURRY Alan Thomas, Tyne And Wear, Pensioner, aged 93
DAVIES Nesta, Clwyd, Widow, aged 87
DEBOISSIERE Myrle Ianthe, London, Pensioner, aged 92
DEIGHTON Edward Morrell, Yorkshire, Pensioner, aged 78
DEVITT Dorothy Florence, Beds, Widow, aged 100
DUCKHAM James Derek, Hampshire, Pensioner, aged 88
DUNN Richard Douglas, East Sussex, Pensioner, aged 69
EDMUNDS Betty Maude, Cheshire, Widow, aged 99
ELLIS Herbert, Clwyd, Pensioner, aged 80
EYRE Dennis Arnold Roy, London, Pensioner, aged 89
FACKRELL J V, Surrey, Widow, aged 100
FARRANT Leonard William, London, Pensioner, aged 98
FERGUSON B J, Devon, Widow, aged 95
FISHER Lucy Ann, Newcastle upon Tyne, Widow, aged 84
FLETCHER Barbara Dorothy Maud, Birmingham, Widow, aged 89
FLETCHER Robert Bruce, Leeds, Pensioner, aged 64
FOX Carol Dawn, Hampshire, Pensioner, aged 52
FOX Anthony Arthur Folkarde, South Yorkshire, Pensioner, aged 81
FRERK Barbara, Surrey, Widow, aged 87
FROST Eileen Grace, Ipswich, Widow, aged 95
GIBSON Stella Joyce, Warrington, Widow, aged 93
GLUE Colin Michael, Hampshire, Pensioner, aged 67
GOODALL Michael Ernest, Hampshire, Pensioner, aged 83
GRANT Reginald Edward, Bristol, Pensioner, aged 90
HABGOOD Barbara, Devon, Pensioner, aged 85
HALL Timothy Henry James, Devon, Pensioner, aged 74
HAND I J, Peterborough, Widow, aged 96
HARRIS Edna, East Sussex, Widow, aged 85
HARRIS Cicely Teresa, Hertfordshire, Widow, aged 88
HEWITT M J, Spain, Pensioner, aged 82
HIBBERT Bryan, Blackburn, Pensioner, aged 71
HILL Peter, Southampton, Pensioner, aged 85
HONESS N F, Kent, Widow, aged 88
HUMPHERSON Margaret Frances, Nottingham, Pensioner, aged 89
JACKS Alan, Cheshire, Pensioner, aged 83
JACKSON Glenys Valerie, Kent, Widow, aged 80
JENKINS Dilys Catherine, Carmarthen, Widow, aged 79
JERVIS William Brian, Chelmsford, Pensioner, aged 90
JOHNSTON Leslie Edward, Spain, Pensioner, aged 93
JONES John Brynmor, London, Pensioner, aged 78
JONES Margarita Victoria, Essex, Widow, aged 95
JONES Kenneth, Kent, Pensioner, aged 79
KIRKHAM Josephine Margaret, Isle Of South Uist, Pensioner, aged 82
LARGE Irene Constance, West Midlands, Pensioner, aged 96
LAVIERS Gwyn Davies, West Midlands, Pensioner, aged 79
LEIGHTON Heidelinde, Bedfordshire, Deferred, aged 49
LEVERSEDGE Robert George, Kent, Pensioner, aged 88
LLOYD Joyce Mary, Lincolnshire, Widow, aged 95
MARKS Alan Edward, Warwickshire, Pensioner, aged 70
MARR Maurice Keith, Solihull, Pensioner, aged 77
MARSDEN George, South Humberside, Pensioner, aged 95
MARSHALL John William Jesse, Norfolk, Pensioner, aged 87
MARVELL Gwendoline Joyce, Surrey, Widow, aged 93
MAYNE Doris, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Widow, aged 91
MCKENZIE Denis, Bedfordshire, Pensioner, aged 92
MILLER Robert, West Yorkshire, Pensioner, aged 74
MORRIS Linda Allison, Essex, Widow, aged 78
MURPHY Gerald, London, Pensioner, aged 88
NICHOLLS John Lewis, Nottinghamshire, Pensioner, aged 80
NICHOLLS Edmund Bailey, Lincolnshire, Pensioner, aged 78
OBASUKE Joseph Peter, Warrington, Pensioner, aged 69
OBERTELLI John Walter, Kent, Widower, aged 84
OCONNOR Barbara Agnetta, Bristol, Widow, aged 89
OLLETT Maurice, Hull, Pensioner, aged 93
PALEY Mary, Cheshire, Widow, aged 86
PEARSON Enid Irene, Oxford, Widow, aged 91
PETTET Daphne Barbara, Kent, Widow, aged 90
PLESTED Ronald Gilbert, Southampton, Pensioner, aged 83
PRICE Albert Ryan, Dorset, Pensioner, aged 91
PRITCHARD Emyr Wyn, Warrington, Pensioner, aged 82
RATCLIFFE Albert, Warrington, Pensioner, aged 92
RAYNER Bert Frederick, Birmingham, Pensioner, aged 96
RAYNER Hilda May, Birmingham, Widow, aged 94
READ Betty Kathleen, Kent, Widow, aged 90

REDGEWELL Eleanor Ada, Essex, Widow, aged 89
RIGGS Edwin Joseph, Southampton, Pensioner, aged 78
ROBBINS Betty, Leeds, Widow, aged 90
ROBERTSON Sally Denise, Bristol, Pensioner, aged 57
ROBINSON Frederick Joseph, Essex, Pensioner, aged 80
ROWLEY Diana, Cambridgeshire, Widow, aged 84
SAUNDERS Ronald Phillip, Warwickshire, Pensioner, aged 51
SAUNDERS John, Kent, Pensioner, aged 71
SAVAGE May, Tyne & Wear, Widow, aged 92
SELVES John, Surrey, Pensioner, aged 84
SEMKEN Joyce Marigold, Kent, Widow, aged 97
SEVERS David John, Surrey, Widower, aged 88
SIMMONS Jeffrey Keith, Northamptonshire, Pensioner, aged 75
SMITH Esther Mary, Nottinghamshire, Widow, aged 88
SMITH Peter Michael, Bristol, Pensioner, aged 74
STAGG Derek, Essex, Pensioner, aged 85
STIRK Claude, Leeds, Pensioner, aged 94
STONES Joan Mary, South Humberside, Widow, aged 92
STOTT Cecil Roy, Surrey, Pensioner, aged 94
STRATHERN Frank George, Gloucestershire, Pensioner, aged 89
STRATTON Lilian May, Norfolk, Widow, aged 89
STRUDWICK James, East Sussex, Pensioner, aged 87
TAYLOR Violet Mary, West Midlands, Widow, aged 85

TEAGUE Alan, Norwich, Pensioner, aged 92
THOMAS Lily Edith, Kent, Pensioner, aged 91
THOMAS P, Hertfordshire, Pensioner, aged 89
THOROGOOD Ellen Nora, Essex, Widow, aged 100
TREHEARN Tony Bernard, Dorset, Pensioner, aged 87
TREVASKIS James Henry, Somerset, Pensioner, aged 83
UNWIN Enid Marjorie, Lincolnshire, Widow, aged 87
WALKER Paul Haydn, West Yorkshire, Pensioner, aged 73
WALLIS Thomas Anthony, East Sussex, Pensioner, aged 91
WARBY Ellen Margaret, Kent, Pensioner, aged 91
WARD Doris May, Birmingham, Pensioner, aged 91
WATKINS Mary Myfanwy, Surrey, Pensioner, aged 96
WATMORE John, Hampshire, Pensioner, aged 90
WELLS Eileen Patricia, Middlesex, Widow, aged 85
WHALE Albert Thomas John, Cambridgeshire, Pensioner, aged 92
WHALLEY Barry, Morecambe, Contributing member, aged 57
WILKINSON Robin, Leicestershire, Pensioner, aged 75
WILLIAMS J H, Reading, Widow, aged 101
WILLIAMS Derek Edward, West Midlands, Pensioner, aged 80
WOODMAN Michael Thomas, Somerset, Pensioner, aged 88
WORTHINGTON Michael Ronald, East Sussex, Pensioner, aged 71
YATES Lee, Hampshire, Pensioner, aged 88

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