

Pensions Conference 2026

Forward-looking risk-based supervision

Tuesday 15 September 2026

The Round Room at the Mansion House, Dublin 2

Time	Conference agenda
08.00	Registration with tea/coffee/pastries
08.45	Welcome and introduction Brenda Kennedy Pensions Regulator The Pensions Authority
09.00	Keynote address Dara Calleary TD Minister for Social Protection and Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
09.30	EIOPA policy and supervisory convergence Petra Hielkema Chair European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA)
10.00	Anticipating the authorisation regime for Irish pension schemes Andrew Nugent Director of Supervision, Policy and Legal The Pensions Authority
10.30	Tea/coffee break
11.00	Data at the centre of supervision Eithne Rafferty Head of Strategy and International Affairs The Pensions Authority

11.30	Ensuring cyber security is embedded as a critical risk Paul Stanley Head of Engagement The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration
12.00	Use of Artificial Intelligence in pensions - what trustees need to know and ask. (round table discussion) Joyce Brennan, Chief Executive, The Irish Association of Pension Funds (IAPF) Brian Balmforth, Insurance Directorate, The Central Bank of Ireland Paul Stanley, Head of Engagement, The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) John Gethin - Director of Strategy, IT, Data and Operations
12.45	Closing comments John Gethin Director of Strategy, IT, Data and Operations The Pensions Authority
13.00	Conference closes

Note: There will be a short Q&A section after each presentation.

The Pensions Authority Conference 2026

Speakers

	Dara Calleary TD Minister for Social Protection Dara Calleary is the Minister for Social Protection and also Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht. He was appointed to these roles on 23 January 2025. Before this, he served as Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. A native of Ballina, Dara Calleary has been a TD for Mayo since first being elected at the 2007 General Election. He was previously Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with responsibility for Labour Affairs from 2009-2011 and Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Finance with responsibility for Public Service Transformation from 2009-2011. He served as Minister for Agriculture and as Government Chief Whip in 2020. Dara served as Deputy Leader of Fianna Fáil from 2018-2020 and has also served as Spokesperson on Justice, Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Public Expenditure and Reform and Social Protection portfolio. Prior to entering politics Dara was involved in the banking and business sectors. Dara studied Business and Politics at Trinity College Dublin and attended St Muredach's College Ballina and St Oliver Plunkett National School.
	Petra Hielkema Chair European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) Petra is the Chairperson of EIOPA and has been leading the Authority since September 2021, following her appointment by the European Council on 27 May 2021 after confirmation by the European Parliament on 18 May 2021. As Chairperson of EIOPA Petra is member of the Joint Committee, the DORA Oversight Forum and the ESRB Steering Committee and General Board. Petra was appointed Vice Chair of the IAIS Executive Committee in December 2024. Besides that, she is the Champion of the IAIS Fintech Forum. Prior to this role Petra was Division Director of Insurance Supervision at De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB, the Dutch Central Bank) as well as Alternate Member of the EIOPA Board and Chair of the EIOPA Policy Committee. Petra joined DNB in February 2007 as a policy advisor, contributing to the development of Solvency II. In 2013 she became Head Insurance Policy and in 2015 she was appointed as Head of the DNB Expert Centre for Fit & Proper assessments. In February 2017 Petra started as Director of Payments and Market. Prior to joining the Dutch Central Bank fulfilled several roles working in Central Asia. Petra has a European Masters in Law & Economics and a Masters in Russian Studies. She is married and proud mother of three children.

	Andrew Nugent Director of Supervision, Policy and Legal The Pensions Authority Andrew Nugent joined the Pensions Authority in 2006 and worked on many policy initiatives during that time. Andrew has also been involved in pension policy matters at EU level including the negotiations on a Portability Directive and IORPs II. Andrew was appointed as a Director in the Pensions Authority in 2024 and has responsibility for Policy, Supervision and Legal. Andrew previously worked in a number of Government Departments.
	Eithne Rafferty Head of Strategy and International Affairs The Pensions Authority Eithne is Head of Strategy and International Affairs at The Pensions Authority. Her role focuses on shaping and implementing the Authority's strategic direction, overseeing European reporting initiatives and managing relationships with key national and international regulatory bodies. A Fellow of Chartered Accountants Ireland, Eithne holds a degree in Business Studies (Finance) from Dublin City University. Prior to joining The Pensions Authority, she spent 17 years with PwC, working in the Asset & Wealth Management and Financial Services practices in Ireland, the United States and Canada. Eithne also worked in insurance supervision and has extensive experience across financial regulation, governance and international financial services.
	Paul Stanley Head of Engagement The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration Paul Stanley is Head of Engagement at Ireland's National Cyber Security Centre. Paul has a technical background in Unified Communications, Identity and Access Management and Information Security. He is a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) and an ISO27001 lead auditor. His current role focuses on the communications and outreach work of the NCSC, particularly in the areas of NIS2 and Board of Management responsibilities and he also leads on the implementation of the EU/NCSC funded Cyber COREs project.
	Joyce Brennan Chief Executive The Irish Association of Pension Funds (IAPF) Joyce is Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Associate of Pension Funds. Where she is responsible for the delivery of IAPF's strategy and services to its 250 member organisations. Joyce has extensive and diverse experience across the pensions sector as a trustee, managing director, actuary and advisor.



Brian Balmforth
Insurance Directorate
Central Bank of Ireland

Brian Balmforth works for the Central Bank's Insurance Directorate, where he leads a team which supports risk identification and assessment, strategy setting, and implementation of regulatory change. Brian has over 20 years' experience across consulting, assurance and finance roles in the financial services sector. He is a Chartered Accountant.



John Gethin
Director of Strategy, IT, Data and Operations
The Pensions Authority

John was appointed as a Director at The Pensions Authority in September 2024. With significant international experience gained in complex and regulated financial services organisations John is a former director and branch manager of KBC Insurance and was instrumental in the setting up Ireland's first digital life insurer. Following the decision by KBC Group to exit the Irish market, John successfully led the orderly wind-down of KBC's insurance activities in Ireland. Prior to this John held a number of senior management positions with Aviva and AIB. John has recently completed an MSc in Sustainable Finance and Innovation with Maynooth University.



Brendan Kennedy
The Pensions Regulator
The Pensions Authority

Brendan Kennedy is Pensions Regulator and chief executive of the Pensions Authority. He has held this position since 2006. Brendan has spent almost his entire career in pensions.

Before joining the Authority in 2004, he held a variety of life insurance and consulting positions. Brendan qualified as an actuary and is a Fellow of the Irish Institute of Pensions Management. He also chairs the Technical Committee of the International Organisation of Pension Supervisors.