

# Teachers' Pension Scheme 2025/07

**Who should read:**

- Members
- Chief Executives
- Directors Of Education
- HR Managers
- Payroll Managers
- Teachers' Unions and Representatives

**Action:** For information

**Subject:** Changes to Membership Eligibility Criteria from 1 August 2025

**Date:** 30 July 2025

**The purpose of this circular is to:**

- **Advise stakeholders of changes to Membership Eligibility Criteria within the Scottish Teachers' Pension Scheme (STPS) from 1 August 2025**
- **Provide guidance and FAQs to assist employers with the implementation of those changes from 1 August 2025**
- **Employers should inform scheme members of the forthcoming changes**

**Scottish Teachers' Pension Scheme – Membership Eligibility Criteria from 1 August 2025****1. Purpose of this guidance**

1.1 In March 2025, SPPA published a [consultation response](#) on [proposed changes to membership criteria](#) in the Scottish Teachers' Pension Scheme (STPS). Following that response, the scheme regulations will be updated to provide clarity on which roles are eligible for membership of the STPS with effect from 1 August 2025.

1.2 It is recognised that there was previously some ambiguity about the eligibility for individuals taking up new or certain roles to retain or have access to membership of the STPS. This resulted in employers having to submit job descriptions to SPPA for consideration before entitlement to membership could be assessed.

1.3 The regulation changes clarify who is entitled to be a member of the scheme. This guidance is provided to help employers assess which scheme an employee should be enrolled in.

1.4 Please note that the changes do not apply retrospectively and are applicable only from 1 August 2025.

## 2. Who is eligible to be a member of the STPS?

2.1 If an individual is employed by an eligible employer in a predominantly teaching role, and they are between the age of 16-75, they are eligible for enrolment into the STPS. The regulations do not define what a teaching role is, but it is generally accepted to involve frontline teaching.

2.2 The STPS is the default pension scheme for all teachers working in local authorities and some independent schools in Scotland. The STPS also extends to lecturers working in further education colleges and post-1992 universities in Scotland and satellite campuses for those Scottish institutions which are based elsewhere.

2.3 As well as those employed in a teaching or lecturing role, the regulations will be updated from 1 August 2025 to specify who else can be a member of the STPS. Details of the applicable roles are noted in the following sections.

## 3. Local Authorities – SNCT Roles

3.1 Within Local Authorities, all roles covered by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) terms and conditions are eligible for membership of the STPS. Those roles include:

- Teacher
- Chartered / Lead / Principal / Depute / Head Teacher
- Music Instructor (excluding self-employed Music Instructors)
- Educational Psychologist
- Senior / Depute Principal / Principal Educational Psychologist
- Education Support Officer
- Quality Improvement Officer
- Quality Improvement Manager

3.2 Anyone who commences employment with a local authority on or after 1 August 2025 in one of the roles noted above should automatically be enrolled into the STPS when they commence that employment. There is no requirement for those employees to have previously been a member of the STPS to be eligible for membership of the STPS.

3.3 The rules are generally unchanged apart from extending eligibility to Music Instructors and Quality Improvement Manager roles which were not previously entitled to membership of the scheme. Arrangements are in place to cover existing members of the scheme who no longer meet the updated eligibility criteria, as well as existing members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) (LGPS(S)) who have become eligible for membership of the STPS as a result of the updated criteria. Further information on how existing employees should be treated can be found in Section 8 relating to Transitional Protection.

3.4 In the event that the roles covered by the SNCT terms and conditions change, or new roles are created, we will assess whether scheme regulations will need to be updated accordingly.

#### 4. Lecturers in Further Education

4.1 There is generally no change to previous rules.

- Lecturers employed in further education colleges and post-1992 universities are eligible for membership of the STPS;
- Support staff who are not employed as lecturers are not eligible for membership of the STPS;
- Senior Managers within further education colleges are not generally eligible for membership of the STPS unless they meet the criteria relating to previous membership of the teachers' pension scheme as noted in Section 6 - Senior Manager Posts.

#### 5. Secondments

5.1 From 1 August 2025, where an existing member of the STPS is seconded to a role connected to education, the control or supervision of teachers or lecturers, or services ancillary to education, they remain eligible to continue STPS membership during that secondment up to a maximum period of four years.

5.2 The length of secondment is determined by an employing authority in relation to business needs and in accordance with the terms and conditions of employment. It is acknowledged that most secondments are for a maximum length of 23 months, however, it is understood that some employers may have a need to engage an employee on secondment for a period lasting longer than this. In these circumstances, the regulations allow members of the STPS to continue membership of the scheme up to a maximum of four years.

5.3 Once the period of secondment ends, if the member returns to their substantive teaching role they will continue membership of the STPS. However, if the member gains substantive employment in the previously seconded role, and that role is not eligible for STPS membership, they should be moved into the appropriate pension scheme for that role from the commencement date of the substantive post.

#### 6. Senior Manager Posts in Local Authorities, Further Education Colleges and Universities

6.1 Individuals in Senior Management roles are not generally eligible for membership of the STPS and roles should not be advertised as having this entitlement. Normally those roles would be entitled to membership of an alternative pension scheme, such as the Local Government Pension Scheme, or an alternative pension scheme provided by the employer.

6.2 However, the changes being introduced from 1 August 2025 mean that once recruitment is concluded, if the successful candidate is an existing member of the STPS, and provided they are promoted to a management post connected to the control and supervision of teachers, they remain eligible to continue membership of the STPS in that management post, subject to the criteria below.

6.3 To retain membership of the scheme, those members promoted to a senior manager position must have previously been a member of the STPS or a corresponding scheme in

England and Wales or Northern Ireland within twelve months of commencing that role. The aim is to provide continuity of pension provision for successful candidates, and to remove barriers to recruitment for employers.

6.4 Entitlement to continuing membership of the STPS should be assessed and confirmed by the employer. Where the employer is not aware of the employee's previous pension provision – such as where the employee is moving from a different employer – the new employer will need to establish whether the member has had previous membership of the STPS, or the corresponding scheme in England, Wales or Northern Ireland within twelve months of the commencement date of the management role.

6.5 In cases where the employer is not aware of the employee's previous pension position, it is the employee's responsibility to provide such evidence to the employer, for example a recent annual benefit statement confirming membership of the STPS or corresponding scheme within the previous twelve months. If the employer is not satisfied that the member has had previous membership of the teachers' pension scheme, that member cannot continue to contribute to the STPS and should be enrolled into the appropriate pension scheme for that role.

6.6 It is not intended that this provision will cover strategic management roles such as Chief Executive of a local authority where responsibility covers multiple areas and is not specifically focussed on education, as this cannot be considered to be connected to the control or supervision of teachers. However, roles such as Principal or Vice Principal of a college would be in scope as they would be considered to be connected to the control and supervision of teachers or lecturers.

## **7. Individuals who move from lecturing to research roles in Higher Education Institutions (HEI)**

7.1 Research roles are not generally eligible for membership of the STPS as they do not involve frontline teaching. Normally those roles would be entitled to membership of an alternative pension scheme provided by the employer.

7.2 However, from 1 August 2025, where an existing member of the STPS moves from a lecturing role to a research role within a Higher Education Institution in Scotland, they remain eligible to continue membership of the STPS, subject to the conditions noted below. The aim is to provide continuity of pension provision for those who move between lecturing and research roles.

7.3 To retain membership of the scheme, those members who move to a research role must have previously been a member of the STPS or corresponding scheme in England and Wales or Northern Ireland within twelve months of commencing that role.

7.4 Entitlement to continuing membership of the STPS should be assessed and confirmed by the employer. Where the employer is not aware of the employee's previous pension provision – such as where the employee is moving from a different employer – the new employer will need to establish whether the member has had previous membership of the STPS, or the corresponding scheme in England, Wales or Northern Ireland within twelve months of the commencement date of the research role.

7.5 In cases where the employer is not aware of the employee's previous pension position, it is the employee's responsibility to provide such evidence to the employer, for example a recent annual benefit statement confirming membership of the STPS or corresponding scheme within the previous twelve months. If the employer is not satisfied that the member has had previous membership of the teachers' pension scheme, that member cannot continue to contribute to the STPS and should be enrolled into the appropriate pension scheme for that role.

## 8. Transitional Arrangements

8.1 To provide consistency of pension provision for existing employees, transitional arrangements are in place to protect those members covered by the SNCT terms and conditions who therefore meet the updated eligibility criteria but are currently members of the LGPS(S). Those employees will be allowed to continue membership of that scheme until they leave that post; those members can, on request, opt to leave their current pension provision and to join the STPS before they leave that post if they wish to do so. Amendments to LGPS(S) regulations are planned to provide for the transitional protection of existing members.

8.2 Likewise, existing members of the STPS whose current post no longer meets the updated eligibility criteria can continue membership of the STPS until they leave their current post. Any subsequent posts should be assessed based on the criteria detailed in this guidance.

## 9. Frequently Asked Questions

**Q1. We have an individual who is currently contributing to STPS but is no longer eligible for the STPS under the new criteria, do I have to move them to another scheme on 1 August 2025?**

**A1.** No. There are transitional arrangements so that members who no longer meet the updated eligibility criteria may remain in their current pension scheme until they leave that role.

**Q2. We are a local authority and have some individuals who are currently in the LGPS(S) but are covered by SNCT terms and conditions. Do they need moved into STPS on 1 August 2025?**

**A2.** No. The transitional arrangements allow those individuals to remain in LGPS(S) until they leave that role.

**Q3. What is changing from 1 August 2025?**

**A3.** The position remains the same in relation to teachers being entitled to membership of the STPS, however, the scheme regulations are being updated to clarify that all staff within local authorities who are covered by SNCT terms and conditions can join the STPS when they commence employment. In addition, changes are being made to cover senior management posts which are connected to the control or supervision of teachers or lecturers, seconded posts which are connected to education, and research posts within higher education, subject to individuals having previous membership of the STPS or a corresponding scheme within twelve months of starting on that role.

**Q4. Why were the changes necessary?**

**A4.** The changes were necessary to clarify who was eligible to be a member of the STPS. Employers often had to contact SPPA and provide job descriptions before eligibility could be confirmed. The updates and guidance aim to allow employers to determine who can be a member of the STPS.

**Q5. I am a local authority employer, which employees should be enrolled into the STPS?**

**A5.** Within local authorities, all individuals covered by SNCT terms and conditions who commence employment on or after 1 August 2025 should be enrolled into the STPS. In addition to those individuals, existing members of the STPS who are seconded to another educational role, or who are promoted to a senior management role may be eligible to continue membership, as detailed in sections 5 and 6.

**Q6. Which employees of further education colleges should be enrolled into the STPS?**

**A6.** Within further education colleges, all lecturers should be enrolled into the STPS. In addition to lecturers, lecturers who are promoted to a senior management role, or who are seconded to other educational roles may also be eligible to continue membership of the STPS providing they meet the criteria detailed in sections 5 and 6.

**Q7. Which employees of a Higher Education Institution should be enrolled into the STPS?**

**A7.** Within post-1992 universities, all lecturers should be enrolled into the STPS. In addition, lecturers who are promoted to a senior management role connected to the control or supervision of lecturers, who move to a research role within that institution, or who are seconded to other educational roles may also be eligible to continue membership of the STPS providing they meet the criteria detailed in sections 5, 6 and 7.

**Q8. Which employees of an independent school should be enrolled into the STPS?**

**A8.** Where an independent school is an accepted school participating in the STPS, all teachers should be enrolled into the STPS. In addition to those teachers, existing members of the STPS who are seconded to another educational role, or who are promoted to a management role connected to the control or supervision of teachers within that independent school may be eligible to continue membership, as detailed in sections 5 and 6.

If, however, the school is a phased withdrawal school, this means that existing members of the STPS can remain in the scheme but no new teaching staff who commence employment with that school after the date of phased withdrawal can join the STPS. This will have been considered by the Board of the independent school when it opted to become a phased withdrawal school. Therefore, any new teaching employees should be enrolled into the school's alternative pension scheme and will not be impacted by the changes to scheme eligibility.

**Q9. I have an employee who is no longer eligible for STPS under the updated criteria. I understand they can remain in the STPS until they leave their current post, however, the employee has asked to move to LGPS(S). Can they move now?**

**A9.** The transitional arrangements in place mean that no-one will be forced to move pension schemes on 1 August 2025. However, if the employee requests to move, they can opt out of their existing pension scheme and join the pension scheme that they are now entitled to join (for example LGPS(S)) if they wish to do so.

**Q10. I am an HR Manager recruiting for a senior manager post which involves the control or supervision of teachers. Should the post be advertised as being eligible for membership of the STPS?**

**A10.** Any job advert for a senior manager post should reflect the guidance noted in section 6.

**Any further questions?**

Please contact [sppapolicy@gov.scot](mailto:sppapolicy@gov.scot) if you have any enquiries about this circular.

**SPPA Policy**  
30 July 2025