



## Working in partnership with your administrator

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Your pensions administrator is a critical party when it comes to achieving your Scheme's objectives. They are the first port of call for your members and are your front line in delivering the right benefits, to the right members at the right time. They provide scheme data to your advisers, and they play a key role in delivering your strategic projects. So, it's important to partner with them in a way that enables successful outcomes and avoids unwanted surprises.

### What is it you need from your administration service?

Can you articulate what is it that your administration service should be delivering? If you asked a fellow Trustee Director, or your Pensions Manager, would they say the same? What about your administrator, do they know what you, and your members expect, and how you would like it delivered?

Our earlier article '[How do you know your administration service is working?](#)' shared the eight things that schemes expect from their administrator. If you haven't done so already, it might be worth considering these eight areas as a Trustee Board, and agreeing some administration objectives that are right for you and your journey plan.

### Working in partnership

This is oversight and collaboration, not micro-management. A good partnership will be based on a shared understanding of what you are trying to achieve together, with clear roles and responsibilities and framework of what to do in the situations that arise along the way, including who to contact and when. Documenting the processes is key, so that all parties have accountability.

Listen to any constraints that your administration team anticipates or is experiencing, and any challenges they might have with the current ways of working. Work together to navigate these.

It can take time to build an effective partnership and to work through any scheme specific projects, requirements, or other challenges collaboratively. If you are short on time, there could be benefits in bringing in some independent oversight and assistance. The value of effective communication and alignment make a material difference to your members' service experience and/ or the cost or readiness to undertake an insurance transaction.

If you're targeting the completion of your GMP projects, but your administrator hasn't been invited to the meeting, they won't be able to comment on whether it's achievable within your timescales, or whether there are more efficient approaches that work with their administration systems. Nor will they know about or have ownership of any actions that arise.

## Keeping the conversation going

Building in regular sessions with your administrator to ensure you're both meeting your requirements can provide you with the confidence that you're on track to meet your scheme's objectives.

How often you schedule meetings will be dependent on a number of things, including scheme size, project work on the go, etc. Talking regularly ensures that there are no nasty surprises when your next Trustee meeting rolls round. And by engaging in a collaborative approach, you're more likely to spot potential risks as they arise and mitigate them effectively.

Your scheme's priorities will change, and what was once a 2026 objective, could very well become a 2024 objective. It's important that your administrators know as soon as practicable when there's a switch in priority order, so that you can both work towards a good outcome.

Ensure that you're inviting the right people to the sessions. If you've outlined clear and defined roles and responsibilities, then this will be more easily achieved.

## Bring balance to the conversation

When talking about improvements to your service, it's also important to acknowledge what is working well. Your administration team are working hard to ensure your members' needs are being met, and a thank you for all the things being done well can go a long way!

Above all, the relationship is a partnership, so whilst you should use these sessions to challenge your administrator and ask probing questions, keep what you want in the future front of mind, so that the conversation can achieve a positive solution, and not get stuck in the past.



**Is it time you revisited your relationship with your pension administrator?** It can be tricky to know where to start, but at its core, an effective partnership is built on a shared vision of what you are trying to achieve, collaboration, effective challenge and good oversight.

If you would like practical help and independent advice please contact Jo or Robyn at:  
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