



Public Accounts Committee

Catherine Little CB
Civil Service Chief Operating Officer and Permanent Secretary
Cabinet Office

By email

13 February 2026

Administration of the Civil Service Pension Scheme: Hardship loans

Dear Permanent Secretary,

As you will be aware, yesterday, 12 February, we heard evidence from Capita on its administration of the Civil Service Pension Scheme, background to the problems you and Capita are currently facing and the Cabinet Office/Capita 'recovery plan'.

We were incredibly concerned to learn of a ballooning number of cases Capita has not yet dealt with—up from 86,000 on their takeover of the Scheme to 120,000 today—and 16,000 email enquiries presently having gone unread. Capita admitting that "the backlog overwhelmed us", sadly confirmed the warning in our October 2025 report, that "there is a clear risk that Capita will not be ready to take over administration of the Scheme as planned on 1 December 2025".

We will continue our scrutiny of these and other issues in the months ahead. As a matter of urgency, however, we seek information from you on your Department's plans for offering 'hardship' loans to those whose pensions are not being paid on time and who are in financial distress.

We request information on: how many of the government Departments and organisations covered by the Civil Service Pension Scheme are set up to grant hardship loans; what the terms of these loans are; how many loans, to date, have been granted; what the average and total value of these loans is; and what the Cabinet Office is doing to assure itself that departments are offering emergency loans and also have access to financial assistance.

Loyal and dedicated former Civil Servants should not be forced into hardship due to failures of government administration, nor should they have to rely on emergency loans in retirement or, worse, be allowed to fall through the cracks of a fragmented Whitehall response.

We require a response to this letter with the above requested information by 20 February.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts