

Scottish Voluntary Sector Pension Scheme (SVSPS) Employer Committee (EC)

As we open applications for new members to join the SVSPS EC from 1 October 2026, the EC Chair, Tim Hencher, shares his experience and advice to applicants.

Hi Tim, and thanks for joining us to talk about your role on the EC.

How did you become a member?

I joined through SCVO's participation in the scheme, as an employer representative. Over time, I became more involved in discussions and was elected Chair by fellow committee members in December 2014.

What does the EC do, and what does your role involve as Chair?

We represent employers' interests in the SVSPS, challenging and engaging with the Trustee on funding, investment strategy, long-term sustainability, administration, and affordability. As Chair, I help coordinate that collective employer voice.

How does your role fit into daily life – how much time do you spend on it and when?

It's a periodic commitment alongside my main role. The Committee usually meets up to twice in a non-valuation year, and up to four times in years when the Scheme undergoes its full actuarial valuation (which takes place every three years). Between meetings there are occasional items to review, but the main commitment is reading the papers in advance. That typically takes a couple of hours, and meetings themselves last around three hours. Meetings can be virtual or held in person in Edinburgh or Leeds, so there is some travel involved, but all expenses are covered by the Scheme.

How has the last year been for the SVSPS EC – what have you been focused on?

Over the past year the Committee has focused on challenging the Trustees on the Scheme Benefits Review, both on costs of the review, cost allocation to SVSPS, and potential outcomes. The Benefits Review is about previous changes that were made to members' benefits and, because of the potential liability consequences, have consumed a lot of the EC's time over the last couple of years – this work will conclude soon.

What's coming up for the SVSPS EC?

The next year is all about preparing and engaging with the Scheme's 2026 valuation. We'll be looking to gain a full understanding of the Scheme's funding and assumptions, used to establish the scheme's liabilities, while ensuring that TPT is aware of employers' affordability to meet any new liabilities that might arise, as well as ongoing scheme expenses.

Finally, what would you say to someone thinking about joining the EC?

My advice would be don't be daunted. The Committee is supported by professional advisers and experienced colleagues who mostly started with little or no prior knowledge, and you'll also receive training. Prior pensions knowledge isn't required – enthusiasm and a willingness to challenge are what matter most. Personally, it's been rewarding to work with peers from different organisations and to deepen my understanding of pensions, investment, and long-term financial stewardship. Professionally, it develops strategic insight and governance experience while supporting voluntary sector organisations that are members of the scheme.