Trustee preparation for pension IHT changes must look beyond administration, says ZEDRA

16 November 2026

[UK – 16 November 2026] – ZEDRA, an award-winning provider of pension and incentive services, today urged pension trustees to look beyond administrative compliance and consider the wider governance implications of the forthcoming changes to Inheritance Tax (IHT) on pensions, ahead of their introduction in April 2027.

Much of the industry focus has understandably centred on the tax implications for members and beneficiaries, alongside the work required by pension administrators to adapt their systems and processes. However, the changes will also create new responsibilities and interactions between pension schemes, administrators and those responsible for administering estates, bringing wider considerations for trustees.

John Starkie, Head of Group Life at ZEDRA, said: “The industry is making good progress in preparing for the forthcoming changes, but there are some important practical considerations that will only become apparent as the new regime takes shape. While much of the focus has understandably been on ensuring pension administrators have the systems and processes in place to meet their new obligations, there is a wider picture for trustees to consider.

"One of the less discussed aspects is the impact on Personal Representatives (PRs) – the individuals, often family members or friends, responsible for administering someone's estate after they die. They will have new responsibilities around reporting and paying IHT on pension benefits, but many may have little awareness of what is required, the timescales involved or how to navigate the process. They will be relying on pension schemes and administrators to provide timely information and support, often at an already difficult time.

"For trustees, this creates an opportunity to take a broader view of scheme readiness. Alongside the administrative changes, consideration needs to be given to governance, appropriate oversight, member communications and how schemes will support those navigating the new requirements. This includes ensuring that existing processes are robust, administration teams are appropriately equipped and members understand the potential implications for their own arrangements.”

Starkie continued: "There is also a valuable opportunity to engage with members ahead of the changes, encouraging them to review beneficiary nominations and wider estate planning arrangements. For many, pensions have traditionally been considered separately from their estate planning, and the new rules may prompt a rethink of arrangements that have been in place for years.

"The challenge for schemes over the next six months, and indeed continuing into the future, is not simply compliance with new legislation; it is ensuring that those who will ultimately be responsible for administering estates are equipped to navigate an increasingly complex process. A proactive, joined-up approach will be important in helping schemes manage the transition effectively and ensuring members and their beneficiaries are properly supported."

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Notes to Editors

For more information, please contact:

KBPR

Kate Boyle

07930 442 883

kate@kbpr.agency

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With more than 1,400 specialists across 100 countries and 30+ offices, ZEDRA combines deep technical knowledge with a genuine relationship-led approach. From global expansion and fund administration to private wealth, pensions and incentives, ZEDRA helps clients manage risk, protect assets and build for the future with confidence.

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