



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPC RESPONSE TO PENSIONS REGULATOR STATEMENT: VIGILANCE IN THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

The Society of Pension Consultants (SPC) welcomes the statement from The Pensions Regulator alerting schemes to the risks posed in the current economic downturn.

SPC has highlighted scheme governance member protection as a key priority for schemes during this economic cycle and, following The Regulator's statement, is offering support to any schemes looking for corporate governance advice in this area.

Duncan Howorth, President, SPC, commented:

"The security of pensions and member benefits is of the highest priority at the present time and SPC supports the Regulator's attention to this area. Our members adopt the high standards of professionalism and practice and look forward to supporting schemes in managing these risks. Past downturns have seen patterns of illegal behaviour and people preying on unsuspecting consumers and we will be working with our members to raise awareness of these risks with all schemes. We invite any schemes looking for guidance in this area to speak with us as the industry at large seeks to address the challenges presented by the economic climate."

Whistleblowing, highlighted by The Regulator in its statement as a critical component in ensuring the safety of schemes, is viewed by SPC as a key duty for those managing schemes and one which will become more prevalent over the course of 2009. We have agreed to work directly with the Pensions Regulator on ways to raise awareness and use of whistle blowing as a defence against these risks.

Howorth continued: "Mismanagement relating to conflicts of interest and, in some cases, criminal behaviour are unfortunate by-products of a recession. Corporate crime and fraud are both expected to increase and we predict that breaches in conduct will increase in 2009 as the credit crunch continues to bite. Trustees, Scheme Managers and, in certain cases advisers, have a vital responsibility to ensure that appropriate cases are brought before The Regulator and, in the interests of members, must be now more watchful than ever."

ENDS



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NOTES FOR EDITORS

SPC is the representative body for a wide range of providers of advice and services to work-based pension schemes and to their sponsors. SPC's Members' profile is a key strength and includes accounting firms, solicitors, insurance companies, investment houses, investment performance measurers, consultants and actuaries, independent trustees and external pension administrators. SPC is the only body to focus on the whole range of pension related services across the private pensions sector and, through such a wide spread of providers of advice and services. We do not represent any particular type of provision or any one interested body or group. Many thousands of individuals and pension funds use the services of one or more of SPC's Members, including the overwhelming majority of the 500 largest UK pension funds. SPC's growing membership collectively employs some 15,000 people providing pension-related advice and services.