Life ILS Conference 2025

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Life Risk News

Life Risk News held its annual Life ILS Conference in London on Tuesday, 20th May 2025, at the offices of EY. The event, which saw attendees participate both in-person and virtually to discuss capital market participation in the longevity and mortality markets.

The 2025 edition of the Life ILS Conference was the event's sixth overall, and it gave me great pleasure to once again be able to gather such a wide range of industry experts to discuss the latest trends and topics that are advancing capital market participation in the life risk markets.

The Life ILS Conference serves as a platform for knowledge exchange, networking, and collaboration. To that end, the agenda was carefully crafted to cover a wide range of topics, delivered via both deep-dive presentations and panel discussions, ensuring that all attendees gained practical insights into the hot topics impacting the life risk markets in 2025.

Additionally, we dedicated significant time to networking, enabling participants to connect with fellow professionals, forge new relationships, and expand their networks. We believe that collaboration is key to fostering innovation and driving growth in our industry, and we are committed to providing our event attendees with an environment in which they can enjoy meaningful interactions.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our sponsors, without whom the Life ILS Conference 2025 would not have been possible:

Venue Host, EY;

Prime Sponsor, Longevity Holdings;

Conference Partners, ArentFox Schiff, Hudson Structured Capital Management, and LifeRoc Capital;

Break Sponsors, Actuarial Risk Management, BroadRiver Asset Management, Corry Capital Advisors, and Wilmington Trust;

Conference Supporters, Club Vita, Kilter Finance, Leadenhall Capital Partners, Mayer Brown, Preston Capital and Willkie, Farr & Gallagher.

I would also like to thank our speakers:

Arik Rashkes, Ben Grainger, Benjamin Kieffer, Daniel Poole, David Griffiths, David Horley, George Belcher, Greg Winterton, Joe Tolen, Kirsty Maclean, Lara Desay, Liam Bodemeaid, Luca Tres, Matt Mejia, Matthew Sheridan, Michael Millette, Professor Richard Faragher, Ryan McTernan, Stuart McDonald, and Tom Spreutels.

I hope you enjoy reading about some of the highlights of the Life ILS Conference 2025.

Chris Wells
Managing Editor
Life Risk News

Keynote Presentation

Tackling Ageing: Hopes, Fears and Black Swans

Professor Richard Faragher
Professor of Biogerontology, Brighton University

Summary

The keynote address for the Life ILS Conference 2025 was given by Professor Richard Faragher, Professor of Biogerontology at Brighton University.

Faragher began his remarks by highlighting observations from studies completed on rodents and horses to illustrate markers of aging that reflect biological processes shared across different species and how that translates to an understanding of the impact of adjusting certain genes on aging.

He then moved on to the biology of aging, highlighting how society labels certain symptoms of aging, such as osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease, as diseases, whereas others, such as wrinkles and greying hair as natural changes, before explaining that it is possible to target the mechanisms of aging directly which would therefore impact the gamut of age-related diseases simultaneously.

Next, Faragher explained the Geroscience hypothesis; how it captures the hallmark mechanism of aging, defined as those that clear three bars: a) the mechanism has to be present in intact bodies; b) it has to be capable of exerting effects; and c) accelerating the process speeds up aging and slowing it down decelerated the process before pivoting to spend the balance of his talk digging into two hallmark mechanisms of aging: Dysregulated nutrient sensing and cell senescence.

Faragher provided insights from studies on mice for the former and showed how significantly senescent cells differ from their growth competent counterparts before looking at some of the studies currently in progress for the latter.

Faragher closed by looking at instances where the work currently being undertaken in the scientific community in terms of aging crosses into the financial, insurance and risk management markets and the potential for developments in geroscience to disrupt current mortality assumptions.

Click to watch video

"The idea that we would go after the fundamental mechanisms of aging rather than simply and exclusively going after mechanisms that we know play a role in individual diseases is now pretty conventional thinking."

"Don't have the impression that we should either target fundamental aging mechanisms or we should target the mechanisms of disease...these approaches are synergistic."

"Senescent cells want to be found by your immune system. When you are 20 and you make a senescent cell, it is clobbered immediately. When you are older, as a result of both increased generation and reduced clearance, senescent calls start to build up."

– Professor Richard Faragher, Professor of Biogerontology, Brighton University

Session 2 Discussion Panel

The State of the Life ILS Market

Panel Chair
Joe Tolen
Cambridge Associates

Ryan McTernan
Fifth Season Investments

David Horley
Schroders Capital

Lara Desay
Hymans Robertson

Summary

The State of the Life ILS Market panel was chaired by Joe Tolen of investment advisory firm Cambridge Associates which saw David Horley of Schroders Capital, Lara Desay of Hymans Robertson and Ryan McTernan of Fifth Season Investments discuss the pressing challenges and opportunities facing the life settlement, life ILS and UK pension risk transfer markets.

In the life settlement market, Ryan McTernan mentioned the impact of the rehabilitation of insurance company PHL Variable and the challenges of investing in a market that contracted in 2024.

In the life ILS space, David Horley observed the increased interest in commission-backed transactions and the slow return of mortality risk transfer transactions to the market.

Lara Desay referred to funded reinsurance and the potential impact on pricing of recent new insurer entrants to the UK's pension risk transfer market and a potential softening of demand from pensions schemes if the upcoming Pensions Bill makes running on a pension scheme more attractive.

The quartet moved on to discussing the impact of regulations on their respective markets; how macroeconomic factors such as inflation and interest rates have on their play pits; innovations in each of the markets the panel operates in and the potential impacts of medical advances and disease treatments on the life settlement, life ILS and pension risk transfer markets.

An audience Q&A concluded the session.

Click to watch video of panel

"We continue to find interesting opportunities in private credit and direct lending but increasingly see demand for diversifying those strategies which is why we're looking at other alternative credit opportunities."
– Joe Tolen, Cambridge Associates

"Five to ten years ago, you would go to a bank, have a LTV calculation, agree on the V and away you go. We're finding more disagreement on the V...our interpretation of the value of a portfolio might be very different than the borrowers' interpretation of the value so we try and find ways to structure around that."
– Ryan McTernan, Fifth Season Investments

"We're expecting a new pensions bill in the next month or so which could impact the appetite for pension schemes to move into the insurance space."
– Lara Desay, Hymans Robertson

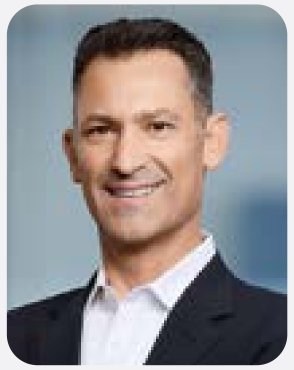
Session 3 Discussion Panel

Supply and Demand Dynamics

Panel Chair
Greg Winterton
Life Risk News

Matt Mejia
Preston Capital

Tom Spreutels
Leadenhall Capital Partners



Arik Rashkes
Solomon Partners

Summary

Matt Mejia of Preston Capital began the *Supply and Demand Dynamics* session with a presentation covering the life settlement market.

Mejia covered a range of topics and trends within the space, including the total addressable market and the tailwinds to growing that; the benefits of the life settlement asset class and its applicability to what investors want in a private credit allocation; how the return stream in life settlements looks and the perceived risks that are top of mind for investors; and current market conditions and the outlook for the asset class through the rest of 2025.

Next up was Tom Spreutels of Leadenhall Capital who began looking at the history of the life ILS market, noting its transition from a market where deal activity was more public to one that is now more private.

He continued by explaining the impact of regulations on the types of firms that have been allocating capital to the space, and how life ILS asset managers need to reposition themselves to focus more on solutions for insurance companies than pension funds.

The final presentation was given by Arik Rashkes of Solomon Partners. Rashkes looked at the evolution of the confluence between life insurance companies and alternative assets, including the drivers of change and what the composition of US life insurer asset management portfolios looks like now.

Rashkes then moved on to examining the structural trends in the US life insurance market and how that aligns with the 'new normal' of insurer asset portfolios and then ended his presentation by looking at what lies ahead, including the impact of AI and certain product innovations.

After the presentations, the session concluded with a panel-style Q&A where Mejia, Spreutels and Rashkes offered additional insights into the nuances of their respective markets.

Click to watch video of panel

"We have to produce returns to maintain interest. That is going to be the driving force – giving investors the returns they expect, or exceeding those returns."
– Matt Mejia, Preston Capital

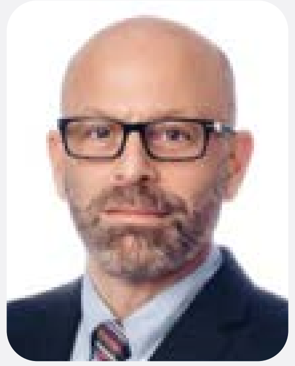
"The opportunities in the space bring features that we can structure into assets that meet the requirements of an alternative credit investor...the skillset and expertise of life ILS managers continues to be relevant even as the investment universe evolves."
– Tom Spreutels, Leadenhall Capital Partners

"The role of private equity in the insurance ecosystem is here to stay, I think that it's growing, and I think it's a win-win for everyone. I think the retires are going to benefit, the carriers are going to benefit, and investors are going to benefit."
– Arik Rashkes, Solomon Partners

Session 4 Discussion Panel

The Outlook for Growth in the Life (Re)Insurance Sidecar Market

Panel Chair
Kirsty Maclean
Willkie Farr & Gallagher



Michael Milette
Hudson Structured Capital Management

David Griffiths
Willkie Farr & Gallagher

Summary

The Outlook for Growth in the Life (Re)Insurance Sidecar Market session featured Michael Milette of Hudson Structured Capital Management, David Griffiths of Willkie, Farr & Gallagher and his colleague, Kirsty Maclean, who chaired the discussion.

The session began with Milette explaining the different types of insurance-linked transactions before moving into the nuances of the asset-intensive life reinsurance space; he then discussed the evolution of the intersection of the life insurance, pension and alternative investment industries, and the current competitive landscape.

The panel then moved on to discussing structural considerations for life reinsurance sidecars and the rules of the road with regards to governance and alignment of interest in reinsurance sidecars to ensure the investor has a voice and influence, before wrapping with questions from the audience.

An audience Q&A concluded the session.

Click to watch video of panel

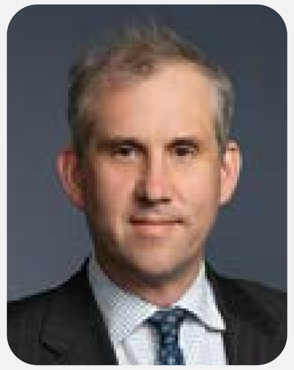
"I do think it [asset intensive life reinsurance] has been slower to emerge in Europe and I also think we have regulatory headwinds in the UK."
– Kirsty Maclean, Willkie, Farr & Gallagher

"Our view is that asset intensive life insurance is really a $25trn retirement savings market where the best manufacturers of retirement liabilities and the best manufacturers of private assets are increasingly operating in the same companies."
– Michael Milette, Hudson Structured Capital Management

"If an investor has a lot of faith in a cedant, then perhaps it agrees underwriting guidelines and it is happy from that point on to be a passive investor. Alternatively, an investor could assess everything in a block right at the start and that block ends up being the only thing ceded to the sidecar, or something in the middle. Deciding between the three to some extent is based on the trust an investor has based on the ability it thinks the cedant has."
– David Griffiths, Willkie, Farr & Gallagher

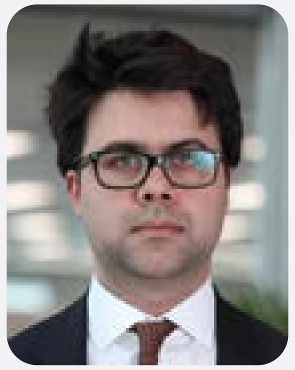
Session 5
Discussion Panel

Innovation in Longevity Risk



Panel Chair
George Belcher
Mayer Brown

Luca Tres
Guy Carpenter



Ben Grainger
EY

Benjamin Kieffer
Goldman Sachs

Summary

The *Innovation in Longevity Risk* panel saw George Belcher from Mayer Brown chair a discussion with Benjamin Kieffer of Goldman Sachs, Ben Grainger of EY and Luca Tres of Guy Carpenter.

The quartet began by looking at the playing field in longevity risk; the participants, the type of products being derisked, and regional trends in transaction activity.

Longevity transaction structuring came up next, emphasising the difficulty insurers have in entering into non-traditional risk transfer transactions.

Assets – the flip side of the longevity risk coin – then entered the conversation as the panellists dug into what they are seeing here, with a focus on the matching adjustment and portfolio optimisation techniques.

The discussion concluded with a look at what changes and structures would be required in order to kick-start mass capital-market participation in longevity risk; the goal being the development of fungible, tradable financial instruments that ultimately lead to the creation of a liquid market for longevity risk.

An audience Q&A concluded the session.

Click to watch video of panel

"Key here will be the ability of a capital markets investor to 'put' its participation back to the cedant/ risk seller (i.e., where there is no willing purchaser in the market). Relatedly the industry should consider, together with regulators and market bodies, how to lessen the regulatory impact of such a put from the cedant/ risk seller's perspective. Ideas might include a 'dampener', grace period or other mechanism to delay the regulatory impact until market conditions have changed and new investors attracted."
– George Belcher, Mayer Brown

"The fundamental picture remains the same. In the long term, we need capital market investors to step up and take longevity risk. At the moment, however, the lions share of longevity de-risking goes to the insurers and reinsurers."
– Luca Tres, Guy Carpenter

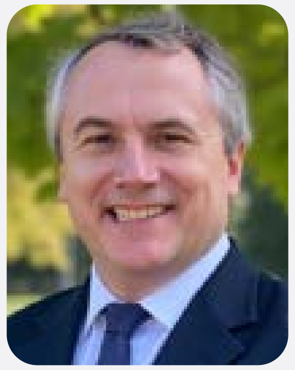
"The higher rates environment has resulted in fewer high spread investment opportunities for UK insurers and increased competition from total return investors. This in turn has resulted in many insurers moving away from 'high-return high-capital' to 'lower-margin lower-risk' strategies. The macro impact is an increase in competition for assets that insurers can allocate to, especially as they receive increasingly large volumes of bulk purchase annuity premiums."
– Ben Grainger, EY

"You have to be much smarter on the asset side when you transact blocks with longevity risk...we do see life insurance consolidators being much more sophisticated in that regard because credit spreads are much tighter, the capital charge for assets is tending to increase and getting the benefits of Scenario-Based Approach to reserving is increasingly difficult."
– Benjamin Kieffer, Goldman Sachs

Session 6
Discussion Panel

Understanding Mortality






Panel Chair
Stuart McDonald
Lane, Clark & Peacock

Daniel Poole
Club Vita

Liam Bodemeaid
Actuarial Risk Management

Matthew Sheridan
Health Data Analytics Institute

Summary

The *Understanding Mortality* session featured three presentations from Daniel Poole of Club Vita, Liam Bodemeaid of Actuarial Risk Management and Matthew Sheridan of Health Data Analytics Institute.

Poole's presentation began the session, examining what drives longevity and the data available that supports each of these features before moving onto a deep dive into how postal / zip codes can provide a range of insights into mortality trends in a specific postal area.

Poole then moved on to discuss how postal / zip code data can provide insights for insurance actuaries and pension scheme trustees with regards to pricing for pension risk transfer deals, before finishing by looking at the applicability of postal area data for the life settlement market.

Bodemeaid went next, with a deep dive into the impact of the wealth factor on longevity risk in the life settlement market. He began by separating wealth into cohorts, showing the impact of increasing wealth on life expectancy.

He then moved on to explaining what needs to be considered when underwriting the wealthy insured population, including situations where wealth does or does not translate to health, finishing by emphasising the importance of wealth modelling on longevity risk in the life settlement market.

Sheridan began his presentation by looking at the disproportionate nature of healthcare spending on those receiving complex care and advanced illness and how predictive models can help health systems to understand more about what is driving readmission and follow up times.

He then moved onto discussing the applicability of health data to the life settlements market, including the use of digital twinning to construct an accurate life expectancy. Sheridan concluded by explaining the impact of predictive modelling on socio-economic signals, health providers and how it can solve for counter-intuitive effects in health system impacts outcomes.

The presenters were then joined by Stuart McDonald of Lane, Clark and Peacock for a Q&A session which covered conflicts in the relevance of socio-economic data, best practices when combining different data sets for mortality modelling, the extent to which existing analysis techniques can help predict future changes in mortality, the potential impact of anti-obesity medicines, the nuances of the shape of the tail of extreme wealth as it pertains to health and life expectancy and the scope for existing approaches to lead to incorrect life expectancy forecasts.

Click to watch video of panel

"The history of estimating life expectancy is 200 years of underestimating longevity gains, followed by about 15 years of overestimating them...our models are never going to get this perfectly right as we know 'all models are wrong, but some are useful'."
– Stuart McDonald, Lane, Clark & Peacock

"In the PRT market, by far the most informative factors we have got are postcode and affluence measures...we find these can outperform information about historical health status."
– Daniel Poole, Club Vita

"Generally, wealth translates to time, especially at the ultra-high net worth levels, and the health advantages there are completely unmatched."
– Liam Bodemeaid, Actuarial Risk Management

"Digital twinning allows you to pluck people from the population who look very much like the people you are interested in, and much more than demographics – the reasons they were in hospital, when did they get discharged...you're building an A-to-E but you're building your E out of actual people."
– Matthew Sheridan, Health Data Analytics Institute

Secondary Life Markets Conference 2025

MONDAY
15TH SEPTEMBER 2025
ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

ELSA

About ELSA

The European Life Settlement Association (ELSA) was founded in 2009 to set standards for the European life settlement industry. ELSA represents investors, service providers and intermediaries in the longevity and mortality markets who are looking to promote best practice by providing accurate, authoritative information to institutional investors, regulatory bodies and the media.

ELSA's focus is on the promotion of transparency and the positive development of the life industry's reputation amongst all stakeholders. We endeavour to encourage fair competition and investor protection within the life market.

Our efforts are organised around four main pillars:

- Encouraging best practice;
- Educating industry participants, the public, regulators and the media;
- Developing new and innovative longevity- based research;
- Leading the promotion of life markets amongst investors.

ELSA members must comply with the Association's Code of Practice, a comprehensive framework that ensures the highest professional and ethical standards within the industry and protection of the interests of investors in the asset class. Membership is open to capital providers, service providers and intermediaries in the longevity and mortality markets.

The Code of Practice
ELSA's Code of Practice has established common standards of best practice within the life settlement industry and protect the interests of investors in the asset class.

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ELSA