



Pensions

Finance Directors,
Payroll Managers and Pension
Officers, all GP Practices and
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Dear Colleague,

Maintenance of NHS Pension Scheme member records – Data Cleanse Project Update

I am writing further to my previous letter dated May 2008 to provide you with an update on the progress that has been made within the Data Governance Project, to remind you why the project has been set up and explain why your support is crucial to its success.

A significant amount of work has already taken place to reduce the amount of outstanding data errors and we would like to pass on our thanks to those employers who have been working with us to bring their records up to date. This exercise will only be a success if employers and NHS Pensions jointly own it.

So far we have:

- Resolved nearly 2 million data errors to reduce the outstanding total to 282,000 in February 2009. We have achieved this by:
 - Working collaboratively with employers and the ESR Project;
 - Employing a dedicated team of administrators to help clear errors; and
 - Putting new automated checking processes in place.
- Increased the number of records we have updated.
- Developed and released a “Non Updated Records” Tool on Pensions Online to highlight to employers any updating that is required.
- Enhanced system processing to prevent the most common errors from being created in the future.
- Cleansed errors for the 55+, 50-54, 45-49 and under 30 age groups.

- Issued NHS Pensions named contacts to most employers (with the remainder being issued soon).
- Processed ESR data more regularly and made progress to reduce errors created through ESR following year-end.

One of the key priorities of the project is to work with employers to improve the current status of the records that require updating. We still have a long way to go to get all pension records updated (see table below), but I am sure we can all improve these percentages over the coming months.

It is vitally important that each member's record is updated to at least 31 March 2008 (31 March 2007 for GPs).

Year ending	* Open emps 26 Jan 2009	Updated 26 Jan 2009	Not updated 26 Jan 2009	% updated 26 Jan 2009
2008	1,358,276	933,996	424,280	68.76
2007	1,149,004	951,549	197,455	82.82
2006	1,012,721	887,293	125,428	87.61
2005	885,395	791,528	93,867	89.40
2004	761,487	687,867	73,620	90.33
2003	649,694	591,036	58,658	90.97
2002	551,844	506,170	45,674	91.72

• This column relates to the number of current open employments. Some scheme members may have more than one open employment if they are part time.

*Please note the above figures do not take into account updates received that are in error.

I would also like to draw your attention to the following paragraph that can be found on Page 18 (item 56) of the Department of Health 2009/2010 Operating Framework which is available on their website.

“Of particular importance to staff is the NHS pension. With the Pensions Choice Exercise due to begin in July 2009, NHS organisations need to ensure that the data they provide to the Business Services Agency (BSA) Pensions Unit is accurate and up to date to enable eligible staff to be offered the option to remain on the 1995 NHS Pension Scheme or to convert to the 2008 scheme.”

The success of the Choice exercise will largely depend on the accuracy of the employment data that we hold for members. Any errors or omissions are likely to generate queries and issues from members, for both employers and NHS Pensions to resolve.

In our previous letter we asked you to nominate an Action Manager who NHS Pensions could work with to agree plans to clear the data issues for each organisation and to date we have received over 3000 replies. There are still a number of employers who have yet to respond to this request.

If you have not yet contacted us with details of your Action Manager please do so as soon as possible by emailing datacleanse@pensionsagency.nhs.uk. In the absence of a named Action Manager, we will continue to use the Pensions contact already held on our records to avoid any delay in the data cleansing required.

For those employers who use the ESR system we are carrying out an ESR Reconciliation exercise to ensure that the data we hold within our database matches the data held within the ESR system for each employer. Dedicated resources are assigned to this element of the project. This should reduce the amount of errors produced from the mismatch of records and should go some way to improving the error rate from 43% (last year) to a more manageable level.

It is extremely important that you work with the NHS Pensions Data Cleanse Team on this project. Without your involvement we have little chance of improving the quality of the data retained for pensions estimates and awards. It is in all our interests that pensions data is accurate and up to date so that we can provide a first class service to our members.

Enquiries

If you have any enquiries about the content of this letter, or if you would like more information please contact us at datacleanse@pensionsagency.nhs.uk

I would be grateful if you could ensure a copy of this letter is passed to your respective Finance Director or Pension Officer where appropriate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ken Cunningham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'K' and 'C'.

Ken Cunningham
Interim Managing Director