# Employers Newsletter Articles – March 2019

## 1: The last 12 months



Over the last 12 months we have engaged with employers more than ever before and have worked hard to improve the service you receive

Hosted **15** stakeholder engagement events across the country throughout 2018

Attended **2** national exhibitions

Attended over **32** regional pension group meetings across the country

Participants at our events asked **1,715** questions

Over **800** practice managers attended our GP Practice stakeholder events during 2018

Delivered **bespoke training sessions** to our different employer groups

**Shared our performance** in monthly newsletters

Managed the implementation of the **new medical services contract**

**Managed** both the Stakeholder and Employer **email accounts**

Introduced **Employer resources** section on the website

Implemented **new** end of year process for Non POL employers **reducing errors** from approx. **3500** to **137** for year end 2018

## 2: Sharing Our Performance:

We are continuing to make progress in the timeliness of first pension payments with a total of 3731 applications paid in February so far (25 February) 96.05% were paid either early or on time. The total applications on hand remain stable despite it being our peak processing period.

We are now able to process applications for retirements after 8 April 2019 as we have received the Pensions Increase factors from the Government Actuaries Department for the forthcoming year.

No issues are being reported by our Contact Centre, all four pension lines are within normal SLA.

**First pension processing - Next steps**.

Following the successful completion of the Recovery Plan at the end of November 2018, a new project has commenced in our aim to further improve the service we provide to our customers, by increasing the number of first awards into payment by someone's retirement date.

As part of the recovery plan phase, significant progress has already been made in our efforts to pay a members lump sum for their retirement date, with a steady increase month on month. Furthermore, we have processed 89.43% for the retirement date.

Even though we are continuing to improve, we still find that customers are contacting us throughout their retirement journey as it can sometimes be a while from the submission of their application to their retirement date. We call this "failure demand" because someone has contacted us to find out what is happening with their claim.

In order to improve this, we are looking at the order in which we process applications so that individuals find out much sooner in the process and we have better managed expectations which should reduce their need to contact us as they are a) aware we have received their application and b) they know when their benefits will be paid, in most cases soon after receipt.

There are a number of strands to the project including:

- Review of any training requirements for administrators
- Creation of supporting materials such as process and training guides
- Process Improvement review
- Continue the digital development of the AW8P
- Keeping you informed of progress
- Workflow Management – to ensure any changes are reflected in our workforce management tool that is used to allocate the work in priority order to administrators.

We will provide regular updates as part of our monthly performance update so you can see what progress is being made and we may even get some of you involved as we push these improvements forward.

**Revised Pensions (AW171) – Next steps**

As we prepare for the system functionality to be delivered, we have formally launched a business readiness project to closely track a number of different Workstreams:

We have a number of strands to the project:
- Compendia development requirements
- Business process review and continuous Improvement
- Review of any training requirements/materials for administrators.
- Keeping you informed
- Initial triage and data readiness for the work on hand.
- Workflow management

Part of the analysis will be to look at the different reasons for a revised award to put them together into specific "pots". This creates efficiencies as work in each pot will be similar and as such administrators become quicker in dealing with them. Once we have completed the analysis we will be able to share more details in terms of volumes on hand etc.

We are continuing to track the Compendia development. This is a big change and the timescales to deliver are much clearer now. That said; full delivery is more likely to fall during Quarter 2 2019. However, between now and then we will slowly start to process more cases and particular urgent cases on demand.

Again, we will provide regular updates as part of our monthly performance summary so you can see what progress is being made.

# 3: Pensions Online (POL) downtime

POL is scheduled to be down during March as follows:

7pm Friday 1 March 2019 - 7am Monday 4 March 2019

If we do need to bring POL down at short notice for urgent maintenance we will advise you as much as we can in advance via the POL homepage.

# 4: Pensions Online (POL) & Electronic Staff Record (ESR) employers

**Data error clearance**

As we approach 31 March 2019, we would like to remind employers that clearing errors allocated to you in Pensions Online error handling, before the submission of your year-end data, will improve your year-end success rate and prevent further errors.

There are currently 78,000 errors allocated to employers where a joiner, annual update or leaver form has not processed.  These will all create an error at year end or show as a non-updated

record if the leaver form has not processed.  Clearing your errors now will save additional work following processing of year end data.

We continue to work on the 48,500 joiner, annual update and leaver errors allocated to us.  Can we please remind employers that you only need to email or send an error handling comment to the Data Management Team if you can provide additional information to enable us to clear the error.

**ESR employers**
**Year-end reports and heat maps**

We aim to provide all ESR employers with their year-end report and heat map by the end of June.

Year end 2018 saw more than 356 organisations reach a pass rate of 96% or higher with 13 of our largest organisations achieving 99% or more.  This is an excellent achievement and a reflection of the effort made by these organisations to manage their data effectively.

We look forward to the results this year and, hopefully, seeing even more organisations reach this level of success.


# 5:  Contributions Rates

Employee and Employer Contribution Rates from 1 April 2019.

Business Services Authority (BSA) shall provide an update in March 2019.


# 6: Greenbury update

The Greenbury window for submission has been available since Monday the 7 of January 2019, to date we have received 2519 requests and have cleared 1935 of them.   The disclosure window is open until Thursday 28 February 2019 to enable us to provide you with the necessary disclosure information by 1 April 2019.

To date we have just over 100 EA's who have not submitted any figures.  Please note, we can't guarantee that requests or queries received after 28 February 2019 will be dealt with by 1 April 2019.

For those employer's where the submissions have been returned and are clear we advise that you check this data and submit any questions via the "Query" button as soon as possible.

This year's exercise has been administered differently in as much as each employer has a dedicated handler so any questions or queries will be dealt with by your own allocated representative; we listened to last year's feedback on this point and hope that you have seen an improved service.

For full clarification on any Pensions Online (POL) Guidance for Greenbury please refer to our website at: http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Pensions

# 7: Change of Contributions and Pay – Form SM8

**For Officers and Practice Staff Only**

When a member works part time in either an hourly or sessional contract and the annual update or termination details show actual part time hours or sessions worked that are in excess of whole time for the period, we reduce the annual hours/sessions figure to the maximum hours/sessions that can be worked for the period. A form SM8 is sent to you advising of this figure and requesting that you either:

Or

- Agree the figure and amend your records

- Advise of the correct figure to be shown, which must be below the figure notified to you.

An example is where the annual update for year ending 2018 showed that the member worked a total of 1399 hours for the period 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018 (121 days). The member's standard hours for this employment are 37.5; therefore the maximum number of hours that can be worked during this period is 648 hours, calculated as follows:

$$121/7 \times 37.5 = 648 \text{ hours}$$

If the member has worked any hours that were paid at overtime rate then these are not pensionable and you should amend the hours, if relevant. You will need to reduce both the employees and employers contributions and pay figures to exclude contributions/pay taken on the non-pensionable hours using form SD55E.

**For General Practitioners (GPs) please find further information on the practitioner page within the member hub.**

# 8: GOV.UK Verify Identity Providers

From 1 March 2019, **CitizenSafe** and **Royal Mail** will cease to be Identity Providers for GOV.UK Verify.  Members who use these companies to access Total Reward Statements and other government services through Verify will need to create a new identity account with another provider.

This can be done whenever they use one of the government services that use GOV.UK Verify. It should take between 5 and 15 minutes to create a new account.

The following companies will continue to work with GOV.UK Verify as Identity Providers:

- Barclays
- Digidentity
- Experian
- Post Office
- Secure identity

# 9: Re-employed Pensioners

We are looking to improve the way we collect annual earnings for re-employed pensioners. We currently issue an annual earnings certificate form (RE116), by post, each April for each re-employed pensioner. In order to make sending and receiving forms more efficient and reduce the time required to complete each form, we are looking to issue some forms electronically this year. The proposed change is that we will issue you with a spreadsheet, containing all pensioners re-employed within your organisation, which we will ask you to complete, with the same information that we collect on the RE116, and email the completed spreadsheets back to us.
What does this mean for me?

If you have re-employed pensioners working in your organisation we will endeavour to email you a spreadsheet requesting the same information that you currently complete on the earnings certificate form (RE116) each April. If we are unable to send you a spreadsheet we will continue to issue paper earnings certificates to you via mail.

Earnings certificates will be issued between 1 April 2019 and 12 April 2019.

Full instructions on how to complete and return the spreadsheet will be issued with the spreadsheet and all we ask is that you endeavour to complete the spreadsheet in the same time frame as the paper annual earnings certificates.


# 10: Escalation Process

An important aspect of The Stakeholder Engagement Team's work involves a managed escalation and recovery process of unpaid NHS Pension contributions. Unpaid payments include employee and employer contributions as well as any related AVC / ERRBO payments that have not been paid over by employers to us on a monthly basis. The non-payment of contributions constitutes a breach of Scheme Regulations as there is a legal obligation for contributions to be received by us on time. The process of recovering unpaid contributions was introduced when the team was formed and since these activities commenced, the team has recovered over **£4.24 million**.

Using an agreed, bespoke escalation process which includes writing to active NHS Pension members, the team has dealt with over 200 cases and has written to over 1200 members of the Scheme. Through member contact, the team has been able to deliver first class levels of customer service through reviewing member records and providing members with assurance and support as required.  In a recent case, over 100 active members of the Scheme were contacted to advise of the issues with their employer, members then addressed the issues directly with their employer and in conjunction with recovery actions the team undertook, the immediate recovery of £110,000 was made possible.

Through recovery activities, a significant number of incorrect or non-updated pension records have been identified, addressed with employers and corrected, which has added extra value to the overall escalation process.

The Stakeholder Engagement Team is committed to ensuring public funds are appropriated correctly and will vociferously continue to approach employers who do not maintain regular or

accurate contribution payments. Further updates on this important area of work will be provided in future Newsletters.

## 11: Stakeholder & Engagement Team

**GP Practice Stakeholder Events 2019/20**

The next round of GP events will be starting in April 2019.

April 2019 – Birmingham

May 2019 – Leeds

May 2019 – Exeter

June 2019 – Brighton

If you would be interested in attending one of these events and have not yet received your invitation through Eventbrite, please contact us at nhsbsa.pensionsevents@nhs.net and a member of the team can assist.

All slides from our previous stakeholder events can be located under Employer Resources on our website.

Further locations and dates will be added throughout the year. All details will be shared in our upcoming newsletters**.**

## 12: Non-POL Employers Annual Update events

During February our Stakeholder Engagement team have been holding events for non-POL employers to assist them with the process of submitting their 2018/19 annual update.



Events were held in both Leeds and London and were well received with 80 employers attending which is approximately one fifth of non-Pension Online (POL) employers. The day involved:

- Understanding why we adopted a new annual update process
- Lessons learned during 2017/18 and trialling the new process

- Frequent errors and how to avoid them so that as many members as possible receive Annual Benefit Statements
- Walkthrough the new spreadsheet and validations for 2018/19 updates
- Question and answer session

Both days were a great success with positive feedback received and some good suggestions for future training being provided by the attendees.

The team are also providing further training via a teleconference; invites for this have already been sent to our non-POL employers via Eventbrite, however if you would like to attend and have not received an invite please email the Stakeholder Engagement team directly.

nhsbsa.stakeholderengagement@nhs.net


# 13: 2018/19 Non Pensions Online (POL) Annual Update (Organisations without access to Pensions Online)

Following the success of the 2017/18 non POL update process, we have made a few improvements and are now well underway in rolling out the process for 2018/19 to non POL employers. This has involved;

- Face to face training for 125 pension administrators who attended our events in Leeds and London.
- A question and answer document will shortly be put in the resources section of the Employer Hub which will include questions asked at the events.


We have only received a small amount of feedback to date about our events however we would encourage all employers who attended to log into www.sli.do under #9621 and please share your feedback to allow us to improve our events going forwards.

Feedback that we have received from the events demonstrates that delegates now feel more confident after the event in administrating the update moving from 5.8/10 to 8.1/10.

During March we will now be focusing on further supporting employers which will include;

- Telephone conferences which will cascade key information for the 2018/19 update for employers who were unable to attend the face to face events.

- A comprehensive guide for employers to be used as a desk aide when completing the end of year return which will be available in the resources section of the employer's hub.

- Completion of the annual update spreadsheets and sending to the main EA contact at each non POL organisation for completion between 1 April 2019 and 31 May 2019


Further updates will be sent by both the employer newsletter and email cascades to non POL organisations. If you have not received these please contact the Stakeholder Team and we will be able to advice why.

## 14: Ask Us Articles

| Pensions Employer | | Pensions Member | | TRS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| What should I do if I have paid the incorrect amount of contributions to NHS Pensions? | 223 | Where can I find my SD number? | 2747 | How can I access my Total Reward Statement? | 5718 |
| What is my EA code? | 197 | How can I get an estimate of my NHS pension benefits? | 1723 | How is my 1995 Section pension revalued each year on my Total Reward Statement/Annual Benefit Statement? | 287 |
| How can I calculate the notional whole time salary for a part time staff member? | 161 | How do I apply for my NHS Pension? | 1523 | Why don't I have a pension estimate on my Total Reward Statement? | 247 |
| Do I need to submit the SD55 and SD55T when a member is retiring? | 143 | What are the reduction factors for Actuarially Reduced Early Retirement in the 1995 section? | 1267 | How often is my Total Reward Statement/Annual Benefit Statement updated? | 213 |
| When would it be necessary for me to post a retirement benefit claim form (AW8) to NHS Pensions? | 142 | What is a deferred benefits claim form (AW8P) and when should it be completed? | 1210 | What is a Total Reward Statement? | 199 |
| How does an employer pay their pension contributions to NHS Pensions? | 116 | Can I return to NHS work after retiring from the 1995 section of the Scheme? | 980 | Why can I no longer access my Total Reward Statement via Government Gateway? | 189 |
| How can I apply for Mental Health Officer (MHO) status? | 95 | How will my NHS Pension be paid? | 895 | What is GOV.UK Verify? | 172 |
| Ethnicity codes | 94 | What is an AW8 application form and when is it completed? | 585 | What should I do if I have forgotten my GOV.UK Verify log in details? | 159 |

| How should I submit an AW8 application form if I do not have access to Pensions Online (POL)? | 90 | What is Mental Health Officer status and who is entitled to it? | 577 | What is a Annual Benefit Statement (ABS)? | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 136 |
| What are final pay controls? | 86 | How is abatement calculated if I retire from the 1995 section of the scheme? | 570 | I have tried to access my TRS/ABS but my address is incorrect, how long will it take to update? | |
| | | | | | 134 |