

NHS Pensions Update – August 2020

NHS Pensions coronavirus (COVID-19) response

For the latest information on guidance and easements we have introduced to help support employers at this time, please visit our Coronavirus (COVID-19) contingency planning page on the Employer Hub where we have included lots of useful information and links to other relevant areas of the website.

We thank you for understanding and for your continued efforts in delivering vital healthcare services at this critical time.

Sharing our performance

Table 1- Total Transactions

Item	Volume
Total Transactions	15,935
First Retirements	5,002
Revised Retirements	2,850
Estimates	2,582
Re-Employment Cases	759
Transfers In	369
Transfers Out	588
5 Year-Rejoiners	61
Pensions on Divorce	45
Life Assurance Lump Sums	245
Partner Pensions	758
Child Allowance	109
Refunds	2,567

Table 2 - First Retirements and Pensioners

Item	Volume
Applications Processed	5,002
On Time	99.78%
Amount paid in Lump Sums	£189,837,971.56
Amount of Pension Paid	£794,785,316.58
No. Pensioners in Payment	991,470

Table 3 - Employer Helpline statistics

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	2,091
Average Handling Time (s)	450
Average Speed of Answer (s)	376

Table 4 - Member Helpline statistics

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	25,319
Average Handling Time (s)	595
Average Speed of Answer (s)	367

TRS / Annual Benefits Statements

Refreshed TRS/ Annual Benefits Statement will be made available by the end of August 2020 and the mid-year refresh will be available in December 2020.

The employer contributions increased with effect from 1 April 2019 from 14.38% to 20.68%. You were informed that the increase was centrally funded and so not paid directly by you. As a result of this arrangement the increased payments will not be included in any of the total employer annual contribution figures on member TRS/Annual benefit statement this year. However, the value of employer contributions has no impact on the standard benefits as quoted within member statements. This includes include those of you that have been invoiced and paid a percentage of the increase.

We are notifying members via the member newsletter and on our website.

The NHS and Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme 2020

Information on the government's life assurance scheme for eligible frontline health and social care workers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic can be found on the NHSBSA website via www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/coronavirus-life-assurance-2020

Take a look today and make sure you understand your responsibilities as an employer in helping to communicate the scheme to staff, support bereaved families to make a claim and oversee their claims process.

HM Treasury Public Service Pensions Schemes Consultation (McCloud)

Following the Court of Appeal ruling that the 2015 government reforms to public service pension schemes were discriminatory to younger members, HM Treasury has published its consultation setting out options for how the government intend to fix this.

More information on the consultation is available on the [NHSBSA Employer Hub](#) and we have emailed this information directly to Employers.

A copy of the full consultation document can be found via [GOV.UK](#)

The consultation ends on Sunday 11 October 2020. Responses to the consultation can be submitted by email to: PensionsRemedyProjectConsultation@hmtreasury.gov.uk

NHS Employers is also asking Employers to help inform their response to the consultation by submitting your views via their [online response form](#) by 31 August 2020.

Extension of Voluntary Scheme Pays deadline 2018 / 2019

The NHS Business Services Authority is sympathetic to the situation that NHS staff currently find themselves in during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and is keen to support members of the NHS Pension Scheme (England and Wales) who are front line healthcare workers.

Following careful consideration, we extended the voluntary scheme pays deadline for 2018/19 by three months until 31 October 2020. We have reviewed this extension again and extended the 2018/19 deadline until 31 March 2021.

You can read more information via the [Annual Allowance page](#) of our website.

Pensions Online Error Handling

Last month we advised that from 1 August 2020, NHS Pensions will no longer deal with comments submitted through Pensions Online (POL) error handling.

Where you can provide relevant information for resolving an error, you should now email nhsbsa.nwdatamanagement@nhs.net

Where an error is urgent as payment of benefits is due, please continue to email nhsbsa.datamanagement@nhs.net

Current position:

Employer comments providing relevant information received before 1 August 2020 have now been cleared by NHS Pensions.

Employer comments received regarding 8310 errors have not been cleared and will be allocated to our teams for clearance in line with our business priorities.

There are also a small number of errors which have to be referred to another team within NHS Pensions, there will be a delay in clearing these cases.

When to email NHS Pensions about an error:

We no longer deal with the POL employer comments due to the volume of unnecessary comments received. In line with our email policy, we will not respond if we receive an email that does not give relevant information.

As a general guide:

Errors allocated to NHS Pensions in POL error handling

Do not email NHSP:

- As a general reminder or requesting that we clear the error
- To ask what information we need from you

Please email NHSP:

- If the error is delaying a benefit payment
- If you have done the update via POL and the error needs to be deleted

Errors allocated to the employer in POL error handling

Do not email NHSP:

- To amend and reprocess the form
- To delete the error
- If the member record is incorrect and needs amending for the error to reprocess
- If there is missing joiner, cyclic or termination details
- You are able to complete these actions in POL without contacting NHSP
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Please email NHSP:

- If you have submitted a joiner form with an incorrect start date
- If you have evidence that a NI number or DOB we hold is incorrect
- If you do not hold the member's previous surname and need this for a joiner form error
- If the PT/WT information was incorrect on a joiner form (not for a change during employment)
- If you need AVC, AP or ERRBO details and cannot find the joiner notification in POL

This is a general guide to contacting us and will not cover all scenarios.

The POL Error Handling Guide will be updated over the next few months to give error specific guidance.

Marriage Certificates as supporting evidence

A reminder that when accepting supporting documentation, a NIKAH NAMA Muslim marriage certificate cannot be accepted as evidence of marriage. This unfortunately is not a legitimate certificate under UK law unless it is accompanied by a civil ceremony certificate.

If it is not possible for the claimant to provide a ceremony certificate one of the following is acceptable:

- Visa documents,
- Sworn Affidavit that confirms their marriage,
- Home Office documents,
- Any documents showing their marital status when entering the country,
- Documents to show payment of DWP marriage related benefits,
- Passport that shows you are the spouse of.

NHS Pensions will make the final assessment for individual cases where supporting documentation cannot be determined.

Death in service – outstanding annual leave

A reminder that the members' record should be terminated on either the date of death, or if annual leave extends the last day of service on that date using exit code 14.

Please also ensure the employer pay provided on the termination form includes payment for annual leave. The annual leave should also be included in the pensionable pay period for the calculation of benefits.