

NHS Pensions Updates – April 2020

Guidance on NHS Pensions COVID-19 contingency planning

We understand that many employers will be adopting different working practices and may be working remotely as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. To ensure you can access the resources you need we are adapting some of our processes to assist you during this period.

To find out more, please visit our website at: <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/employer-hub/covid-19-contingency-planning-employers>

At NHS Pensions we have taken, and continue to take, a number of proactive steps to ensure that we support you during these difficult times. Our efforts will ensure that in the days and weeks ahead we can prioritise retirement applications, receipt of notifications of bereavements and the processing of pensions payment to our members. As a result, you may notice some disruption to our other services, but we will do our very best to limit this.

Retired members returning to support COVID-19 response

The UK Government's Coronavirus Action Plan set out measures to increase the health and social care workforce available to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak by removing barriers to allow recently retired NHS staff and social care workers to come back to work. These measures allow skilled and experienced members who have recently retired from the NHS to return to work, and also allow retired members who have already returned to work to increase their commitments if required, without affecting their pension benefits.

We have included more information on this, including a Q&A document with frequently asked questions, on our website, which can be found here:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pensionerhub/covid-19-guidance-support-retired-members>

Sharing our performance

Table 1- Total Transactions

Item	Volume
Total Transactions	13,305
First Retirements	5,422
Revised Retirements	1,000
Estimates	1,110
Re-Employment Cases	1,147
Transfers In	203
Transfers Out	411
5 Year-Rejoiners	37
Pensions on Divorce	27
Life Assurance Lump Sums	228
Partner Pensions	736
Child Allowance	92
Refunds	2,892

Table 2 - First Retirements and Pensioners

Item	Volume
Applications Processed	5,422
On Time	99.80%
Amount paid in Lump Sums	£268,993,738.35
Amount of Pension Paid	£734,418,666.75
No. Pensioners in Payment	976,327

Table 3 - Employer Helpline statistics

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	2,725
Average Handling Time (s)	328
Average Speed of Answer (s)	57

Table 4 - Member Helpline statistics

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	27,155
Average Handling Time (s)	428
Average Speed of Answer (s)	47

Table 5 - Total Transactions 2019 / 2020

Item	Volume
Total Transactions	164,437
First Retirements	54,037
Re-Employment Cases	18,694
Refunds	37,679

Table 6 - First Retirements and Pensioners 2019 / 2020

Item	Volume
Amount paid in Lump Sums	£2,414,589,645.88
Amount of Pension Paid	£7,862,368,783.30

Table 7- Employer Helpline statistics 2019 / 2020

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	38389
Average Handling Time (s)	365

Table 8 - Member Helpline statistics 2019 / 2020

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	381042
Average Handling Time (s)	473

TRS Refresh 2020

This year's TRS data cut for the annual refresh will take place after 7pm on Friday 19 June 2020 with refreshed statements being made available by the end of August 2020.

Our NHS Pensions team will be working hard to try and ensure that as many updates as provided to us before the June date are applied and we have included further information below on the steps we are taking to support employers who are unable to submit updates. Where it is not possible for updates to be applied, information may appear unchanged on an individual's August TRS. However, any updates that have been missed will be captured in the mid-year refresh.

The data cut for the mid-year refresh will take place after 7pm on Friday 9 October 2020. Statements will be made available in December 2020.

Further information and updates will be provided in our Pension Update. Please keep reading for advice if you are experiencing any issues submitting updates.

Should you have any queries or concerns, please contact nhsbsa.stakeholderengagement@nhs.net

Non-Pensions Online (POL) Annual Updates

On an annual basis, all employing authorities are required to submit end of year information to NHS Pensions. For employers who do not have access to POL, our Data Management Team have previously shared a spreadsheet to your organisation's main EA contact during March 2020. This will have been partially prepopulated and will include details of all the members where we believe an annual update should be submitted. The main EA contact will have been asked to submit the requested information to NHS Pensions by 31 May 2020.

We would like to reassure employers that we understand that as a result of the current COVID-19 outbreak, many organisations may not have access to all of the systems and information they typically would have and as a result it may not be possible for your organisation to submit its year end annual updates by the 31 May 2020 deadline.

We have published further information and guidance on our website, which can be found here <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/covid-19-update-2020-refresh-and-non-pensions-online-pol-annualupdates>

Non-POL Joiner Information

Can all Non-POL users who send in SS10 forms please send them via the post to NHS Pensions, PO Box 2269, Bolton, BL6 9JS. For employers that use the excel joiner spreadsheets please send these to the Scheme Access Team via e-mail to nhsbsa.schemeaccess@nhs.net

Independent Provider (IP) End of Year Certificate 2019 / 20

The 2019/20 End of Year Certificate is now available on our website and can be accessed by following this link. As part of your Independent Provider status, you are legally required to complete end of year certificates for each employer code you have declaring Scheme members, contributions and contact details. IP employers must download and complete the certificate and return along with the staff list to nhsbsa.pensionsfinancereporting@nhs.net by 31 May 2020.

Please note that it is important, and also a legal requirement, that all member records are updated by 31 May 2020. Without this, we will be unable to verify and sign off your returned certificate as we would be unable to perform all required reconciliations and controls.

If you have any concerns about not being able to complete this activity as a result of COVID-19 outbreak, please contact our team on nhsbsa.pensionemployers@nhs.net

New Fair Deal (NFD) End of Year Certificate 2019/20

The 2019/20 End of Year Certificate is now available on our website and can be accessed by following the link below. As part of your New Fair Deal (NFD) status, you are legally required to complete end of year certificates for each employer code you have declaring Scheme members, contributions and contact details. NFD employers must download and complete the certificate and return to nhsbsa.pensionsfinancereporting@nhs.net by 31 May 2020.

Please note that it is important, and also a legal requirement, that all member records are updated by 31 May 2020.

If you have any concerns about not being able to complete this activity as a result of COVID-19 outbreak, please contact our team on nhsbsa.pensionemployers@nhs.net

Employer Contribution Rate Arrangements to Remain for 2020/21

The NHS Pension Scheme employer contribution rate increased on 1 April 2019 from 14.3% to 20.6%, plus an employer's levy of 0.08%. The Department of Health and Social Care's consultation response announcing the rise, published in March 2019, confirmed the available funding to meet the associated costs and that a transitional arrangement would operate in 2019/20 where employers in the Scheme would continue to pay 14.3%, plus the employer's levy of 0.08%.

We can now confirm that the transitional approach will continue in 2020/21.

This means that for 2020/21, all employers should continue to pay 14.3% in employer contributions plus the employer's levy of 0.08% under their normal monthly payment process to the NHS Pension Scheme. NHS England will continue to make payments to the scheme for organisations covered by the commitment to the NHS, and the Welsh Government for their equivalent organisations. A small number of ALB organisations will be invoiced directly by NHS Pensions for the 6.3%.

As referenced in the consultation response, the 6.3% increase was split into two elements: i) a 2.5% foreseen element, which was the increase expected at the time of Budget 2016, and ii) an unforeseen element accounting for the remaining 3.8%. Organisations outside the scope of the commitment to the NHS will receive funding for the unforeseen costs and will have to manage the impact of the foreseen element, in a continuation of the 2019/20 arrangement.

To clarify following on from the article in the February 2020 employer newsletter, the specific contribution from university medical schools will remain as advised by the BSA for 2019/20.

For 2020/21, non-NHSE ALBs will continue to receive the same available funding support. However, there will be an adjustment to the administrative arrangements which will be communicated directly to relevant organisations.

More information regarding the arrangement for 2020/21 can be found on our [website](#)

2020/21 Freelance GP Locum & SOLO forms

The 2020/21 freelance GP locums' forms A and B and the SOLO form are now available on the Practitioner webpage of the Member Hub section of our website.

Salaried GPs are reminded that they must complete their 'type 2 medical Practitioner self-assessment forms' on an annual basis in addition to any other pension forms they are required to complete.

Due to the current COVID-19 outbreak we have introduced a number of easements to this process, including changes to the processes around Form A and the 10-week window. Further information can be found on our website [here](#).

GP Pension Guide & Annualising Calculator

There is a new GP Pension Guide for GPs and their representatives (e.g. medical accountants) which provide information regarding contributions, completing forms, etc.

There is also an annualising calculator to assist 2015 Scheme GP members in setting the correct tiered employee contribution rate.

The Guide and the calculator are both located within the Practitioner webpage of the Member Hub section of our website.