

NHS Pensions Updates – July 2020

Update for employers on NHS Pensions coronavirus (COVID-19) response

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we have taken, and continue to take, proactive steps to ensure we support members, employers and colleagues. This has included introducing a number of easements and changes to processes to proactively support employers administering the NHS Pension scheme, as you adapt to new ways of working.

Over recent weeks we have been able to return our teams to full capacity with many colleagues now working from home. We continue to work hard to address any outstanding enquiries as a result of the steps we have taken over recent months to set up social distancing in our workplaces, support colleagues to effectively work from home and prioritise business areas most directly linked to pensioner payments.

We are pleased to report that we have continued to meet our KPIs in prioritised business areas throughout June.

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	14,307
First Retirements	3,804
Revised Retirements	2,892
Estimates	2,026
Re-Employment Cases	1,056
Transfers In	185
Transfers Out	550
5 Year-Rejoiners	65
Pensions on Divorce	55
Life Assurance Lump Sums	228
Partner Pensions	801
Child Allowance	109
Refunds	2,536

Table 2 - First Retirements and Pensioners

Item	Volume
Applications Processed	3,804
On Time	99.55%
Amount paid in Lump Sums	£188,974,612.53
Amount of Pension Paid	£793,103,761.65
No. Pensioners in Payment	988,008

Table 3 - Employer Helpline statistics

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	2,165
Average Handling Time (s)	446
Average Speed of Answer (s)	578

Table 4 - Member Helpline statistics

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	22,588
Average Handling Time (s)	578
Average Speed of Answer (s)	584

Contacting NHS Pensions

We continue to receive a high volume of calls to our NHS Pensions Employer Helpline and our helpline colleagues remain very busy dealing with enquiries, both for NHS Pensions and other NHSBSA services directly linked to supporting the NHS' frontline.

Please do take a look at the dedicated resources and guidance for employers within our [NHS Pensions Employer Hub](#).

Should you have any queries, you can also contact our team on Twitter @nhs_pensions or via nhsbsa.pensionsemployers@nhs.net. We do aim to respond to your email as soon as possible but please be aware there may still be some delays to responses at this time.

NHS and Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance (Wales) Scheme 2020

Following the Secretary of State for Health's announcement of a new life assurance scheme for eligible frontline health and social care workers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, information on the NHS and Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme 2020 for Wales is now available on the NHSBSA website.

You can access more information on the scheme, as well as information on the scheme in England, via: <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/coronavirus-life-assurance-2020>

The NHS and Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme is independent of the NHS Pension scheme. Any lump sum or pension benefits payable to the relatives or dependents of NHS Pension scheme members will continue to be processed and paid as before.

III Health Applications – Missing Information

NHS Pensions is continuing to receive the following applications forms:

- The Consideration of Entitlement to Ill Health Retirement benefits (AW33E)
- The Consideration of Entitlement for Early Payment of Deferred Benefits due to Ill Health (AW240)

Please can you check these forms before submission to NHS Pensions.

We are finding that information boxes are being missed and job descriptions are not being sent to us.

This will help to avoid delays in considering the members application.

Pensions Online – Error Handling

Pensions Online (POL) error handling has a facility for employers to submit a comment on an error, to the NHS Pensions Data Management Teams. Employers are asked to submit comments where additional information can be provided to enable NHS Pensions to clear the error.

NHS Pensions has engaged with employers to try and ensure that the comments submitted are relevant however, we continue to receive high volumes of comments that do not provide necessary information for the resolution of the errors.

To ensure that we can focus our available resource most effectively, from 1 August 2020, NHS Pensions will no longer deal with comments submitted through POL error handling.

From 1 August 2020, where you can provide relevant information for resolving an error, please email Nhsbsa.nwdatamanagement@nhs.net.

NHS Pensions will then contact you when they have actioned your request so you can resubmit your error for processing, if necessary.

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

In line with our current email protocol, no action will be taken for emails received that are not urgent or do not provide information to resolve the error.

We will continue to review our process and provide a further update in our next newsletter.

Update on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)

Further to the NHS Pensions and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) article in the June 2020 newsletter, HMRC has published further information as part of their business support during COVID-19, which confirms the way in which the furlough scheme is changing.

Employer's must remember to adjust a member's pensionable hours and the employer and employee contributions paid (but not the rate of contributions paid), should the member's furloughed pay change in line with furlough scheme or the employer's circumstances.

Please see the example where a member's pay was previously restricted to £2,500 due to their earnings and has now been amended for the September reduction to the CJRS:

Example:

From September a full-time member who has pensionable pay of £40,000 will only receive furloughed (pensionable) earnings of £2,187.50 per month i.e. 70% of their normal pensionable pay up to a cap of £2,187.50.

For a member who has pensionable pay of £40,000 they will receive $£2,187.50 \times 12 = £26,250 / £40,000 \times 100 = 65.625\%$

Whilst on furlough the member will receive 65.625% of their full-time hours whilst classed as part-time. For example, if they would typically work a standard week of 37.5 hours, they will be deemed to have worked 25 hours per week ($37.5 \times 65.625\% = 24.6$ hours rounded up to 25).

For a part-time member they will receive 65.625% of their contracted hours i.e. for a member who normally works 30 out of 37.5 hours per week, they will be deemed to have worked 20 hours per week ($30 \times 65.625\% = 19.6875$ hours rounded up to 20).

Please note, the greater the reduction in the member's pay and the longer the time they are on furlough the more likely this is to affect the member's benefits.