

NHS Pensions Updates – May 2020

Update for 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. As we implemented social distancing in the workplace and set up colleagues to effectively work at home, we prioritised business areas most directly linked to pensioner payments including retirement applications, bereavement applications and the processing of pensions to current and retiring pensioners.

As a result, you may have noticed some disruption to our other services, however, we have worked hard to limit this impact.

Additionally, we have worked on emergency legislation and the temporary suspension of some of the regulations governing the administration of NHS Pensions. Our helpline colleagues have handled an increased number of enquiries, for NHS Pensions and other NHSBSA services directly linked to supporting the NHS' frontline. We've also introduced a number of easements and changes to processes to proactively support employers administering the NHS Pension scheme, as we know many employers have implemented new working practices as a result of the outbreak.

This week we anticipate our teams returning to full capacity with all colleagues working from home. It may be a few weeks before all of our services return to normal, but we assure you of our commitment to keep any disruption to an absolute minimum.

We thank you for your patience and for your continued efforts to deliver vital healthcare services at this critical time.

Sharing our performance

Table 1- Total Transactions

Item	Volume
Total Transactions	10,768
First Retirements	7,523
Revised Retirements	68
Estimates	266
Re-Employment Cases	673
Transfers In	1

Item	Volume
Transfers Out	0
5 Year-Rejoiners	12
Pensions on Divorce	2
Life Assurance Lump Sums	192
Partner Pensions	629
Child Allowance	73
Refunds	1,329

Table 2 - First Retirements and Pensioners

Item	Volume
Applications Processed	7,523
On Time	99.84%
Amount paid in Lump Sums	£285,812,449.93
Amount of Pension Paid	£786,599,636.60
No. Pensioners in Payment	982,417

Table 3 - Employer Helpline statistics

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	2,136
Average Handling Time (s)	370
Average Speed of Answer (s)	160

Table 4 - Member Helpline statistics

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	21,543
Average Handling Time (s)	462
Average Speed of Answer (s)	172

The NHS and Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme 2020

The Secretary of State for Health has announced that staff who are performing vital frontline NHS or social care work during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak may be eligible for a life assurance scheme, recognising the increased risks they are currently facing.

In the event of a staff member dying due to COVID-19 a lump sum payment of £60,000 will be made to their estate, if they meet the qualifying work-related criteria for the scheme. The scheme is non-contributory, meaning there is no cost to staff or employers.

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

The NHS and Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme is administered by the NHSBSA. Information can be found on the [NHSBSA website](#) and further details regarding

the life assurance scheme, including the benefit claim form and contact details should you have queries, will be made available in the coming days.

You can also find information on Gov.UK.

Ill health applications – Coronavirus (COVID-19) arrangements

NHS Pensions is continuing to receive applications for:

- 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)

Due to the unprecedented pressure on front line NHS Services during the COVID-19 pandemic, it may be more challenging for the Schemes Medical Adviser to obtain information from doctors; information or reports which may be required, in order to assist the Medical Adviser with their clinical consideration of the application. This can result in a delay in the Schemes Medical Adviser providing a decision.

We ask all employers to ensure that members and occupational health physicians understand the importance of including all relevant evidence to allow the Medical Adviser considering the application to have a good understanding of the members condition.

This should hopefully reduce the number of further medical evidence requests made to front line NHS Services and therefore avoid delays in considering members applications.

NHS Pensioner P60s and Annual Newsletters

P60s and annual newsletters are currently being sent to all NHS Pensioners.

A P60 includes information about the pension paid and the tax deducted during the tax year.

P60s are distributed in a phased approach and may not be received until the end of May. In addition, NHS Pensions has written to pensioners who are likely to be affected by the government's emergency legislation, which temporarily suspends some of the Scheme regulations governing retired members returning to work or increasing their hours. The information in this letter overrides the re-employment guidance contained in the Annual Newsletter which was printed earlier this year.

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

You can now [access the 2019-20 End of Year Certificate via our website.](#)

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 also 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 COVID19, please contact our team on nhsbsa.pensionsemployers@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 this link. 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 31st May 2020.

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

If you have any concerns about not being able to complete this activity as a result of COVID19, please contact our team on nhsbsa.pensionsemployers@nhs.net

Guidance on AW8 / AW8P application forms

A new document has been created to assist you when deciding which retirement application form AW8/AW8P needs completing when a member retires. You can find this on the [Technical Guidance page on the Employer Hub](#).

ESR Year-end data processing

The 2019/20 ESR year-end was received over the Easter weekend as expected and so far we have processed over 900,000 updates of the 1.5 million. Based on the forecast we anticipate processing to be completed by Sunday 17 May 2020.

Annual Update – Non-POL Organisations

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 that will have been partially prepopulated. The main EA contact will have been asked to submit the requested information to NHS Pensions by 31 May 2020.

We published more information in our Employer News in April: [COVID-19 Update on 2020 Refresh and Non Pensions Online \(POL\) Annual Updates](#)