

NHS Pensions Update – June 2021

Welcome to the June 2021 NHS Pensions Employer Update.

If you have any queries about the 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.

Sharing our performance

Table 1- Total Transactions (May 2021)

Item	Volume
Total Transactions	111,254
First retirements	6,121
Estimates	2,770
Annual allowance	3,891
Ill health applications	443
AP/ERRBO/AVC	1,054
Bereavements	6,862
Transfers	2,870
Nominations	2,018
Pensions On Divorce	1,323
Protection of Pay	158
Refunds	2,151
Revised retirements	4,262
Service	2,847
Inbound processing	8,399
Data support	54,774
Pensioner admin	11,311
First retirements	6,121
Estimates	2,770
Annual allowance	3,891
Ill health applications	443

Table 2 - First Retirements and Pensioners (May 2021)

Item	Volume
Applications Processed	6,121
On Time	99.43%
Amount paid in Lump Sums	£183,666,240
Amount of Pension Paid	£825,334,661
No. Pensioners in Payment	1,019,421

Table 3 - Employer Helpline statistics (May 2021)

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	2,760
Average Handling Time (s)	585
Average Speed of Answer (s)	403

Table 4 - Member Helpline statistics (May 2021)

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	22,527
Average Handling Time (s)	610
Average Speed of Answer (s)	367

We have amended the way in which we report transactional values to include all events across the Scheme and all transactions completed for each function, up to and including the actual event itself. For example, we completed 2,770 transactions to process on hand estimates in May. This number does not represent the number of estimates. This change has been made to provide a more comprehensive overview of transactional volumes on a month-by-month basis.

Employer queries on Greenbury info

The Greenbury team have received a number of queries in relation to the figures that have been produced. Below we have included more information on the most frequent queries.

No Mandatory Lump sum

The 2008 Section and the 2015 Scheme do not offer mandatory lump sums, for members of these schemes no lump sum amount will be provided.

Lump sum amounts will be provided for 1995 Section members, and for members of the 2008 Section who those to move their 1995 Section benefits to the 2008 Section under the Choice exercise.

For 1995/2015 transition members a lump sum amount will be provided for the 1995 Section only.

No CETV figures

No CETV will be shown for pensioners and senior managers over normal pension age (NPA).

Information for employers on year-end processing

The ESR year-end processing and the subsequent processing of April's joiners and leavers and May's joiners has been successfully completed.

A total of 1,600,904 updates have been processed. This resulted in an 89.91% success rate overall.

Please check your error handling if you have access to POL and resolve any issues prior to the TRS data refresh in June 2021.

TRS Refresh 2021

The annual refresh is set to commence with the data cut being taken after close of business on the 18 June 2021. If the process goes to plan, the aim is for the statements to be made available mid-August as usual. We will confirm the exact refresh date nearer the time.

Changes to final pay controls – DHSC consultation outcome

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has published the outcome of its consultation on proposed amendments to the NHS Pension Scheme Regulations.

It confirms the changes that will be made to final pay controls from 1 July 2021

The aim of the final pay control regulations in the 1995 Section of the NHS Pension Scheme is to protect the Scheme against the costs of excessive increases in pensionable pay. Under the current regulations, employers are charged if they give a scheme member an increase in pensionable pay which is above an allowable amount in the final three years of their employment.

The changes to reform final pay controls include increasing the allowable amount from the consumer prices index (CPI) measure of inflation plus 4.5% to CPI plus 7%.

There will also be new exemptions introduced for increases in pensionable pay as a result of:

- nationally agreed contracts, framework agreements or re-banding where this is authorised under particular NHS terms and conditions
- a National Clinical Excellence Awards (CEA)
- promotions following fair and open competition
- the ending of a salary sacrifice arrangement
- an increase in practice profits impacting non-GP providers (in certain scenarios)

The changes will be applied retrospectively to 1 April 2018

Employers who have paid or received an invoice for a final pay control charge on or after 1 April 2018 will be able to request for this to be reviewed once the revised legislation takes effect on 1 July 2021.

We'll share more information as processes are finalised

We're reviewing the outcomes of the consultation response and the procedures and application information/forms that will need to be put in place as a result.

We'll share more information with Employers as these are finalised ahead of the 1 July 2021.

You can find more information on the consultation outcome via the [Gov.UK website](#).

Changes to the AW171 process – information for employers explained

Last month we told you that the final phase of the system functionality to automate the AW171 process was complete and advised employers that AW171's are no longer required. Any changes which cannot be made via POL, such as change to retirement date or lump sum charges, should be emailed to nhsbsa.pensionemployers@nhsbsa.nhs.uk. Since then, there has been an increase in AW171 forms being emailed to the pension's employers' team.

Please note that we no longer require AW171's. They should not be emailed to the pension's employers email account.

For revisions where change is not reflected electronically, please email the team using the details above to explain the changes and request a substitute award be launched. An AW171 is not required, and the change can just be requested in the body of an email. Any AW171 forms received will be returned and not processed.

Non-POL employers requesting changes to information

As per the last pensions update explaining the removal of the paper AW171, we wanted to confirm the process for non-POL employers requesting changes to information. Instead of sending in the AW171, all non-POL employers will now need to submit the Change of employment details (SD55E) form and submit this to nhsbsa.directionbodies@nhs.net

The form can be found on the [Employer forms](#) page of the NHS Pensions website under the section for those without access to Pensions Online (POL) / Electronic Staff Record (ESR).

Connectivity to Pensions Online (POL)

Please note the information in this article has been updated in July 2021 to reflect subsequent changes to the connectivity details following distribution of this article.

Due to some employers having issues connecting to POL, we have been advised to amend the IP Address we use to host the site. This change will be implemented between 15:00 and 16:00 on Friday 2nd July and will result in a short outage during this time.

If your IT supplier currently uses the HSCN DNS Service then you shouldn't have to make any changes.

However please check with your IT supplier that you can access POL with these details:

- URL: https://nww.pensionsagency.nhs.uk/poltest_forms/home3.cfm
- IP Address: 194.155.10.129 (Previously 194.155.10.128)
- Ports: TCP 80 and 443
- Network: HSCN

You must have a HSCN service to access POL. Guidance for obtaining a HSCN service can be found at [Health and Social Care Network \(HSCN\) - NHS Digital](#)

Employer helpline – Pensions Online (POL) queries

If you have a query about Pensions Online (POL) you are now able to contact us by the telephone helpline once again.

Lines are open between 8am – 6pm and our Customer Contact Centre are available to support with your calls about e-forms, the Memberzone, notifications and notice board, and more.

The Employer Helpline is 0300 330 1353 (press option 2 for POL).

[Find out about call charges.](#)

The Contact Centre is not able to deal with registrations, changes, or password resets. Use the email address nhsbsa.polhd@nhs.net in the following circumstances:

- Sending change of administrator forms for POL
- PIN and password resets for POL main account holders (additional user accounts are administered by the main account holders)
- Account unlocks for POL main account holders (additional user accounts can only be unlocked by the main account holder)
- Updating account details (if the main account holder changes their surname, telephone or email address)

We have also signposted other areas of support below depending on the type of query you have:

- If you can provide relevant information for resolving an error, email nhsbsa.nwdatamanagement@nhs.net
- If an error is urgent as payment of benefits is due, you should continue to email nhsbsa.datamanagement@nhs.net
- If your query is regarding the MCP system for making contribution payments, email nhsbsa.mcponboarding@nhs.net
- If your query is an employer general query regarding the Scheme or a specific member, email nhsbsa.pensionemployers@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

Changes to member employment via Pensions Online (POL)

The final part of the SD55 annual update is where you can advise of changes to the members' employment details and/or personal details, as follows:

- enter date of change (if required)
- select Change Type
- enter change details

We also have a guide on completing the SD55 which is particularly useful if you're completing changes to part time and/or changes to standard hours. You can find this guide, which is POL guide number 18 in the [Pensions Online section of our Employer Hub](#).

The areas available for change are:

- Surname – no date of change is required if SD55G has not been completed
- Forename(s) – no date of change is required if SD55G has not been completed
- NI Number – no date of change is required if SD55G has not been completed
- Capacity code – date of change required
- EA code – no date of change required
- Date of birth – if SD55G has not been completed
- Change to whole time– date of change required (only available if employment is part time)
- Change to part time– date of change required (only available if employment is whole time)
- Actual part time hours – date of change required (only available if employment has not been part time before)
- Standard hours – date of change required (to be used when employment changes to part time for the first time)
- Change to standard hours – date of change required (relevant only where standard hours for an existing p/t employment change)
- Change of mental health officer (MHO) status – date of change required
- Disallowed mental health officer (MHO days post 05/04/1988) – no date of change required (to be completed where disallowed days apply and employment is MHO)

A maximum of five changes can be completed and you should always start with the first change line.

Some changes, for example changes from whole time to part time, need to be in a specific order, to enable them to process successfully.

Example:

- 1 Line - date of change and in the drop down select to part time
- 2 Line - date of change, then select part time hours, then actual part time contracted hours – 1500 – no decimal point
- 3 Line – date of change, then select standard hours, then whole time standard hours – 3750 – no decimal point

For changes from whole time to part time if a member (other than capacity 3, 8 or 10) is changing to part time and has previously been part time within the employment then select

'To part time' from the drop-down selections and enter the date of change to part time. Actual hours do not need entering.

Standard hours only need entering if they are changing from those already held on our records.

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.

Annual allowance information required

Employers are required in legislation to provide information to NHS Pensions which enables pension savings statements to be provided to members. This statement informs members whether they have exceeded the annual allowance limit in the NHS Pension Scheme. The requirements specify that employers must provide pay (and membership) information to NHS Pensions by 6 July following the end of the tax year.

We are expecting an influx of requests for annual allowance statements in July. In order to be able to respond to these requests, we must have the available pay and membership information from employers for 2020/21 by 6 July 2021 (information for previous years should already have been received). If a member's record is not updated by the employer by this date, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) may impose fines and charges on employers of:

- Up to £300 per member, and
- £60 per day per member until the member's records are updated.

If the information is not provided, we will not be able to conduct the necessary calculations to check whether the member has exceeded the annual allowance limit. We will not be able to generate a pension savings statement and notify potentially affected members in a timely manner. Members could be subject to fines and late payment penalties from HMRC.

Special arrangements were made for PCSE/NHS England in relation to the provision of information for GPs once their end of year certificates have been received and the provision of pension information to NHS Pensions after HMRC's deadline.

Application forms

When sending application forms to the NHSBSA, including the AW33E Consideration of entitlement to ill health retirement benefits form, you should ensure that forms are scanned in the correct order from page 1 to the end of the document before sending.

Any supporting documentation such as medical evidence submitted with an application form should also be scanned in the correct order.

We have noticed that we are receiving an increased number of application forms that are mixed up and documentation is not in the correct order. When applications are received by the NHS Pensions scanning team, they are scanned as they have been received onto the member's record.

Receiving the forms in the correct order will ensure the process of updating member records is smoother and we avoid any errors or confusion.

Level 1 GP practice manager additional events

Due to the exceptional demand for spaces, we've arranged a few additional Level 1 GP practice manager events to take place in July.

As a reminder, there are two training sessions:

- GP Practice Manager Event Level 1 Part 1
- GP Practice Manager Event Level 1 Part 2

You will need to attend two consecutive training sessions. The second session needs to immediately follow the first. For example, if you select to attend Monday 12 July Level 1 Part 1, you must also select Tuesday 13 July Level 1 Part 2. Only after the two consecutive sessions have been attended will you receive a Continued Professional Development (CPD) accreditation.

All the events will be delivered virtually via Microsoft Teams.

GP Practice Manager Event Level 1, Part 1

Monday 12 July 1pm to 3pm

This session includes NHS Pension Scheme website, Annual Benefit Statements and roles and responsibilities.

[Link to Eventbrite: Level-1-Part-1](#)

GP Practice Manager Event Level 1, Part 2

Tuesday 13 July 1pm to 3pm

This session includes: POL, AW8 and the member journey.

[Link to Eventbrite: Level-1-Part-2](#)

GP Practice Manager Event Level 1, Part 1

Wednesday 14 July 1pm to 3pm

This session includes NHS Pension Scheme website, Annual Benefit Statements and roles and responsibilities.

[Link to Eventbrite -Level-1-Part-1](#)

GP Practice Manager Event Level 1, Part 2

Thursday 15 July 1pm to 3pm

This session includes: POL, AW8 and the member journey.

[Link to Eventbrite-Level-1-Part-2](#)

If you register and then are unable to attend, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can reallocate your ticket. We will charge you for non-attendance if you do not let us know at least 24 hours before the event.

Level 2 NHS Pensions GP practice manager events

Our Level 2 GP Practice Manager Events will be starting in September.

We'll be publishing the registration details via Eventbrite in the Employer Update in the next couple of months.

These events will be delivered virtually via Microsoft Teams and will include the following sessions:

Session 1:

- Flexible retirement
- Early retirement
- Drawdown where a member takes part of their pension early, including how to administer and the processes involved
- Retire and return

Session 2:

- Ill health
- Ill health and family benefits
- Serious ill health including commutation, where a member that has less than 12 months to live may receive all their ill health pension in one lump sum payment
- Death in membership

Session 3:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Detailed explanation of Primary Care Support England (PCSE) and GP pensions.
- Completion of estimate of pensions income / pay / profits form
- Non-compliance and The Pension Regulator

Session 4:

- Pensions Online (POL)
- POL Memberzone

Reminder of new employer email account

This is a reminder that the employers email account is now nhsbsa.pensionemployers@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

Please ensure that any autofill's that you have on your email systems have been changed to this new account.

Any emails sent to the old account will not be received and will cause delays to any actions that you have requested.

Employers email account – IG update

Following the change of the employer's email account to nhsbsa.pensionemployers@nhsbsa.nhs.uk on the 1 April 2021 the following information will need to be included in member specific queries to ensure that employer queries are responded to in full:

- EA Code of your organisation
- member's SD number
- member's full name

If you are unable to provide the full name of the member then please replace it with one of the below:

- member's first initial
- member's date of birth
- member's postcode

The above may be different to what is received on the auto response from the account. This is a systems issue that we are currently working on to amend to the above. Please ignore any requests from the employers email account that request information other than the above.

If you have any further questions in relation to the new email account or the information governance for this account, please contact nhsbsa.stakeholderengagement@nhs.net

Member email account contact information

We have noticed an increase of members contacting us directly using the incorrect routes of contact. Please can all employers ensure that when providing contact information to members for NHS Pensions that they provide them with dedicated member contact information if they are wanting to contact NHS Pensions directly:

Member helpline: 0300 3301 346

Members dedicated email address: nhsbsa.pensionsmember@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

Please also ask members to include their SD number or NI number when emailing or have it close by when calling. This will enable us to provide a better service to our members.

2019/20 Pensions Annual Allowance Charge Compensation Policy

Both NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) and NHS Wales have published guidance on their respective 2019/20 Pension Annual Allowance Charge Compensation policies, including an application form for eligible clinicians to apply for the scheme and information on the actions that employers now need to take.

It follows the NHSEI and NHS Wales announcements at the end of 2019 that clinical staff who go over their annual allowance for the 2019/20 tax year and who use Scheme Pays to pay the tax charge can be compensated in retirement for any reduction to their NHS Pension Scheme benefits.

You can find resources for employers, downloadable application forms and details of how to confirm eligibility on the NHSEI website if you're based in England, or the NHS Confed website if you're based in Wales:

- PAACCS information for England: www.england.nhs.uk/pensions/
- PACCS information for Wales: www.nhsconfed.org/NHSPensionsWales

Reminder: Update on the government changes to public service pension schemes – the McCloud judgment

In 2015 the government made changes to reform the majority of public service pension schemes. These reforms did not apply to those members closest to retirement, who remained in their legacy schemes with 'transitional protection'. The Court of Appeal later found this to be discriminatory against younger members.

The government has been working to fix this and has recently published the outcome of its consultation on how it will address the age discrimination. You can read more about the consultation response and changes on our website.

We have also shared a [news article for members](#) and [FAQs](#) that you may wish to share. We will be sharing more information once this is available.