

## NHS Pensions Update – February 2023

Welcome to the February 2023 NHS Pensions Employer Update.

### Sharing our performance

*Table 1- Total Transactions (January 2023)*

Item	Volume
Total Transactions	83,570
First retirements	11,834
Estimates	11,013
Annual allowance	2,389
Ill health applications	727
AP/ERRBO/AVC	44
Bereavements	9,561
Transfers	2,303
Nominations	2,031
Pensions On Divorce	713
Protection of Pay	20
Refunds	2,025
Revised retirements	76
Service	1,361
Inbound processing	3,897
Data support	21,264
Pensioner admin	14,312

*Table 2 - First Retirements and Pensioners (January 2023)*

Item	Volume
Applications Processed	11,834
On Time	99.27%
Amount paid in Lump Sums	£173,393,462.40
Amount of Pension Paid	£909,040,784.14
No. Pensioners in Payment	£1,090,525.00

*Table 3 - Employer Helpline statistics (January 2023)*

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	2,845
Average Handling Time (s)	461
Average Speed of Answer (s)	121

*Table 4 - Member Helpline statistics (January 2023)*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Volume</b>
Total Volume Calls	32,947
Average Handling Time (s)	599
Average Speed of Answer (s)	377

From May 2021 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. This change has been made to provide a more comprehensive overview of transactional volumes on a month-by-month basis.

## **Introducing proposed retirement flexibilities – a reminder for employers**

Last month we shared the news that we would be starting to contact members to inform them of the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) proposals to introduce changes to the NHS Pension Scheme regulations, to enable members to work flexibly up to and beyond retirement age. You can read the article in full [here](#).

To make sure members who are close to retirement age have a chance to consider the proposed changes before finalising their retirement plans, the DHSC asked that we start writing to those closest to their normal pension age from mid-January 2023.

Letters are being sent in a phased approach and once we have written to all active members closest to normal pension age, we will then be writing to the remaining active members followed by our deferred members. We expect to finish sending letters by June 2023.

The DHSC consultation on the proposed changes has now closed. Once the outcome of the consultation is published by the DHSC, we will update our website with more information on how and when the changes will be introduced and what this will mean for you as an employer.

We will also continue to share updates with you via our Employer Newsletter.

Please encourage any members who are interested in partial retirement or returning to work and continuing to build pension benefits after having taken their pension benefits to continue to check our retirement flexibilities webpage for updates. This is where we will share updates for members.

You can read further information on the proposed changes via our [retirement flexibilities webpage](#) and the [DHSC's consultation webpage](#).

## **Pensions Online (POL) downtime – February and March 2023**

POL will be available throughout January and February between 7am and 7pm apart from the following dates when there will be downtime for scheduled system maintenance:

- Saturday 18 February
- Sunday 26 February
- Sunday 26 March

If we do need to bring POL down at short notice for urgent maintenance, we will advise you as soon as we can in advance via the POL homepage.

## **Deadline approaching for Greenbury disclosure information**

Requests for disclosure information should be received by NHS Pensions by Tuesday 28 February 2023 to enable us to provide employers with the necessary disclosure information to meet reporting timescales.

### **Who should employers request Greenbury figures for**

The Department of Health and Social Care Group Accounting Manual (GAM) 2022-23 states that the remuneration report must disclose information on those persons in senior positions having authority or responsibility for directing or controlling major activities within the group body. This means those who influence the decisions of the entity as a whole rather than the decisions of individual directorates or departments.

The GAM states that the chief executive or accounting/ accountable officer must be asked to confirm whether this covers more than the executive and non-executive directors. It is usually considered that the regular attendees of the entity's board meetings are its senior managers.

The NHS Foundation Trust Annual Reporting Manual (ARM) defines senior managers as 'those persons in senior positions having authority or responsibility for directing or controlling the major activities of the NHS foundation trust. The ARM goes on to say, 'such persons will include advisory and non-executive board members.'

### **Information NHS Pensions will provide**

NHS Pensions will provide disclosure information for executive directors and other senior managers, as confirmed by the Chief Executive. We will not carry out any calculations for non-executive directors because they do not receive any pensionable remuneration.

### **Where an executive director is also a medical General Practitioner (GP)**

Disclosure information will only be provided where the GP is an employed senior manager or executive director. If the GP is employed (i.e. contract of service) as a senior manager or executive director and pays pension contributions then they will be classed as an officer for pension purposes and Greenbury disclosure will apply.

If the GP is also engaged under a contract for services arrangement (i.e. self-employed) then Greenbury disclosure will not apply to this element of their work. Under this arrangement the GP is afforded practitioner status which is not included in the calculation of the accrued pension, lump sum and cash equivalent transfer value (CETV).

Where NHS Pensions is asked for disclosure information for a GP and their pension record holds practitioner membership only then we will assume they are a non-executive director, and no information will be provided. It is important for employers to check that the pension records of their senior managers are completely updated.

NHS Pensions will provide information based on calculations using NHS staff (officer) membership only.

This exercise only relates to remuneration in public bodies which means GP practices and most direction bodies are not required to take part.

### **How to submit disclosure information requests for the 2023 exercise**

1. Employers must request Greenbury senior manager remuneration disclosures for the 2022/23 financial year via Pensions Online (POL).
2. These screens will also be used by NHS Pensions to return the requested pension, lump sum (where applicable) and CETV to each employer.
3. Employers will only be able to view their own disclosure requests.

Employers will need to nominate a user and allocate Greenbury access to that user before disclosures can be requested. Employers will be able to use the previous year's user and password details. If you have any queries about registering a user on POL, please visit [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/employer-hub/pensions-online](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/employer-hub/pensions-online)

The Greenbury screens will also support:

- communication between employers and NHS Pensions concerning Greenbury queries
- requests for re-calculation of Greenbury disclosures
- comparison of this year's disclosure figures with last year's figures

Full guidance on how to register and use the POL system to make your requests is now available on our website at: <http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Pensions>

You should avoid using the comments box on POL unless necessary as this prevents cases running through the system automatically. If a member was part of the exercise last year, the previous year's figures will be provided. Employers do not need to request this information via the comment box.

Reducing comments will mean more submissions will run through automatically and therefore speed up the process.

## Non-POL updates – end of year information

All employing authorities (EAs) are required to submit end of year information to NHS Pensions on an annual basis. **You must submit this information to NHS Pensions by the 31 May 2023.** If you use Pensions Online (POL) you should submit this year end information via POL. For non-POL employers, the Data Management Team will send a prepopulated spreadsheet to the main EA contact week commencing the 13 March 2023.

The spreadsheet will be partially prepopulated for all members where an annual update should be submitted. Once the spreadsheet has been received, employers will receive an email from the Data Team to confirm receipt, which will be sent within five working days. If you do not receive the confirmation email, you should contact the employer helpline on 0300 3301 353.

The Data Team will then contact you directly to resolve the issue and work with employers to resolve any errors arising from the annual update, before the annual benefit statement cut-off date, which are still to be confirmed.

Spreadsheets incorrectly completed will be returned for correction and the data will not be processed until the amended information is received. Any spreadsheets received after the 31 May 2023, will be worked on a best endeavours basis. The Data Team are unable to commit to these being completed prior to the cut off. Comprehensive guidance notes will be made available to all employers. The Stakeholder Engagement Team are hosting a virtual training event via Microsoft Teams for all Non-POL employers. A date is to be confirmed and we will contact the non-POL employers directly with information.

## Reminder on NHS Pensions revaluation

The NHS Pension Scheme employer contribution rate increased on the 1 April 2019 from 14.3% to 20.6% plus the employer 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 14.38%.

Although our initial expectation was that this transitional arrangement would only be in place for 2019/20, the approach continued in subsequent years, and we can now confirm that the transitional arrangement will continue again in 2023/24 in order to maximise stability for employers in the sector, particularly in light of the continuing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

This means that for 2023/24, all employers should continue to pay 14.3% in employer contributions plus 0.08% employer levy 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.

As referenced in the 2019 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 original 2019/20 arrangement.

For 2023/24, Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs), excluding NHS England, will continue to receive the same available funding support and the funding and administrative arrangements will continue to be the same as in 2022/23.

We are currently writing to university medical schools to let them know that the specific contribution from university medical schools will remain as advised by the NHSBSA for 2019/2020.

## **Stakeholder Engagement events**

The Stakeholder Engagement Team run a series of events throughout the year providing regular updates and delivering educational training for employers.

Please see our [Employer Events page on the Employer Hub](#) for upcoming events. These events are free of charge, and some include CPD accreditation. The NHSBSA does not endorse any other third-party training events.

If your organisation would like to request training or attendance directly from the Stakeholder Engagement Team, please complete the [event/ meeting request form](#) and email the team for consideration: [nhsbsa.stakeholderengagement@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsa.stakeholderengagement@nhs.net)

## **Administration Foundation Course – new dates added for March and April**

The Foundation course has been developed following feedback from our GP practice manager employer training events.

This course is available to all new local administrators of the NHS Pension Scheme who are less than 12 months in post and provides an overview of what is expected of you as an NHS Pension Scheme administrator throughout a Scheme year.

At the end of the course, you will have a high-level understanding of the actions required to enable you to administer the NHS Pension Scheme at a local level. The course could also be used as a refresher course for anyone restarting in local NHS Pension Scheme administration. The details for the next available courses are as follows:

- [Friday 10 March 2023, 1pm - 2.30pm](#)
- [Wednesday 26 April 2023, 10am - 11.30am](#)

## **GP practice manager training – new dates added for March and April**

Further dates are available in March and April for the Level 1 and Level 2 GP practice manager events, which include educational training tailored for practice managers, delivered virtually via Microsoft Teams.

Practice managers need to attend the whole training session to receive a Continued Professional Development (CPD) accreditation.

### **Level 1 GP practice manager event**

This session includes information on the NHS Pension Scheme website, Annual Benefit Statements, roles and responsibilities, Pensions Online (POL), the AW8 and the member journey. The details for the next available course are as follows:

- Tuesday 21 March 2023, 10am - 2pm

### **Level 2 GP practice manager event**

These sessions include roles and responsibilities, flexible retirement, leave overview, ill health and family benefits. The details for the next available course are as follows:

- Wednesday 5 April 2023, 10am - 2pm

## **NHS Pensions Member Events – new dates added up to June**

In 2022 we had over 2,000 delegates attend the Administration Foundation course, GP Practice Managers Level 1 and Level 2 courses and over 18,000 members participating in our live webinar events via Microsoft Teams.

The NHS Pensions member events aim to help members understand everything they need to know about their NHS pension and how to navigate through the Scheme.

We have several events planned throughout the year to help them which includes:

- Understand what the NHS Pension Scheme is
- Find out all they need to know about their Total Reward Statement and Annual Benefit Statement
- Explore their retirement options

You can find links to [register for the member events up to June 2023 here.](#)