

NHS Pensions Update – March 2023

Welcome to the March 2023 NHS Pensions Employer Update.

Sharing our performance

Table 1- Total Transactions (February 2023)

Item	Volume
Total Transactions	74,834
First retirements	9,019
Estimates	9,671
Annual allowance	2,646
Ill health applications	821
AP/ERRBO/AVC	38
Bereavements	8,993
Transfers	2,225
Nominations	2,497
Pensions On Divorce	862
Protection of Pay	36
Refunds	1,915
Revised retirements	102
Service	1,193
Inbound processing	3,309
Data support	19,277
Pensioner admin	12,230

Table 2 - First Retirements and Pensioners (February 2023)

Item	Volume
Applications Processed	9,019
On Time	99.6%
Amount paid in Lump Sums	£149,787,998.95
Amount of Pension Paid	£911,802,245.49
No. Pensioners in Payment	1,091,784

Table 3 - Employer Helpline statistics (February 2023)

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	2,618
Average Handling Time (s)	525
Average Speed of Answer (s)	208

Table 4 - Member Helpline statistics (February 2023)

Item	Volume
Total Volume Calls	26,563
Average Handling Time (s)	619
Average Speed of Answer (s)	499

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.

Pensions Online (POL) downtime – March and April 2023

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

- Sunday 19 March
- Sunday 26 March
- Saturday 1 April
- Sunday 23 April

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.

DHSC confirms changes to scheme rules for retire and re-join and partial retirement

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has confirmed that amendments to the NHS Pension Scheme rules will go ahead to help retain more experienced NHS clinicians and remove barriers to staff returning to work following retirement.

DHSC [published the outcome of its consultation](#) on the proposed changes on Tuesday 7 March.

The confirmed changes include:

- introducing retire and re-join for members with 1995 Section benefits **from 1 April 2023**
- introducing changes to make it simpler to take partial retirement **from 1 October 2023**

Now the consultation response has been issued we're updating our website including the [Your options for a flexible retirement](#) webpage.

We'll be sharing more information before the end of March 2023 on the retire and return changes being introduced from 1 April 2023. We'll also share these with you by email.

We're aiming to share updates and information on partial retirement by early summer ahead of implementation from 1 October 2023.

DHSC confirms change of date of annual 2015 Scheme revaluation

Each year, 2015 Scheme pensions for members who are still actively contributing are reviewed to keep up with the rise in the cost of living. 2015 Scheme pensions are reviewed using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the year before, plus an additional 1.5%.

This is called revaluation and it usually happens on the 1 April, but from 2023 onwards it will happen on the 6 April.

For GPs, non-GP providers and dental practitioners, this uplift happens to your pensionable earnings in the 1995 and 2008 Sections and it will also take place on the 6 April from 2023.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has [confirmed the change of date in the outcome of its recent consultation](#).

DHSC is making the change to address a gap between the CPI used to calculate in-service revaluation of 2015 Scheme benefits and the CPI used for working out the pension growth for annual allowance tax calculations. This means that the pension growth calculation will only consider growth in pension benefits above inflation.

Status of NHS Pension Scheme member data by employer

In March we will be sending information to finance directors or senior managers of large NHS organisations, to advise on the status of their member data prior to completion of the annual Contributions Assurance Certificate. A copy will be sent to the NHS Pensions contact.

The information will include an assessment of data based on the number of members, outstanding updates and the data errors outstanding for your employing authority. Below is an example of the details we will send:

Organization name	Position compared to other employers	Open employments	Non-Updated employments	Data errors allocated to you
1234 – NHS Trust	21	7,200	2	6

In addition to this, we will provide an anonymised national table for employers to understand how their data compares across other, large NHS organisations. For transparency, the table also shows data errors or actions allocated to NHS Pensions. Below is an example of the national table:

Position compared to other employers	Open employments	Non updated employments	Employer allocated errors	NHSP Allocated errors/actions
1	9,000	1	0	30
2	7,500	2	0	147
67	4,700	60	26	266
68	1,500	4	26	84
136	6,500	216	309	312
137	16,300	820	556	536

Employers whose position is amber or red are required to take urgent action to improve their member data.

Member contributions 2022/23 year-end employer guidance

We have shared an update on member contributions and year-end guidance for 2022/23. It includes:

- Requirements for submitting your year-end contribution totals
- Advice on understanding if you need to complete year-end re-banding

You can [view a copy of this 2022/23 year-end employer guidance](#) on the website.

If you have any queries on the member contributions changes made on the 1 October 2022, you can also read our [guidance on the top ten employer queries about member contributions](#).

We can also confirm that the current tiers and contribution rates for member contributions will remain unchanged from the 1 April 2023.

Non-POL annual update reminder

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.

Annual Total Reward Statement refresh

The annual Total Reward Statement (TRS) refresh is set to commence with the data cut being taken after close of business on Friday 16 June. 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.

RE08 re-employment form

In January we explained there were some changes that were going to be made where we intended to remove the RE08 (re-employment form) from the retirement notice letter for all types of retirements, except for those which are still subject to abatement (ill health and interests of efficiency). We hoped this removal would take place during a system release in February, however this wasn't possible and it will now take place at the start of April.

Until this has taken place there is no requirement to return the RE08 (except in the cases stated above) and closer to the end of the relaxation of the regulations, we will contact all those who have confirmed on their AW8 that they are re-employed to ask them if their employment has continued and to provide them with an earnings margin, if required.

NHS Pensions will no longer be double checking that a 24-hour break has been taken before the member returns to work after retirement. This requirement is the responsibility of the employer.

Reminder – completion of final pay controls Supplementary FPC1 form

We no longer require you to provide pensionable pay (TPP) for 1995 members on the FPC1 form. This field has been removed from the form in line with the awards process and the removal of this information on the AW8. Our systems will calculate the pensionable pay.

You must still complete the FPC1 form with the additional information required to help us determine if a final pay control charge applies.

The FPC1 form must be returned to us when you submit the member's retirement application form AW8.

You can find all information and guidance on the [final pay controls page of the Employer Hub](#).

Reminder of extended 2020/21 voluntary scheme pays deadline of 31 March 2023

A reminder that the extended voluntary scheme pays deadline for 2020/21 is on the 31 March 2023.

Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 the decision was taken to extend the voluntary scheme pays deadline for 2020/21 from the 31 July 2022 to the 31 March 2023.

The NHSBSA does not have the authority to extend the mandatory scheme pays election deadline for 2020/21, as this was confirmed in legislation. The 2020/21 mandatory scheme pays deadline was 31 July 2022. More information can be found on the [Annual Allowance page of the Member Hub](#).

New NHS Pensions member events for NHS dental practitioners

A new series of NHS Pensions member events are now available specifically for NHS dental practitioners who are part of the NHS Pension Scheme.

The events aim to provide more clarity on what the Scheme is and the benefits that members are entitled to, as well as how to navigate through the Scheme. The sessions include:

- An overview of the Scheme
- Eligibility of the Scheme and its Sections
- Contractual enrolment
- Cost of being in the Scheme
- General Dental Practitioner (GDP) categories
- Providers pensionable income
- Annual Reconciliation Report (ARR)
- How to nominate someone to receive your pension in the event of your death
- Benefits of the Scheme
- Pension commutation
- How to increase your benefits

The events are an hour and a half long and includes a presentation and Q&A for anyone to ask questions at the end.

The first events for NHS dental practitioners are in April and [more information can be found on the Member Hub](#).

If you register and then are unable to attend, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can reallocate your reserved place to the next available person.

NHS Pensions Member Events

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](#).

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