

EMPLOYER

Technical Update

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1. Reminder - Disclosure of Senior Managers' Remuneration and Pension Details

Please note: GP Practices and Direction bodies do not need to take part in this exercise.

HSS(F) 59/2010 refers. As notified by Pat McCarney (Financial Accounting Unit), all requests for information under Disclosure of Senior Managers' Remuneration and Pension Details should have been received by HSC Pension Service by Friday 7th January 2011.

This is to enable us to provide you with the necessary disclosure information by the required deadline.

Important Note: Information supplied by HSC Pension Service should be thoroughly checked by employers.

2. Pension Position of On-Call Arrangements for Agenda for Change Staff

Pension Position

Commitment or availability payment

Regular payments made in recognition of being available for on-call work where there is a specific rota commitment are pensionable for both whole-time and part-time members. It is recognised that there must be some degree of flexibility within an on-call rota but in order to pension this payment a member must have a definite commitment to the rota for which they are paid on a regular basis, i.e. weekly, monthly or annually.

For whole-time members payments for work done whilst on-call are non-pensionable as they are classed as overtime.

For part-time members payments for work done whilst on-call are pensionable at plain time rates, up to the whole time weekly hours. Hours up to whole time should be credited for pension purposes.

Sleeping in

The availability payment is pensionable. The payment for work done is pensionable up to the whole time weekly hours only. When a member already works whole time the hours worked during a sleep-in would be classed as overtime and non-pensionable. Where an individual undertakes no other work for the Trust other than performing the sleep-in, the payment made for sleeping-in is non-pensionable. No actual work is performed so the payment cannot be attached to hours worked.

Previous arrangements

HSC Pension Service is aware that some employers operating “combined” on-call payment arrangements may have pensioned the whole amount for both part-time and whole time staff under previous arrangements. Further information on this will follow in a later newsletter.

Unsocial hours

On-call payments should not be confused with the enhancement paid for unsocial hours worked (for example during the night, or at weekends) within normal standard hours, which is pensionable.

3. 2008 Section Draw Down applications

A key feature of the **2008 Section of the HSC Pension Scheme** is the provision for partial retirement, or 'draw down'. On reaching age 55 members become eligible to take some of their pension if they reduce their pay by switching to a lower paid job or reducing their hours of work. A break in employment is not required to take advantage of this provision to 'draw down' some of their pension.

To be eligible for draw down members must:

- be age 55 or older;
- be reducing actual pensionable pay by at least 10% (or a 10% reduction in commitment for GPs);
- have had the previous level of pensionable pay for at least 12 months;
- expect the new level of pensionable pay to last at least 12 months;
- not have already drawn down twice.

Subject to overall limits, members can draw down a minimum of 20% and up to a maximum of 80% of their pension entitlement earned to date, whilst continuing to build up further membership.

If you have a member of the 2008 Section applying to draw down some of their pension then;

- Complete a form AW6 form as normal marked '2008 section Draw Down'.
- On a separate sheet of paper we need the following information from you,
 - Confirmation that the member has reduced their pensionable pay by at least 10% (or a 10% reduction in commitment if a GP) and
 - The amount of pension that they wish to take, with the minimum amount being 20% and the maximum 80%.
- Attach this separate sheet of paper to the AW6 form and sent it to HSC Pension Service.

4. Changes for members returning to work in receipt of an Ill-health pension;

Ill Health retirement – Returning to work with a Tier 2 Pension - Factsheet

Information for members who are in receipt of a Tier 2 pension and intend to return to work has been released as a factsheet onto our website.

The factsheet sets the restrictions for those members who have retired on a tier-2 ill health pension (meaning that they have satisfied the medical advisers that they are permanently incapable of engaging in any regular employment because of the illness or injury) and now feel well enough to return to work.

If a member wants to retain their Tier 2 ill health pension there are restrictions based on the kind of work they do and the amount of money they earn. These restrictions differ primarily on whether they return to work in the HSC or not. There are two restrictions for those who return to work in the HSC and one for those outside HSC work.

You should also be aware that under the rules governing the continued receipt of a tier-2 ill health pension, members will be subject to an annual review.

The Factsheet can be found on our website – www.hscpensions.hscni.net

5. Reminder – Employers should only use current HSC Pension Scheme Forms

Employers are reminded that they should not use old stocks of HSC Pension Scheme Forms as these are routinely reviewed and amended.

Employers can access the most up to date forms via the HSC Pension Service website – www.hscpensions.hscni.net under the fast link entitled 'Scheme Forms'.

In particular:

- For a Permanent Injury Benefit application, form PIB 1 should be used
- For a Refund of Contributions application, form REF (1) should be used

6. Availability of GP Providers (& Non-GP Providers) Annual Certificate of Pensionable Profits 2009/10

The 2009/10 Annual Certificate of Pensionable Profits, which all GP (& non-GP) Providers must complete, is now available on our website www.hscpensions.hscni.net under the fast link entitled 'Scheme Forms'.

You can also find comprehensive guidance and completion notes in addition to guidance covering 'frequently asked questions' and 'overlaps'.

It is a statutory requirement of HSC Scheme membership that every GP Provider, and non-GP Provider, completes the certificate each year.

The deadline for completion and return to BSO is 28 February 2011.

7. The Assistant Medical Practitioner Self-Assessment of Tiered Contributions 2009/10

The 2009/10 Assistant Medical Practitioner Self-Assessment of Tiered Contributions, which all Assistant Medical Practitioners must complete, will shortly be available for completion and return to BSO.

You will receive an Employer Technical Update to inform you when this is available on our website.

It is a statutory requirement of HSC Scheme membership that every Assistant Medical Practitioner in Northern Ireland completes the Self-Assessment form each year.

Distribution List:

The Director of Finance and Director of Human Resources of the:
HSC Board;
The Business Services Organisation;
The Patient and Client Council;
The Public Health Agency;
HSC Trusts;
Each Special Agency;
GP Practices;
Dental Practitioners;
Out of Hours Providers;
Directional Bodies;
and
Staff Representative Bodies.

How to contact us:

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Via e- mail at:- hscpensions@hscni.net

By Fax:- 028 71 319144

For urgent enquiries only, you can contact us by Telephone: 028 7131 9111

9.00am to 5.00pm – Monday to Thursday; 9.00am to 12.00 Friday

Any enquiries relating to this update should be emailed to Emma Cocks, HSC Pension Service - emma.cocks@hscni.net

If you have any comments about the content or format of this newsletter please email them to hscpensions@hscni.net

