

## Auto Enrolment – Member FAQs

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### 1. General

#### Q What is Auto Enrolment?

A The Government has introduced a new law that requires all employers to automatically enrol certain workers. Due to a change in law the Government requires all employees who are aged 22 or over, earn over £8,105 per year (2012-13) and are under State Pension age to be enrolled into a qualifying workplace pension scheme, if they are not already in one.

The aim is to make it easier for workers to save for their retirement and for more people to have another income, on top of the State Pension, when they come to retire.

Employers will also have a duty to automatically re-enrol workers into a qualifying pension scheme every three years.

#### Q Does auto-enrolment apply to me?

A Employers must enrol into a workplace pension scheme, workers who:  
are not already in a qualifying workplace pension scheme;  
are aged 22 or over; are under State Pension age; earn more than £8,105.00 per year (in 2012-13); and work or usually work in the UK.

#### Q What pension scheme will I be enrolled in?

A You will be enrolled in the HSC Pension Scheme if you meet the scheme's eligibility criteria.

If you cannot be enrolled in the HSC scheme for any reason, your employer will enrol you in an alternative qualifying pension scheme, such as the National Employee's Savings Trust (NEST).

**Q What is a qualifying workplace pension scheme?**

**A** It is a pension scheme that meets certain standards that are set by the Government.

The HSC Pension Scheme is a qualifying workplace pension scheme.

**Q I qualify for auto-enrolment. When will I be enrolled in the Scheme?**

**A** Auto enrolment is being introduced by all HSC employers over a five year period, commencing March 2013.

The largest HSC employers will conduct their auto-enrolment duties first. Medium and smaller sized employers will follow later on.

If auto enrolment applies to you, your employer will inform you of your enrolment date nearer the time.

**Q What if I don't qualify for auto enrolment?**

**A** If you don't qualify for auto-enrolment then your employer will not automatically enrol you in a workplace pension scheme.

You may still be able to join the HSC Pension Scheme or another pension scheme if you wish. Your employer will be able to tell you more about this.

If you qualify for auto-enrolment at a later date, (for example if you reach age 22 or you start to earn more), then your employer will automatically-enrol you in a qualifying pension scheme at that time.

**Q I already pay into the HSC Pension Scheme. Will auto enrolment affect me?**

**A** If you are already paying into the HSC Pension Scheme then you should not be affected by auto enrolment. Your employer will write to tell you about this.

**Q I already pay into a Personal Pension Scheme. Will auto enrolment affect me?**

**A** Your employer will still need to assess you for auto enrolment. Employers are required to enroll eligible jobholders into a qualifying

workplace pension scheme if they are not already in one.

If you are auto-enrolled into a workplace pension scheme, you can choose to opt out of the scheme if you wish.

**Q Can I choose not to be auto-enrolled into a pension scheme?**

- A** No. Your employer is required by law to automatically enrol their employees, who are classed as eligible jobholders, into a qualifying workplace pension scheme.

If you are auto-enrolled into a workplace pension scheme, you can choose to opt out of the scheme if you wish.

**Q Do I have a choice about the scheme I am enrolled in?**

- A** No. The HSC Pension Scheme is the default pension scheme for HSC employers to be enrolled in.

If you are not eligible to join the HSC Pension Scheme for any reason then your employer must enrol you in an alternative qualifying pension scheme, such as the National Employee Savings Trust (NEST).

Once your employer has enrolled you in a pension scheme, you can choose to opt out of it if you wish.

**Q Can I ask my employer to delay my enrolment date?**

- A** No. The Pensions regulator has provided a date (known as the staging date) to HSC Employers according to the size of their PAYE scheme as at April 2012 and Employers cannot change the staging date.

**Q Where can I find further information and advice about Automatic Enrolment?**

- A** You can find further information about auto-enrolment and other pension matters from the following organisations:

**The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS)**

Website: [www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk](http://www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk)

Telephone: 0845 601 2923

### The Money Advice Service

Website: [www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk](http://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk)

Telephone: 0300 500 5000 or 0300 500 5555 (Welsh)

## 2. Where can I find further information and advice about Automatic Enrolment?

Q How much does the HSC Pension Scheme cost?

A Employee contributions vary according to how much they earn. More information can be found on HSC Pension Service website at: [www.hscpensions.hscni.net](http://www.hscpensions.hscni.net).

In addition to the employee's contribution, the employer pays in a further 13.3% into the scheme on behalf of the employee.

Q How will I know when I am going to be enrolled in the HSC Pension Scheme or another scheme?

A Your employer will write to you in advance to confirm your enrolment date along with details of the scheme into which you will be enrolled.

Q I already pay into a personal pension instead of the HSC – what should I do?

A Even if you already have your own pension arrangements your employer must still assess you for auto-enrolment. If you qualify for auto enrolment then your employer will enrol you in a qualifying workplace pension scheme.

If you are auto-enrolled into a workplace pension scheme, you can choose to opt out of the scheme if you wish.

Q I have more than one HSC job – does auto enrolment apply to all my HSC employments?

A Yes. For the hours you work up to whole time, your employer will enrol you into the HSC Pension Scheme. For any jobs you work in addition to whole time hours, your employer may have to enrol you into an alternative qualifying pension scheme.

You should ensure that each of your HSC employers is aware of all your HSC jobs.

**Q Which Section of the HSC Pension Scheme will I be enrolled in?**

A The Scheme Regulations will determine which Section of the HSC Pensions Scheme you will be enrolled in.

Please refer to the flowchart in the Scheme Guide which will help you determine the Section of the Scheme that you are eligible to join.

**Q I am working in the HSC, but I am employed by an Agency. What will happen?**

A Either the Agency, as your direct employer, or the HSC employer at your place of work will assess you for auto enrolment.

Generally, Agency workers do not have access to the HSC Pension Scheme.

**Q I am currently on secondment to another organisation. What will happen?**

A Your originating employer is responsible for assessing you for auto enrolment.

If auto enrolment applies to you, you will be enrolled into your originating employer's pension scheme or, if this is not possible, into an alternative qualifying pension scheme.

### 3. Enrolment into an Alternative Qualifying Pension Scheme

**Q What is NEST?**

A NEST (the National Employment Savings Trust) is a new qualifying workplace pension scheme which has been set up to help employers meet their Auto-Enrolment obligations.

With NEST, employees have a single retirement 'pot' that can stay with them for life, regardless of whether they change jobs, or work for more than one employer. For more information, see their website:

[www.nestpensions.org.uk](http://www.nestpensions.org.uk).

**Q Why wasn't I enrolled into the HSC Pension Scheme?**

**A** Your employer has determined that you are not eligible to join the HSC Pension Scheme. In these circumstances auto-enrolment rules require them to enrol you in another qualifying pension scheme, such as NEST (the National Employment Savings Trust).

If you wish to check your eligibility for the HSC Pension Scheme, please refer to the Scheme Guide.

**Q I have been enrolled in the HSC Pension Scheme for my whole time HSC job and into another scheme for my part time HSC job. Why can't I pay into the HSC from both jobs?**

**A** Employees can only be members of the HSC Scheme for a maximum of whole time HSC employment.

This means that your additional part time post cannot be pensionable in the HSC Pension Scheme because the hours you work in this post are over and above whole time.

If your working pattern changes you must contact your employer(s).

**Q Can you advise me which pension scheme is best for me?**

**A** No. HSC Pension Service are unable to provide any kind of financial advice.

You can obtain further information from organisations such as The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS), whose services are free of charge.

Alternatively, you may wish to seek independent financial advice.

#### **4. Opting Out of the Scheme**

**Q How do I opt out of the HSC Pension Scheme?**

**A** To opt out of the HSC Pension Scheme you must complete the Application to leave the HSC Pension Scheme (SD502). The form must be fully completed by you and your HSC employer.

A request to opt out that is made by any other means e.g. letter, email or made verbally cannot be accepted.

**Q** How do I obtain an Application to leave the HSC Pension Scheme form (SD502)?

**A** The form can be downloaded from our website at:  
[www.hscpensions.hscni.net](http://www.hscpensions.hscni.net).

If you are unable to download and print a copy of the form you can request one by calling HSC Pension Service on 028 7131 9111.

**Q** Can my employer provide me with an Application to the leave the HSC Pension Scheme form (SD502)?

**A** No. Under the auto-enrolment rules, employers are prevented from issuing pension scheme opt out forms directly to their employees, following their staging date.

**Q** I don't have personal access to the internet or a printer. Can I use the computer facilities at my place of work to download the Application to leave the HSC Pension Scheme (SD502)?

**A** Yes, if your employer agrees. To comply with the auto enrolment rules, any facility made available by your employer must be on the understanding that you are obtaining the form yourself, rather than the employer providing you with the form.

**Q** Where do I send my completed Application to leave the HSC Pension Scheme (SD502) form?

**A** Once you have signed the SD502 form, it must then be passed to your employer for them to complete and process - please do not send the form to HSC Pension Service.

**Q** I have already opted out of the HSC Pension Scheme – why do I have to join the scheme and opt out again?

**A** Your employer is required by law to assess their employees for auto enrolment.

Employees that are not members of a qualifying pension scheme and who qualify for auto-enrolment must be enrolled in a scheme on the enrolment date.

The rules apply even where the employee has already opted out of the Scheme before the enrolment date.

**Q** I have more than one HSC job – do I have to opt out of the scheme in respect of all my jobs?

**A** If your jobs are with the same Employer then you only need to complete one SD502 form.

If your jobs are with different Employers you will need to complete an SD502 form for each employer.

**Q** If I opt out will my employer automatically re-enrol me in the future?

**A** Employers will continue to monitor the pension status of their employees and they are obliged to conduct an auto enrolment exercise every three years.

**Q** If I opt out can I join the HSC Pension Scheme at a later date?

**A** Yes. You can join or rejoin the HSC Pension Scheme at any time as long as you satisfy the Scheme's normal eligibility criteria (refer to the Scheme Guide for further details).

## 5. Refund of Contributions

**Q** I am opting out of the HSC Pension Scheme – will I get my contributions back?

**A** If you leave the scheme and have less than 2 years qualifying membership in total then a refund of contributions, less tax and National Insurance is possible.

**Q** Who will pay my HSC Pension Scheme refund?

**A** Either your employer or HSC Pension Service may pay a refund of contributions - this depends on how soon you opt out of the Scheme after your enrolment.

**Q** How do I claim a refund from HSC Pension Service if my contributions cannot be refunded by my Employer?

- A If you have less than 2 years qualifying HSC Pension membership then please ask your employer for the refund application form REF1.

#### **6. Lifetime Allowance/Fixed or Enhanced Protection**

- Q I opted out of the HSC Pension Scheme because I have Fixed or Enhanced Protection. Will I be assessed for auto-enrolment?

- A Yes. If you have previously opted out of the HSC Pension Scheme for any reason then you must be assessed under automatic enrolment rules.

To comply with HMRC rules, employees with enhanced or fixed protection may wish to avoid accruing further benefits in the HSC Pensions Scheme in order retain their protection and may want to opt out again having taken independent financial advice.

If you do, you must follow the normal opt out procedure and complete another Application to leave the HSC Pension Scheme (SD502).