

HSC Pension Board Annual Report covering the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

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1. Introduction

This is the second Annual Report by the HSC Pension Board (HSCPb) which was established as required under The Public Service Pensions (Northern Ireland) Act 2014. From the 1 April 2015 the HSCPb had the responsibility for “assisting the Scheme Manager” in securing compliance with all relevant pensions law, regulations and directions in respect of the Health and Social Care Pension Scheme, as well as with the Pension Regulator’s Codes of Practice No.14 - for Public Sector Schemes.

2. Executive Summary

The HSC Pension Board met three times between April 2017 and March 2018. Deborah McNeilly, Department of Health carried out the role of Interim Chair for all meetings held.

HSC Pension Service throughout the year, have progressed work in relation to the Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) reconciliation exercise, a significant administration exercise which all public service schemes are undertaking as advised by HMT, which is scheduled to be completed in November 2018.

Underpaid employer contributions totalling circa £15m was identified by PSS Payroll which resulted in HSC Pension Service reporting it as a ‘Breach of Law’ to the Pension Regulator, details of which can be found in **Paragraph 9 (Breaches of Law)**.

Challenges relating to the accuracy and provision of data have continued throughout the reporting year. The Board invited the Chief Executive of the BSO to the May 2017 Board Meeting to provide an update on data quality issues, the underpaid employer contributions and remedial action introduced to improve the quality of data being provided to HSC Pension Service.

Overall the Board’s activities in this past year have set it up well to continue improving Pension Scheme governance, administration and communications with, in the following year, an increased focus seeking assurance that there will be no adverse impacts on service delivery due to payroll data issues.

Minutes of all Board meeting for this reporting year can be found on the HSC Pension Service website www.hscpensions.hscni.net under the heading ‘Pension Board’.

3. Background – HSC Pension Scheme

The Health Service Pension Scheme (HSCPS) provides pensions to employees who have worked in Health and Social Care. It has two sections (1995 Section and 2008 Section) and provides defined benefits based on final salary for most members, with the exception of practitioners who were on the career average. The 1995 section has a normal pension age of 60 and an accrual rate of 1/80 (with an automatic lump sum of 3 times the pension). The 2008 section has a normal pension age of 65 and an accrual rate of 1/60 (with lump sum by commutation only). Both sections provide benefits to practitioners on a career average, rather than final salary, basis.

A new scheme (HSCPS 2015) was introduced from 1 April 2015. The 2015 scheme provides benefits on a career average basis, has normal pension age equal to State Pension Age, an accrual rate of 1/54, and revaluation of CPI+1.5% a year while in service and CPI out of service to all. In both schemes member contribution rates are tiered based on members' pay. Both schemes are unfunded occupational schemes backed by the Exchequer.

The 2015 scheme is open to all HSC employees and employees of other approved organisations. Most active members of the HSCPS transferred to the HSCPS 2015 Scheme on 1 April 2015. Under transitional arrangements aimed at providing protection for those nearest retirement age, some older members are continuing in the HSCPS until they leave due to retirement or otherwise, while others will transfer to the HSCPS 2015 Scheme at a later date.

There are some 63,518 contributing members across the schemes. Pensions are paid to around 36,794 pensioners, a further 14,614 members no longer contributing to the schemes retain entitlement to receive a pension at retirement. Both members and employers contribute to the schemes. Members pay between 5% and 14.5% of pay, depending on their earnings. With effect from 1 April 2015 employers pay a contribution rate of 16.3%.

4. HSC Pension Board – Membership

Two-thirds of the voting members of the HSC Pension Board represent a quorum for Board meetings to go ahead. The Chair must be present for meetings to be quorate. All meetings during 2017/18 have been quorate.

Interim Independent Chair: Deborah McNeilly (Department of Health)

Employer representatives

- Oonagh Burns Business Services Organisation
- Maryna Chambers Northern HSC Trust
- Pamela Crozier Western HSC Trust
- Jacqui Kennedy Belfast HSC Trust
- Alan Stout NIGPC
- Andrea Henderson Business Services Organisation

Member Representatives

- Kevin McAdam UNITE
- Roberta Magee UNISON
- Kevin McCabe NIPSA
- Desmond Lowry RCN
- Mary Caddell RCM
- Dr Padhraic Conneally BMA

5. HSC Pension Board – Terms of Reference

The agreed Terms of Reference for the Pension Board can be found in **Annex A**.

6. HSC Pension Board – Work Plan

The Board agreed a work plan which can be found in **Annex B**, and has made some progress against some of these objectives. A summary of progress is set out in below:-

Legal Cases - Brewster

At May 2016 meeting, Russell McGowan (Pension Policy Unit) explained the effect of the Supreme Court ruling on 8 February 2017, i.e. that scheme members would no longer be required to complete a partner nomination form in order for an unmarried partner to be considered for survivor benefits. HSC Pension Service have now applied the ruling in all relevant cases. DoH Pension Policy Unit will amend the scheme regulations to reflect the Supreme Court ruling.

Forfeiture

Board members discussed and agreed the content of a DoH circular HSS(P) 01/2017 on forfeiture of benefits at the May 2017 meeting.

BSO Data and Contributions

At the May 2017 meeting the Scheme Manager informed the Board that there were a significant number of payroll data errors and that HSC Pension Service had informed and agreed a data improvement plan with the Pension Regulator to resolve these issues over a six month period.

At the September 2017 meeting the Chief Executive of BSO advised Board members on the remedial action being taken in relation to under deducted employer contributions by PSS Payroll. BSO also advised that internal audit had been asked to

substantially increase the checks it performs to provide the wider assurance that Board members were seeking in relation to contributions / member data issues.

At the December 2017 meeting the Board agreed that 'data improvement' should be a standing item on the agenda for future meetings.

Pension Board – Annual Report

At the September 2017 meeting, Board members considered and endorsed the Annual Report.

TPR – Self Assessment

At September 2017 meeting, members agreed to complete the self-assessment template on the Pension Regulator website to help identify gaps in knowledge which would provide the basis for a forward training plan for 2018/19.

Review draft Training Plan

At December 2017 meeting, Board members agreed that for future meetings two items of training should be on the Agenda.

Tiered Contributions

At December 2017 meeting, Phil McCusker (Pension Policy Unit) updated members on the Scheme Valuation advising that the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) has been asked to consider an appropriate member contribution structure from April 2019, which may involve the use of 'actual pay' as opposed to 'whole time equivalent pay'.

7. Training – Progress to Date

Future Plans

Board members agreed at the meeting in December 2017 that for future meetings two items of training should be included on the Agenda and that a forward work plan for 2018/19 be agreed once the new independent chair was in place.

8. Recommendations

The Board had cause to invite the Chief Executive of the Business Services Organisation (BSO) to the September 2017 Board meeting to address concerns in relation to member data and underpaid employer contributions..

Meeting - 13 September 2017

The Board outlined its concerns relating to underfunded employer contributions and member data quality and seeking assurances on remedial action to resolve these issues.

The Payroll Manager of BSO advised that a programme of remedial action was in place to resolve the underfunded employer contribution issue in the form of manually working through estimated amounts and system software changes. The Chief Executive of BSO confirmed BSO Internal Audit has been asked to substantially increase the checks it performs and that this should provide the wider assurance the Board was looking for.

In relation to member data quality the Chief Executive of BSO informed the Board that he was impressing upon Payroll and HSC Pension Service to look within BSO for existing resources to address the outstanding and ongoing data queries in the short term, however a system software solution was the most appropriate way of dealing with the types of data queries raised.

Recommendation

At the December 2017 meeting it was agreed that 'data improvement' should be a standing item on the Board's Agenda and that HSC Pension Service should provide Board members with a progress report on data improvement at future meetings.

9. Breaches of Law

At the May 2017 meeting Board members agreed that the Pension Regulator should be notified under 'Breach of Law' guidance of the underpaid employer contributions of circa £15m.

On the 17 May 2017 HSC Pension Service informed the Pension Regulator of the Breach and the remedial action being taken to resolve the issue.

At the December 2017 meeting the Scheme Manager informed the Board that the Pension Regulator would be taking no enforcement action but expects that the issue is resolved by 30/4/2018.

10. Internal Disputes / Pension Ombudsman

Throughout the course of the year HSC Pension Service received six Internal Dispute Resolution applications all of which were declined.

Four cases related to the award of Mental Health Officer status, one related to a pension calculation query and one related to a query on pensionable pay.

One case was considered by the Pension Ombudsman relating to an overpayment due to re-employment (Abatement) which was not upheld.

11. Forward Work Plan – 2018/19

The forward work plan for year 2018/19 will be developed and agreed at the first Board meeting in 2018, when the new independent Chair will be in post.

12. Conclusion

The second full formal year of operation has successfully established the HSC Pension Board as an effective forum to oversee the administration of the HSC Pension Scheme and to provide robust challenge and effective governance. Going forwards, having overcome the initial challenges presented by the implementation of the new 2015 Pension Scheme, the HSC Pension Board aims to focus its attention on continuous improvement in service provision and HSC Pension member experience, as well as continuing to ensure effective compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations.

I would like to thank all Members of the HSC Pension Board for their contributions during its second year, as well as all stakeholders and observers who have played a key role in enabling us to reach this point.

Any queries on the content of this report should be sent in the first instance to russellmcgowan@health-ni.gov.uk

Deborah McNeilly

Chair

HSC Pension Board – Terms of Reference

Introduction

1. The Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 requires the establishment of a Pension Board with the responsibility for “assisting the Scheme Manager” in securing compliance with all relevant pensions law, regulations and directions – as well as the relevant Pension Regulator’s codes of practice. This role is one of providing assurance in and governance of the scheme administration.
2. The Pension Board is a new requirement under that Act, which has also specified that there should be equal numbers of member and employer representatives – currently proposed as six each.
3. The Pension Board will cover arrangements in Northern Ireland.
4. HSC Pension Scheme specific Regulations introduce the new Governance arrangements from April 2015.
5. In addition to the member and employer representatives, there will be other government representatives on the Pension Board, including DoH. It is proposed to instruct professional advisors, for example finance experts, GAD advisors and legal advisors on an “as required” basis to provide the breadth of specialist understanding to deliver compliance.
6. The scheme administrator (HSC Pension Service - BSO) will provide the necessary input into the Pension Board to support the Board to deliver on its assurance responsibilities. This may require their attendance at meetings for specified timeslots at the request of the Board, through the secretariat.
7. The DoH will provide the secretariat. It is proposed that the Pension Board meets on a quarterly basis, as a minimum.

Scope of the HSC Pension Board (HSCPB)

8. The purpose of the HSCPB is to carry out the roles and responsibilities that a Trustee Board would fulfil for a private sector occupational pension scheme.
9. The HSCPB’s overriding aim is to ensure that all members of the HSC pension arrangements receive on time their correct benefits under the scheme rules. The HSCPB will wish to ensure, as far as is possible, good outcomes for all members of the HSCPB pension arrangements in matters such as receiving excellent service.
10. The HSCPB will at all times work to protect the reputation of the scheme for effective administration and for proper use of scheme funds in

accordance with such good practice guidance that may be issued by the Pensions Regulator.

11. The HSCPB does not have responsibility for providing advice on the desirability of changes to the scheme and on matters of policy.

Definitions

12. In relation to the Pension Board :-

- **The 'Scheme Manager'** – is the Head of the HSC Pension Service
- **The 'Responsible Authority'** – is the DoH

Accountability

13. The Pension Board collectively and members individually are accountable to the DoH, which is the 'responsible authority' for the HSC Pension Scheme.

Responsibilities of the Pension Board

14. The Pension Board is responsible for assisting the Scheme Manager in:
 - Overall assurance and governance of the HSC Pension Scheme administration;
 - Assuring effective and efficient administration of the scheme;
 - Seek assurance that decisions made by the scheme administrator are fully legally compliant, including consideration of cases that have been referred to the Pension Regulator and/or the Pension Ombudsman; recommending changes to processes training and / or guidance where necessary;
 - Supporting continuous improvements;
 - Assuring the scheme administrator supports employers to communicate the benefits of the HSC Pension Scheme through effective communication to members;
 - Assuring the scheme administrator supports members with a range of tools to improve their understanding of their pension benefits as part of the total reward offer, and to inform their personal financial and career planning;
 - Supporting effective implementation of the Employer Charter;
 - Enabling data quality improvements to deliver CARE pension outcomes;
 - Compliance with the Pension Regulator's codes of practice;
 - Fostering good working relationships with the Pension Regulator;
 - Consideration of the annual report from the Pension Regulator, including any responses to recommendations;
 - Producing an annual report outlining the work of the Board throughout the scheme year.

Membership

15. The membership of the Pension Board will include:
 - Member representatives nominated by the staff side to ensure a broad representation of scheme membership; for example to include deferred and pensioner representation. Member representatives will be voting members.
 - Employer representatives that can offer the breadth of employer representation for the HSC PS. Employer representatives will be voting members.
 - The employer and member representatives will remain equal in number at all times
 - An independent Chairperson appointed via the Public Appointments process. The Chair will hold the deciding vote if any vote taken by the member and employer representatives on the Board results in an equal vote.
 - Representatives from the DoH, who will be non-voting members.
 - Attendance is expected of Board members at all meetings; no alternate representation or substitution is allowed

Role of the Scheme Manager (Head of HSC Pension Service)

16. The Scheme Manager will be represented at Board meetings by the Head of the HSC Pension Service or another senior official although they will not Board Members.
17. The Scheme Manager will provide information, assistance and guidance to the Board in relation to operational issues and the day to day administration of HSC Pension Scheme.

Role of the Responsible Authority (The DHSSPS)

18. The Responsible Authority will be represented at Board meetings by staff from the DoH Workforce Policy Directorate (Pension Policy Unit) who will be non-voting members of the Board.
19. The Responsible Authority will provide guidance and assistance to the Board on matters of pension policy and legislation.

Decision Making Process

20. The Pension Board is expected to operate on a consensus basis; however each member (except government representatives) will have individual voting rights. In the event that consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be taken. The Chair will not vote at this stage; only if the vote is equal will the Chair have the deciding vote. The scheme manager should be made aware when a decision is reached in this manner.

Quorum

21. Two-thirds of the voting members of the Pension Board will represent a quorum for Board meetings to go ahead. The Chair must be present for the meeting to be quorate.

Conflicts of Interest

22. The Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 requires that members of the Pension Board do not have conflicts of interests. As such all members of the Pension Board will be required to declare any interests and any potential conflicts of interest in line with legal requirements in The Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 and The Pension Regulator's code. These declarations are required as part of the appointment process, as well as at regular intervals throughout a member's tenure.
23. Annexed to these Terms of Reference is the questionnaire to be completed by Board members to ensure that the scheme manager can be satisfied that Board members do not have any conflicts of interest.

Training requirements

24. Members of the Pension Board will be expected to have a good, sound knowledge and understanding of the scheme rules, the scheme's administration policies and pension law. This will require on-going updates and training as legal requirements change and develop including relevant regulations and directions from HMT and DWP. This is set out further in the Pension Regulator's draft Code of Practice number 14, "governance and administration of public service pension schemes".

Meeting arrangements

25. The Pension Board will meet quarterly in the first year and this arrangement will be reviewed to ensure that it enables delivery of responsibilities.
26. The DoH will undertake the secretariat function for the Pension Board and as such will ensure that:
 - Facilities are available to hold meetings
 - An annual schedule of meetings is organised
 - Suitable arrangements are in place to hold additional meetings if required – ensuring adequate notice
 - Papers will be distributed 7 days before each meeting except for exceptional circumstances
 - Minutes of each meeting will normally be circulated 10 working days following each meeting

Expertise

27. It may be necessary to draw on particular experts or expert groups to support the responsibilities of the Pension Board, such as actuaries and

lawyers. This will be done on an 'as required' basis; any expert advisor attending the meeting is not a Board member and does not have a vote. If required, sub-groups may be established to assist the Board.

28. The Pension Board will work with the Scheme Advisory Board on some key matters such as communication and lines of accountability will be agreed.

Relationship to the Scheme Advisory Board

29. Whilst the function of the Scheme Advisory Board is to provide advice to the Responsible Authority (i.e. Department) about the desirability of scheme changes – there may well be a need for some sharing of information or discussion between the boards.

Remuneration

30. Remuneration for board members will be limited to a refund of actual expenses incurred in attending Board meetings, in accordance with the DoH's expenses policy. The Chair's remuneration will be agreed on appointment.

Tenure

31. Tenure period for board members will usually run for a three to five year period on a rolling appointment basis – assuming a maximum of nine years in any continuous period of 12 years. Tenure will be decided by the scheme manager during the appointment process; board members will have different tenures to ensure continuation of membership in equal numbers for the employer and staff-side members. The Chair's tenure will be agreed on appointment, but will also be between three and five years.
32. Resignation of board members will be documented in writing to the Pension Board Chair. A suitable notice period must be given, with 1 month being a minimum, to enable a replacement member to be found.
33. The performance of board members will be assessed on a periodic basis to ensure that all members are adequately meeting their duties. Poor performance will result in corrective action being taken, and in exceptional circumstances the removal of the Board member.

Review

These terms of reference will be reviewed at the end 2018/19 year, and periodically thereafter.

WORK PLAN FOR HSC PENSION BOARD 2017/18¹

<u>MEETINGS</u>	<u>SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEM</u>
<u>MAY 2017</u>	• Legal Cases (Brewster)
	• Forfeiture
<u>SEPTEMBER 2017</u>	• BSO Data & Contributions.
	• Pension Board Annual Report
<u>DEC17</u>	• TPR Self-Assessment
	• Review Draft Training Plan
	• Tiered Contributions

RECURRING ITEMS:

- Conflicts of Interest
- Scheme Manager's Report
- Data Improvement
- Presentations on pension related matters.
- Risk Register ongoing reviews
- Scheme Valuation
- Recent legislative changes
- Further training requirements as requested by the Board.

¹ NOTE- it is proposed to hold 4 meetings a year. Other meetings will be scheduled as necessary.

HSC PENSION SCHEME - PENSION BOARD TRAINING PLAN

Purpose of the Training Plan

The purpose of this training plan is to determine the training packages that are available, or will be developed, to train the Pension Board Chair and members, to ensure that they are adequately equipped to fulfil their roles.

Not all Pension Board members will need to complete all training, as an individual Training Needs Analysis will be completed to determine the knowledge gap that needs to be addressed for each member and the requirement to undertake training course will be based upon that.

Summary of Training Modules

Training Module	Purpose	What is included	Who would develop	Who would deliver	Mode of delivery	Timing for delivery
1 The HSC Pension Scheme	To provide an overview of the HSC Pension Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evolution of the NHS Pension Scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1995 Scheme summary - 2008 Scheme summary - 2015 Scheme summary 		DoH		

Training Module	Purpose	What is included	Who would develop	Who would deliver	Mode of delivery	Timing for delivery	
2	Scheme Administration	To provide an overview of governance, operations and monitoring of the HSC Pension Scheme Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the HSC Pension Scheme Administrators (HSC Pension Service)) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational structure - Governance structure - Services offered - Data collection and storage - Support provided to members / employers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tools ○ Engagement & Communications • Policy documents as required by TPR, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Record keeping - Internal dispute resolution - Reporting Breaches - Maintaining contributions • Performance Indicators & service evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KPIs - Annual benchmarking exercise - Annual customer satisfaction exercise - Annual staff survey • Service delivery planning (how is it done) 		Scheme Administrators		

Training Module	Purpose	What is included	Who would develop	Who would deliver	Mode of delivery	Timing for delivery
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery risks • Issues encountered by administrators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fraud cases - Disputes • HSC Specific Exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Choice 2 ○ Option to forgo protection ○ Annual Benefit Statements ○ GMP Reconciliation ○ Annual and lifetime allowance changes 				
3	Role of the Pension Board	To provide an overview of the role and function of the Pension Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function of the Pension Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roles and responsibilities • Conflict of interest • Reporting breaches of the law • Work Plan 		DoH	
4	Pensions Legislation	To provide an overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the legislative process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing Scheme Regulations 		DoH	

	Training Module	Purpose	What is included	Who would develop	Who would deliver	Mode of delivery	Timing for delivery
		of the Pensions legislation, regulations and TPR codes of practice that the HSC Pension Scheme is required to conform to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation processes • Dispute Resolution • Pensions related legislation • The interface between occupational schemes and state pensions provision • The Pension Regulator Code of Practice 		The Pensions Regulator?		
5	Overview of a Defined Benefit Scheme	To provide a high level summary of how the funding and operation of a Direct Benefit scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How a Defined Benefits Scheme works • Funding Defined Benefit Schemes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Valuation (SCAPE methodology) - Making assumptions - Member matters - Statutory funding objective - Measuring the liabilities - Calculating the liabilities - Member contributions • The importance of complete, accurate and up-to-date data and calculations 		GAD		

Training Module	Purpose	What is included	Who would develop	Who would deliver	Mode of deliv ery	Timing for delivery
	works					

Risk Register – HSC Pension Board

	Description of Risk	Risk Management Action Undertaken and Planned	Risk Assessment	Risk Owner
Quarterly meetings	Pension Board unable to achieve quorum	Schedule of meetings agreed in advance	Medium	Secretariat
Scheme Knowledge / Understanding	Board members lack of knowledge/understanding of role and responsibilities	<p>Completion and Review of Board members Training Needs Assessment</p> <p>Provide Ongoing training to Board Members</p> <p>Board members to self train online via Pension Regulator Website and HSC Pension Service website</p>	Medium	<p>Board Members / Chair</p> <p>HSC Pension Service</p> <p>Board Members</p>
Ability to Scrutinise information / reports reliably and accurately	Failure to identify appropriate management information required to effectively scrutinise and challenge scheme administrator on governance and	<p>Support of experts as required</p> <p>Ongoing evaluation of competencies of</p>	Medium	<p>Board Members / Chair</p> <p>Chair</p>

	regulatory requirements Reputational Damage to the Pension Board	members Share best practice with other Pension Boards		
Reporting Breaches of the law	Failure to identify and report regulation breaches	Board Members to be fully aware of their reporting responsibilities as detailed in Pension Regulator Code of Practice Provide guidance / training to Board Members	Low	Board Members HSC Pension Service
Conflict of interest	Failure to declare conflicts of interest	Complete Conflict of Interest Declaration Standing Item at every Board Meeting Complete Declaration of Interests Register	Low	Board Members / Chair

GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF RISK

Introduction

These guidelines have been produced to enable those risks identified and included within the risk register to be analysed and assessed on a consistent basis. This involves determining the existing controls and analysing the risks in terms of their impact and likelihood with those controls in place.

Impact

This involves assessing the impact of the risk, should it materialise, upon the successful achievement of the HSC Pension Scheme's business objectives. The range of values to be entered is 1 (insignificant) to 5 (catastrophic).

Table 1 - Categories of Risk Impact, provides guidance to help assess the appropriate impact.

Likelihood

Table 2 – Qualitative Measures of Likelihood provides further detail to assist in identifying the appropriate likelihood of the risk. The range of values this time is 1 (Rare) to 5 (Almost Certain).

Overall Assessment

The overall level of risk is a product of the two values identified above (i.e. Impact x Likelihood) and is determined by applying each of these to the matrix within **Table 3** – Level of Risk. The parameters in this instance are Low, Medium and High. By way of example, using the matrix at Table 3, it can be seen that a risk with a 'Moderate' impact and 'Almost

Certain' likelihood would have High level of risk whereas a risk with a 'Moderate' impact and 'Possible' likelihood would be assigned a Medium level of risk.

Table 1 – Impact

The impact of a risk on the successful achievement of a business objective is measured on a rising scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents ‘insignificant’ impact and 5 stands for ‘catastrophic’ impact. Measurement is generally subjective so, when recording an impact assessment, it is important to document the assumptions underlying the assessment. The table below illustrates the levels of impact on four of the criteria against which risk is to be assessed.

Impact	Non-achievement of key objectives	Reputation / Publicity	Financial consequence	Litigation
	Anything that poses a threat to the achievement of the Pension Scheme’s objectives or service delivery for members	Anything that could damage the reputation of the Department / HSC Pension Service / Pension Board or undermine the public’s confidence in it	Failure to guard against impropriety, malpractice waste or poor value for money (financial scale indicative only)	Failure to comply with the Pension Scheme regulations and the Pension Regulator’s Code of Practice
1. Insignificant	Minor non-compliance	No Press Coverage	Negligible financial loss - less than £1000	Very Unlikely – But Possible Pension Ombudsman Case
2. Minor	Single failure to meet internal standards	Pension Regulator Concerns No press Coverage	Low financial loss - between £1,000 and £9,999	Pension Ombudsman

3. Moderate	Repeated failures to meet internal standards	Pension Regulator Concerns DoH Concerns Possible Media coverage	Medium financial loss - between £10,000 and £99,999	Industrial Tribunal Pensions Ombudsman Court Proceedings / Judicial Review
4. Major	Failure to meet national standards	Media Coverage Expected Questions in the Assembly	High financial loss – between £100,000 and £499,999	Court Proceedings
5. Catastrophic	Gross failure to meet professional standards	Extensive Media Coverage	Extreme financial loss - £500,000 or more	Court Proceedings

Table 2 –Likelihood



The likelihood of a risk occurring is also measured on five-part scale, rising from 1 (rare) to 5 (almost certain to occur). Again, as experience and subjectivity play a large part in this assessment, it is important to document the assumptions underlying the assessment. The table below illustrates the degrees of assessed likelihood.

CODE	DESCRIPTOR	DESCRIPTION
1	Rare	The event will only occur in exceptional circumstances.
2	Unlikely	The event could conceivably occur but not expected to.
3	Possible	The event might occur at some time.
4	Likely	The event will probably occur in some instances
5	Almost Certain	The event is expected to occur in some instances

Table 3 – Level of Risk

Level of risk is a product of the values for Impact and Likelihood, and is determined by applying each of these to the matrix below. The four parameters are Low, Medium or High. For example, a risk with a 'Moderate' impact and 'Almost Certain' likelihood would have High level of risk whereas a risk with a 'Moderate' impact and 'Possible' likelihood would constitute a Medium level of risk.

IMPACT	Risk Quantification Matrix				
5 - Catastrophic	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	High (20)	High (25)
4 – Major	Low (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (16)	High (20)
3 - Moderate	Low (3)	Medium (6)	Medium (9)	High (12)	High (15)
2 – Minor	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
1 – Insignificant	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
	1	2	3	4	5
	Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
	Likelihood				

HSC Pension Service

Key Performance Indicators

		% Number of Procedures Within Target
Joiners/rejoiners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO shall validate interface details within 15 working days of receipt of the relevant interface data BSO will allocate joiners/rejoiners to correct section of the HSC Pension Scheme 	99%
Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO will acknowledge all ad-hoc correspondence within 15 working days of receipt of all information 	99%
Leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO will provide members who leave with less than 2 years membership details of options to take either a transfer value or refund of contributions within 12 months of the member leaving. The BSO will refund contributions within 3 months of receiving the application The BSO will preserve benefits 132 months after the date any member with at least 2 years membership leaves the Scheme 	99%
Transfers In:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO shall acknowledge receipt of Member's request for transfer value within 15 working days, once in receipt of all relevant information. The BSO will issue request for transfer value to sending scheme within 15 days of receiving member's request The BSO shall send a reminder to the sending scheme after 60 days with further reminders at regular intervals The BSO shall process transfer amount within 15 working days of receipt of members instruction to transfer their rights 	99%
Transfers Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO shall acknowledge receipt of instruction from Member's pension scheme within 15 working days once in receipt of all relevant information The BSO shall provide a transfer quote within 8 weeks of receiving the request once in receipt of all relevant information (quote guaranteed for 3 months) 	99%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO shall complete the transfer within 20 working days of receiving the member's instruction to transfer their rights 	
Additional Pension/Half cost Added Years/ERRBO's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO shall issue estimate of costs to Members within 15 working days of receipt of request once in receipt of all relevant information The BSO shall send notification for payroll deduction within 20 working days of receipt of the appropriate authority. The BSO will send confirmation of correspondence to scheme member on completion of additional pension request. 	99%
Death (In – Service/ preserved/Retired member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO shall calculate and issue award details within 15 working days of receipt of the application and all relevant documents. 	99%
Age Retirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO shall calculate and issue final award details on receipt of the fully completed application for payment of award and at least 1 week prior to pension start date where all relevant information has been received 	99%
Ill-Health retirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO shall refer the application to its Medical Adviser within 5 working days The BSO shall notify employer/member whether ill health criteria have been met within 5 days of receipt of Medical Adviser's advice The BSO shall calculate and issue award details on receipt of the fully completed application for payment of award and at least 1 week before pension start date where all relevant information has been received 	99%
Early Retirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO shall calculate and issue final award details on receipt of the fully completed application for payment of award. And at least 1 week before pension start date where all relevant information has been received 	99%
Cash Equivalent Transfer Values for Divorce or Separation purposes (CETV's)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO acknowledge receipt of request within 15 working days. The BSO will calculate and issue CETV within statutory time limit of 3 months from date all relevant information received. The BSO shall send confirmation of correspondence to scheme member on completion of CETV. 	99%
Injury Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO will calculate and issue award details within 20 working days of receipt of all required information. 	100%
Pension Sharing Orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO will acknowledge receipt within 15 working days. The BSO will calculate and issue revised statements for both Debit and Credit 	100%

	<p>Member as at valuation date (as defined in Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999) of pension sharing order within statutory time limit of 4 months from valuation date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO shall send confirmation of correspondence to scheme member / credit member on completion of Pension Sharing Order 	
Annual Benefit Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO will issue Members an annual benefit statement, based on data as at 31 March, and deferred Members every 5 years. 	Due by October 2016
Benefit Estimates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BSO will provide an estimate of benefits for members within 20 working days of receipt of a request, provided they have not received an annual benefit statement or been provided with an estimate in the previous 12 months. 	99%
Payroll Administration	<p>The BSO will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay all existing pensions on due date Ensure 100% of existing pensions are correct at point of payment based on the information we receive Ensure 100% of new pension awards are correct at point of payment based on the information we receive Pay the lump sum into new pensioner's or dependant's accounts by the end of the week following their retirement where all relevant information has been received. Pay the first pension payment into new pensioners and dependants accounts by the end of the month following retirement / death where all relevant information has been received. Issue P60's annually and within statutory deadlines Apply pension increases on an annual basis in accordance with HMT guidelines Issue a Pay advice note to existing pensioners in any month with a variance of £5 net. Issue a pay advice note to new pensioners Ensure GMP is applied on time and accurately in accordance with Statutory Regulations Monitor debits and credits to the Scheme account to ensure payroll transactions are complete, accurate and validated. Collect employer and employee contributions from GP practices and Direction bodies within timely and relevant timescales and ensure the completeness and accuracy of these Recover early retirement and Injury Benefit costs from employers in accordance with legislation 	100%

Annex F**Internal Disputes Resolution (IDR's) and Pension Ombudsman Cases****Reporting Year 2017/18**

	Total Cases	Issue	Outcome
Pension Ombudsman Cases	1	Member challenged overpayment of pension resulting from a return to employment (Abatement)	Not upheld
Internal Disputes Resolutions	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three Members applied for Mental Health Officer Status• Member disputed a pension calculation• Member disputed a pensionable pay figure used in a calculation	All Declined

HSC Pension Service

Record Keeping Improvement Plan

April 2017

1. Summary.

This Record Keeping Improvement Plan sets out the long term objectives to ensure HSC Pension records are maintained and monitored on a regular basis. The plan will also ensure the monitoring and management of the data quality of all records held.

2. Scheme Stats.

Scheme Membership at 31/03/2016

Membership Type	Amount
Active	61,956
Deferred/Frozen	14,498
Pensioner	33,640
Total	110,094

3. Context.

The HSC Pension Scheme is currently open to new members and the employer details are listed below.

Employer	Number of employing bodies
HSC Trusts	6
Directional bodies	12
GP Practices including GP federations	337
Regional bodies	9
General Medical and Dental Practitioners	2250

We regularly liaise with employers and stakeholders through regional groups, workshops and other fora to ascertain how we receive data and how processes can be improved upon to ensure/maintain accurate data. These meetings also enable the parties to share good practice across the HSC in Northern Ireland.

4. Legacy data.

HSC Pension Service receives 95% of its data through an electronic interface from HSC Payroll Shared Service Centre (PSSC). PSSC recently updated their software systems and as part of the new system development a new interface between PSSC systems and HSCPS (Altair) system was required. Development and testing of the new interface took a considerable period of time and was finally signed off and recently put into the LIVE system in June 2016. This delay in implementation had a significant impact on the quality of the data held by HSCPS and therefore it was decided to delay the issuing of Annual Benefit Statements. As legislation required ABS to be issued by August 31st 2016 a breach of law report was made to the Pension Regulator detailing the cause of the delay.

5. Current Data.

Interface data from PSSC has now been updated to 31/03/2015. As this data was retrospective across all employers for up to three years in some cases, 85,000 data quality errors arose which needed to be investigated. In order to address this, a team of dedicated and experienced HSCPS staff was tasked to deal with these queries and correct data entries where required. To date we have now 2400 outstanding errors. The current plan is to ensure that the HSCPS system is up to date for the dissemination of the 2015/16 Annual Benefit Statements which are due to be issued at the end of March 2017. The table below details planned timescales: -

Action	Due Date
Complete Interface errors up to 31/03/2015	31/01/2017
Interface data up to 31/03/2016	10/03/2017
Issue 15/16 Annual Benefit Statements	31/03/2017
Interface data up to 31/03/2017	30/06/2017
Issue 16/17 Annual Benefit Statements	31/08/2017

Whilst HSCPS have completed a thorough data reconciliation from interface files there still remains 5824 outstanding queries awaiting a response from PSSC.

1087 of these queries are requests for information that is required to process pension events; mainly salary figures for pension awards and forecasts of

pension, confirmation of part-time hours etc. HSCPS has resources in place to access the PSSC SAP system and therefore is able to provide pension staff with urgent information to enable retirements etc. to be processed without delay to the retiree.

The bulk of the queries are requests for “termination” information when a member leaves the scheme. There are almost 5000 o/s queries of this nature. The bulk upload of 3 years interface has highlighted this volume of missing information but has not created it.

We are now working with PSSC to establish a Task and Finish Group to analyse these queries and determine a methodology for resolution. A number of actions have already been agreed whereby HSCPS will investigate the Electronic Interface and establish a working group with relevant system providers. PSSC is currently drafting an Action Plan to resolve outstanding queries.

6. Choice 2 Exercise.

In 2008 the HSC Pension Scheme introduced a new section for all members joining the Scheme after April 2008. Some of the changes included changing from a 1/80th to a 1/60th accrual rate, no automatic lump sum and no facility to retain Mental Health Officer or Special Class Officer status. Also one of the most significant changes was the movement of normal retirement age from 60 to age 65. For those staff who were in the 1995 Section (members in an active post, pre April 2008) HSCPS wrote to these members detailing the new changes and giving them the option to move their service from their existing 1995 arrangements into the new 2008 section. At that time approximately 47,000 members were contacted and subsequently just over 300 members transferred into the new section of the scheme.

Pension Reform arrangements saw the implementation of the new 2015 Career Average Revalued Earnings Scheme; it was decided to give those 1995 members an option to review their original decision, particularly in the light of the normal retirement age now being linked to the State Pension Age. Members who were in post at 2008 and at March 2015 who were not protected from the new changes were identified (27,000) and written to with an outline of the main changes and offered once more the option to transfer service. As a result this provided a great opportunity for HSCPS to cleanse existing member data. To assist members with their decision making, HSCPS facilitated a number of workshops, ad hoc presentations, and provided a dedicated telephone line and numerous on line calculators and tools. Those affected members therefore were given the opportunity to verify and examine the existing data we held re their personal records.

7. GMP Reconciliation

HSCPS has written to the DOH outlining the requirement to proceed with GMP Reconciliation. Due to uncertainty re Budget allocations funding has not yet been fully addressed, however internal resources have been identified and HSCPS have completed a detailed analysis in conjunction with Heywood to accurately scope and assess the extent of the required reconciliation project. The initial analysis would indicate that GMP data held on pensioner and deferred membership records is 6% accurate leaving 94% of records requiring further investigation by HMRC or HSC Pension Service. Pending funding HSCPS plan to complete the GMP reconciliation exercise by December 2018.

8. GAD Valuation.

Recently data has also been cleansed by testing of the Valuation data lift for GAD. Year ending March 2016 data has now been sent for analysis by GAD for Scheme valuation.

9. Existing Data Analytical Methods.

Data quality is currently analysed by existing reporting tools within our current Altair software system. Recent reports on our common data were implemented as advised by the Pension Regulator and results are shown below.

Data Item	Population	Fails	Notes
NI Number	159409	11	All scheme leavers
Surname	159409	0	
Forename/Initials	159409	12	All scheme leavers
Sex	159409	0	
Date of birth	159409	0	

Dates started pensionable service	159409	6041	All scheme leavers
Expected retirement	159409	0	
Membership Status	159409	0	
Last Status movement	159409	0	
Address	159409	2063	22 active members
Postcode	159409	13210	742 active members
Total		21334	

10. Improvement Plan.

Tasks	Actions	Owner	Due Date
Review common data	Fix common data where missing in relevant statuses	BSU Team Leader	31/03/18
Report on conditional data	Develop report on the conditional data held on records	BSU Team Leader	31/03/18
Annual bulk processes	Use error reports to assess data quality and inform review processes	Awards Team Leader	Prior to all bulk runs
Staff identify problem areas	Measure current state and suggest how to improve	HSC Pension	Ongoing

with data		Staff	
Review procedural notes	Ensure all procedural notes take account of records update to ensure consistency	Training Officer	Annually
Develop system workflow	Amend workflow to take user through all required steps so records are maintained uniformly	BSU Team Leader	Review annually
Training	Ensure training is completed on record keeping.	All Team Leaders	At induction

11. Managing and Monitoring.

HSCPS will work closely with our software providers to develop and implement new and appropriate interrogation tools to ensure ongoing accuracy of member data.

Standard reporting to our Senior Management team will include analyses of data including regular updates re data cleansing and proposed solutions.

Quarterly reports will be provided to HSCPS Pension Board /HSCPS Pension Advisory Board/DHSSPSNI/Pension regulator and other relevant stakeholders.

Data quality will be included as a standing item on HSCPS operational Risk Register.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE (HSC) PENSION SERVICE

PENSION COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

JANUARY 2017

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

An effective communications strategy is vital for any organisation which strives to provide a high quality and consistent service to its customers.

Objective of the Strategy

- To communicate information about the Pension Scheme and policies in a clear information style to ensure that all our stakeholders are well informed.

Key Principles

- To consult with stakeholder
- To use most appropriate and effective means of communication that takes into account the differing needs of stakeholders
- To communicate aspects of Pension Reform in a language that is easily understood
- To engage in communications
- To evaluate the effectiveness of our communications

There are six distinct groups in no particular order with whom the HSCPS needs to communicate:

- 1. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DoH)**
- 2. SCHEME MEMBERS**
- 3. PROSPECTIVE SCHEME MEMBERS**
- 4. SCHEME EMPLOYERS**
- 5. SCHEME PENSIONERS**
- 6. OTHER BODIES**

In this Communications Strategy we have set out how we will meet the needs of our customers.

Health and Social Care (HSC) Pension Service aims to use the most appropriate communication medium for the audiences receiving the information. This may involve using more than one method of communication.

If you require this document in an alternative format (such as large print, Braille, disk, audio file, audio cassette, Easy Read or in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English) please contact –

Health and Social Care (HSC) Pension Service

Waterside House

75 Duke Street

LONDONDERRY

BT47 6FP

Tel: 028 71319 111

Fax: 028 71319 144

Text Relay Service prefix your number with 18001

Web Site: www.hscpensions.hscni.net

Email: hscpensions@hscni.net

We are committed to developing our communications strategy on an ongoing basis. Comments on this document are very welcome and can be sent by contacting us by text, email or fax.

DoH

Current Communication Mechanisms

HSC Pension Service, Service Level Agreement (SLA) Review Group

As per our SLA with DHSSPSNI, HSC Pensions administer the HSC Pension Scheme which provides retirement benefits to HSC employees, GPs, dentists and employees of other organisations in Northern Ireland that are approved to join our scheme, for example, hospices. Currently we have approximately 63,000 members, our services include: -

- Responsibility for paying lump sums and pensions promptly and correctly to approximately 36,000 existing pensioners.
- Processing and administering claims for new retirements, applications for ill – health retirements, transfers of benefits from one scheme to another e.g. employees transferring from HSC to Civil Service, local government etc. and refunds of contributions to people who have left the scheme.
- Publicising and encouraging awareness of the Scheme among employers and HSC staff through newsletters, booklets, leaflets, seminars, website etc.
- Maintaining member records throughout their membership of the Pension Scheme.
- Dealing with all forms of communication from various sources such as members, employers, representative bodies, The Pension Advisory Service and Pensions Ombudsman.
- Implementing the new CARE Scheme in accordance with the Pensions Act (NI) 2014 and subsequent relevant Regulations.

In addition to pension administration, HSCPS has responsibility for training delivery to its staff. Whilst most of the training delivered is of a technical basis, staff are provided with a range of developmental opportunities from management techniques to computer keyboard skills.

HSC Pensions Service is split into various teams with responsibilities as follows: -

- **Awards** Responsible for all current and deferred members, General Practitioners, General Dental Practitioners, Permanent Injury Benefit and OHS referrals.

- **Payroll** Responsible for payment of pensions and lump sums to beneficiaries.
- **Finance** Responsible for maintenance of general ledger within Account NI, reconciliation of scheme income and expenditure, provision of data for compilation of scheme accounts.
- **BSU** The Business Support Unit is responsible for data management, interface with HRMS, IT and web development, scanning and indexing, and communications.
- **Pension Reform** A dedicated Pension Reform team is now in place to ensure the system implementation required and subsequent work flow and processes re-design required. This team will also have direct responsibility for communications directly relating to Pension Reform.

This Service Level Agreement is regularly reviewed on a quarterly basis by relevant Directors within Business Services Organisation (BSO) and DHSSPSNI. The Scheme manager presents a written report outlining achievements against agreed targets and any further initiatives undertaken by HSC Pension Service.

Proposed Communication Mechanisms

A Pension Reform Board to oversee the project has been set up representing all stakeholders. DHSSPSNI are included on this Board and will therefore receive relevant progress / update reports re implementation.

SCHEME MEMBERS

Current Communication Mechanisms

HSC Pension Service Website

HSC Pension Service has established an extensive internet area containing Scheme details, Scheme leaflets etc. There are also a number of on-line calculators which members can use to estimate accrued pension rights, the cost of purchasing additional pension and the impact of changes to statutory legislation.

Scheme Literature

An extensive range of Scheme literature is produced on line by HSCPS and in certain cases hard copies may be supplied to Employing Authorities and Directional Bodies.

Pay Advices

On occasion HSC Pension Service may request messages on Human Resource Management System (HRMS) payslips for current members

Correspondence

The scheme utilises both surface mail and e-mail to receive and send correspondence. There is a generic dedicated email address to which all correspondence may be sent.

Telephone

HSCPS has implemented an automatic call distribution system to improve customer satisfaction and currently deals with approximately 36,000 calls per annum.

Pension Seminars

The Scheme stages Pensions Seminars as and when required to communicate with scheme members and employers on changes to the scheme or promote the scheme or specific aspects of it.

Additionally, Pensions Administration Staff deliver Pre-retirement courses in association with employers to provide information to staff nearing retirement.

Proposed Communication Mechanisms

Annual Newsletter

Newsletters will be issued on line to members, at least annually, the contents of which cover current pension topics within the HSCPS, specific issues for HSC employees and the pensions industry in general.

Employee Access

With the implementation of our new bespoke pension administration system Altair, it is planned to facilitate on line access for employers and employees. Members will be able to access their service details and make effective use of already existing pension calculators.

Benefit Statements will also be sent direct to the home address of deferred members where a current address is known.

HSCPS Website

HSCPS website has been updated to include a specific section which encompasses the latest updates on Pension Reform. This section also includes reference material such as scheme calculators, guidance on protection (including tapered), PowerPoint presentations, FAQs, Glossary of terms etc.

Pension Reform Workshops

HSCPS in conjunction with HSC Leadership Centre will facilitate a series of half day workshops to update Employers on Pension Reform issues.

E Learning

HSCPS in conjunction with HSC Leadership Centre is developing an ELearning package for all scheme members which will enable all members to access electronically all relevant Pension Reform updates.

Site Visits

HSC Pension Service will arrange a structured programme of site visits to update employers of legislative changes pending.

Surgeries

HSC Pension Service will also on request and subject to officer availability provide one to one surgeries for scheme members. It is envisaged that these will take place in conjunction with or immediately following site visits.

PROSPECTIVE SCHEME MEMBERS

Current Communication Mechanisms

Scheme Guidance

All new prospective Scheme members will be provided with Scheme guidance available on HSCPS website by their employer at the time of their appointment.

Internet

The Scheme's Internet contains specific information for non-joiners. It will highlight the process by which a member should be given the relevant information to make an informed choice, as well as detailing the administrative process that should be followed to "opt out" of the Scheme in accordance with Auto – Enrolment regulations.

Pensions Seminars

As well as being a valuable aid for pensioners and current scheme

Members, seminars will be used to target specific non-members with support being enlisted from The Pension Advisory Service and in-house Additional Voluntary Contributions providers. This will ensure members receive the information required to make an informed choice with regards to their pension provision.

Corporate Induction Courses

Scheme Officers will attend when available, corporate induction events in order to present to prospective Scheme members the benefits of joining the HSC Pension Scheme. A "one-on-one" surgery will also be offered to take account of individual queries that may be raised at such meetings.

Proposed Communication Mechanisms

Break in service

All new members will now be asked to provide details of all previous public sector Scheme membership within the previous 5 years in accordance with the Pension Reform protection arrangements.

Trade Unions

We will work with the relevant Trade Unions to ensure the Scheme is understood by all interested parties. This will be delivered through various mechanisms including the Joint Negotiating Forum, Corporate joint committees etc.

Training days for branch officers will be provided upon request, and efforts will be made to ensure that all pension related issues are communicated effectively with the Trade Unions.

SCHEME EMPLOYERS

Current Communication Mechanisms

Regular Updates

These are issued periodically to all employers. This medium is also used to communicate any issues that are currently under debate. Changes to the Regulations which impact upon the employer's function or their employees are also covered.

Employers' Guide

An Employers Guide is available electronically to assist the employers in discharging their pension's administration and Duty of Care responsibilities. These are continually updated and reviewed by HSC Pension Service and DHSSPSNI Policy Branch. HSCPS Officers are also available for assistance and guidance.

Employer's Fora

A number of Fora have been established such as the Employer's Forum and GP Practice Forum to communicate directly and listen to issues, concerns and legislative impacts to Employers and Scheme members.

Internet

A dedicated area has been established and all manuals and Scheme literature is available on HSCPS website.

Site Meetings

Meetings with Employers take place at their premises. Specifically this has been used as a mechanism for communicating major strategic issues, significant legislation changes and valuation matters.

Proposed Communication Mechanisms

There are currently no proposals to change current mechanism

SCHEME PENSIONERS

Current Communication Mechanisms

Internet

A dedicated area within the HSC website has been designed to deal explicitly with Pensioners queries. A range of Pensioner guides is also available on line.

ACDS

The automated call distribution system has a specific hot line for Pensioner queries.

Pay Advices

The Scheme only issues a pay advice to Scheme pensioners if their net pay varies by more than £5.00. This is utilised as a communication mechanism as well, e.g. Pensions Increase and P60 information is communicated using this medium on an annual basis.

Existence Validation – Pensioners

The Scheme undertakes regular exercises conducted through correspondence in order to establish the continued existence of pensioners. Furthermore the Scheme participates in the National Fraud Initiative process to identify potential overpayments. Other data sources may include local authority registrar information.

SMS

HSC Pensions are the first public sector pension service to implement a new SMS service whereby all our pensioners can now register to receive updates via text messages. This service provides our pensioners with new and important updates on information relating to their pension and directs them to relevant sections of our website.

This enables us to provide updates on pension increases, legislative changes and also direct customers to important changes on our website.

Proposed Communication Mechanisms

Pensioner's Newsletter

An annual newsletter will be issued electronically to all existing pensioners the contents of which covers current pension topics within the HSCPS, specific issues for HSC pensioners and the pensions industry in general.

Fora

HSC Pension Service will engage with a number of existing bodies to communicate with existing pensioners such as the Pension Fellowship Association and the University of the 3rd Age.

OTHER BODIES

HSCPS interacts and engages with a number of other bodies on a regular and on-going basis either by attendance at meetings and seminars or electronically and by teleconference where possible.

Such bodies include: -

Trade Unions

Technical Advisory Group

HM Treasury Official Committee of Occupational Pensions (MOCOP)

The Pensions Advisory Service

Department of Work and Pensions

Northern Ireland Public Sector Pensions Group

Inter jurisdiction Administration

DHSSPSNI Policy team

Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs

Internal Communications

HSC Pension Service Staff

Team Meetings

Office and/or Team Meetings are held on a regular basis.

Communication Methods

Scheme manuals, core briefings, Business Matters, Departmental circulars, Technical Updates etc. are issued regularly. This is an effective mechanism for ensuring that information is available to all staff at their work location in a timely manner.

Induction

All new members of staff undergo an induction procedure and an Induction / personnel manual is available to all staff.

BSO has introduced a performance appraisal scheme for staff which includes a process for discussing and reviewing personal development.

This is supplemented by regular one to one meetings with all staff.

System Re-design

Due to the upgrade of Altair to facilitate the new CARE scheme arrangements, all current workflow processes and subsequent Scheme literature will be revised accordingly. A new series of system operational manuals will be devised to assist staff implementing and operating Pension Reform requirements.

Internet

All staff have been enabled to use the corporate network in order to access the internet and BSO Intranet.

E- mails

All staff have been given access to the e-mail facility.

Customer Service Handbook

All staff have access to our in house handbook detailing how we should deal with our customers.

Pensions Managers

All Pensions Managers maintain an open-door policy and, within reason, make themselves available to all staff on request.

Data Protection

To protect any personal information held on computer, BSO is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. This allows members to check that their details held are accurate.

The Scheme may, if it chooses, pass certain details to a third party, if the third party is carrying out an administrative function of the Scheme, for example, the Scheme's AVC provider. Members who wish to apply to access their data on Data Protection Act grounds should contact the BSO's Data Protection Officer.

BSO is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use information for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies administering public funds solely for these purposes.

Contacts and Further information

If you need more information about the Scheme you should contact HSC Pension Service at the following address:

HSC Pension Service
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
LONDONDERRY
BT47 6FP

Tel: 028 71319 111

Web Site: www.hscpensions.hscni.net

Email: hscpensions@hscni.net