



HSC Pension Service

Business Services Organisation

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## HSC Pension Service

**Welcome to the  
HSC Pension Service  
Member Newsletter**



This newsletter is for all active and deferred members of the HSC Pension Schemes and contains important information about your HSC Pension Scheme Benefits

June 2023



# McCloud Consultation

The Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 requires government departments to make amendments to public service pension scheme regulations to remedy the unlawful discrimination identified by the McCloud judgment.

The remedy has 2 parts:

1. To ensure equal treatment for all members within each of the main public service pension schemes by moving all members into the new schemes on 1 April 2022 irrespective of age.
2. To remove the effect of transitional protection by offering eligible members a choice over the set of benefits (legacy scheme or 2015 scheme) they wish to receive for any pensionable service during the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

Following consultation in December 2021 the first part of the remedy has been implemented.

The second and retrospective part of the remedy will remove the effect of the transitional protections. The Department of Health have an open consultation on the proposed changes to the Scheme Regulations as a result of the McCloud Remedy.

For HSC Pension Scheme members impacted by the discrimination, the retrospective remedy primarily:

1. returns members who moved to the 2015 scheme back into the legacy scheme for their pensionable service ('remediable service') affected by the discrimination during the remedy period, from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022, which in this consultation is referred to as 'rollback'; and
2. offers a choice of whether to receive, legacy scheme benefits or 2015 scheme benefits for their remediable service benefits, both of which are payable from the legacy scheme.

The consultation will end on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and all responses will be reviewed. Following this, revised regulations/legislation will be produced for the implementation of the McCloud remedy from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

## Submission of AW6 Pension Benefit Application - McCloud

The retirement process for Voluntary Early Retirement and Normal Age Retirement currently calls for the Pension Benefit Application (AW6) to be submitted to your HR Department 4 months in advance of your chosen retirement age.

We are currently working with Employers to redesign this process for McCloud affected members. If you are affected by McCloud you will need to make a choice in relation to the remedy period (01/04/2015 – 31/03/2022). This will add an extra calculation into the process and require additional time for you to consider your options and make your choice.

As a result, the notice period for retirements will extend to **6 months** rather than four.





## Annual Allowance 2022-23

Normally, HSC Pension Service must inform any members who breach their Annual Allowance limit by 6<sup>th</sup> October. For year 2022-23 anyone affected by the McCloud Remedy will not receive notice of a breach until 6<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024. This has been extended to allow the re-calculation of Annual Allowance figures for the remedy period.

If you are not affected by the McCloud Remedy and you breach the Annual Allowance limit in year 2022/23 you will still be notified by 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

### Scheme Pays 2021/22

Please note if you wish to avail of Scheme Pays for year 2021/22 you must submit your Scheme Pays Election form (SPE2) by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.



## Unpaid Leave/Career Breaks and Pension Implications

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 members had the option to continue to pay contributions during periods of authorised unpaid leave (including career breaks). However, this is not compulsory and if you decide not to pay contributions your pension record will be closed down by your Employer on the day before the leave commences.

If you are on unpaid leave (not including unpaid sick, maternity, paternity adoption or parental leave) and has ceased paying pension contributions the following implications should be considered;

- **Death and Survivors Benefits** – If a member dies whilst on unpaid leave they are treated as a former member of the scheme. Therefore, they will not be entitled to the Death in Service benefits afforded to active members. Please see the [Life Assurance and Family Benefits](#) factsheet for further information on benefits payable.
- **Ill Health Retirement** – if a member suffers ill health whilst on unpaid leave and wishes to apply for their benefits through the Ill Health Retirement facility they will be treated as a former member of the scheme. This means they will need to satisfy the criteria for Tier 2 but only be eligible for Tier 1 benefits. Please see the [Ill Health Retirement](#) factsheet for more information.

It is important to note that on return to employment following a Career Break it is up to you to opt back into the Pension Scheme by completing a re-joiner form which should be submitted to your Employer.



## Transfer of Benefits into the HSC Pension Scheme

If you have recently joined HSC NI and wish to move previously built up pension rights to the HSC Pension scheme you need to let us know by completing an Application for Transfer In of Pension Rights.

The Transfer In application form can be found on the Scheme website where you will also find the Transfer in Guide informing you of what pension rights that you can transfer and the rules that apply. You can access the guide and the application form [here](#).

The most important thing for you to remember about transferring in your pension is that you only have **12 months** from the day you join the HSC Pension Scheme to apply. Please remember that if you confirm on your Joiner Questionnaire you have service you wish to transfer this does not equate to a transfer request. The Joiner Questionnaire is returned to HR and will not be sent to HSC Pensions so you must follow the instructions in the Transfer in Guide to ensure your Transfer is actioned.

HSC Pension Service recommends that you consider taking independent financial advice before deciding about transferring benefits.

If your transfer request is not within HSC Pension time limits it will be rejected.

### Previous NHS Service in England & Wales, Scotland or the Isle of Man

Please be aware that transfers do not automatically happen regardless if they were previously with another NHS Pension Scheme including NHS Pensions Agency England & Wales or Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) or NHS Isle of Man.

## Annual Benefit Statements

HSC Pension Service are currently on track to have Annual Benefit Statements for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 processed in August 2023. These will be available to view on the Member Self-Service portal. If you have not already registered this can be found at [Welcome - Altair Member Self-Service \(hscni.net\)](#).

It is important to note that if you are affected by the McCloud Remedy these statements will still be based on your original transition date i.e. 01/04/2015 as the McCloud Remedy is not due to be implemented until 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

**When will I  
get my  
Statement?**





## Frequently Asked Questions

Below is a number of the most common queries we have been receiving via telephone and email;

- *The service quoted on my Annual Benefit Statement/Estimate does not reflect the number of years I have been in the HSC Pension Scheme.*

The service quoted on documentation from HSC Pension Service will be years and days from the date you joined the 1995/2008 section of the Scheme up to the day before you transitioned to the CARE Scheme (this will be pro rata for any part time service). The CARE Scheme does not use service in the calculation of benefit and therefore service in this Scheme is not displayed.

- *How much pension do I lose if I retire before my normal retirement age?*

Retiring before your normal pension age is known as Voluntary Early Retirement (VER). If you avail of this option your benefits are subject to an actuarial reduction. The reduction is not an actual loss of benefit but a redistribution of benefits to account for them being paid over a longer period of time.

- *If I reduce my hours how will this affect my pension benefits?*

As we are all now members of the 2015 CARE scheme a reduction in hours will not impact upon your 1995/2008 pension benefits as they use the service already accrued and your whole time equivalent pensionable pay at retirement. It will however, mean that you accrue benefits in the 2015 CARE scheme at a slower rate as this is based on actual pensionable pay each year.

- *I have logged into my Member Self-Service (MSS) and view my Annual Benefit Statement for 31/03/2022.*

As of 01/04/2022 all scheme members affected by the McCloud Remedy had a new pension record created to account for post McCloud service.

- When you log into MSS you will be taken to this record, however your ABS 2022 was created earlier and you will not be able to access from here. On the top right corner there is a green box with a white arrow, by clicking here you can see a list of your other pension records.

Please check each of these records for your Annual Benefit Statement before contacting HSC Pension Service. If there is no statement available on any record you can email [absqueries@hscni.net](mailto:absqueries@hscni.net).



## Contact Us:

### By writing to us at:-

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

Via e- mail at:- [hscpensions@hscni.net](mailto:hscpensions@hscni.net)

### By Telephone: 02871319111

10.00 am to 12.00pm / 2.00 pm to 4.00pm - Monday to Thursday  
10.00 am to 12.00pm - Friday



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If you have any suggestions for the newsletter or would like a particular topic covered in future publications please do not hesitate in contacting us by emailing: [john.coyle@hscni.net](mailto:john.coyle@hscni.net)

