



HSC Pension Service

Provided by



Business Services Organisation

GP STAFF NEWSLETTER

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HSC (P) 02-23/24

September 2023

1. Annual Benefit Statements for Practice Staff (ABS23)

Where the GP55A 22/23 has been received and verified as correct, the information has now been uploaded to individual staff records and Annual Benefit Statements (ABS), for each active scheme member have been produced. The Annual Benefit Statement 2023 (ABS23) is available on Member Self Service (MSS) and all staff should now have registered for this service. Staff should not use generic email accounts to access MSS. All HSC employees should have their own personal email accounts ending in @hscni.net.

Practice managers should encourage staff to contact BSO IT at: supportteam@hscni.net so that a HSCNI email account can be set up, following this they can then complete their registration for MSS by clicking [here](#).

Please note any member who contacts HSC Pension Service asking for a posted ABS23 due to not having access, will be directed back to their employer to assist them in gaining access. If members are having difficulties signing up to Member Self Service, they should email MSSqueries@hscni.net with details of the issues, including a screenshot of any error messages received.

Practice staff included on GP55As where the GP55A has been received after the regulatory deadline of the 12th May 2023, or where an outstanding query on an earlier submission has been raised but remains unanswered, are not guaranteed to have an Annual Benefit Statement produced as part of our ABS23 process for active scheme members. HSC Pension Service staff will refer any queries from these members back to the practice manager. Subsequent production of the ABS23 is therefore likely to be delayed.

2. Keeping HSC Pension Service Updated

Please ensure HSC Pension Service are being informed of any changes to practice manager contacts, including change of contact email or contact number so we can keep our records up to date. If a practice manager has left the practice, we will be updating the contact email address to the generic practice manager email address unless we are given updated individual contact information.

If you are new to practice administration and submit returns on behalf of a GP practice, please complete the authorised signature form available at [GP Practice Forms](#) and return to hscpensions@hscni.net.

A request was made in the last few weeks that all practices submit a current authorised signature form. If you have not already done so, please do now without delay.



3. Pensionable Pay & Contributions

Can you please ensure persons responsible for the practice payroll are fully aware of rules governing pensionable pay and contributions. Extensive information can be found at:

[Section 5: Pensionable Pay and Contributions – HSC Pension Service \(hscni.net\)](#).

Note that the most up to date contribution tiers are currently only available on the employer technical update newsletters. The tiers will be updated on the specific sections of the website in the future.

4. Member Info Tab GP1 Form

Please ensure that the GP1 member info page is being updated when information about the members pensionable employment changes.

Any change to a member's rate of pay or contracted hours will need a revision to the actual pensionable and/or the WTE figure on member info. This can lead to a change in contribution tier linked to the actual pensionable pay.

New staff and leavers need to be entered and amended on the member info tab when the change occurs.

If a member leaves, do not remove the member from the member info tab, enter the leave date as this information is needed for the year end annual returns for the practice.

5. Contacting Us

Whilst our phone lines are open daily our preferred method of communication is by email. Email queries can be logged to individual pension records and any work progressed through the team workflow. This ensures that the work is completed by the appropriate team member and responded to within an acceptable time scale.

A simple general query may be answered quicker than a more complex query, so we respectfully request that you allow us time to reply to your queries before contacting us again.

Please include the NI number or practice identifier code in any communication so that we can access the correct record.

Any queries from your members should be directed to hscpensions@hscni.net and not directly to a specific member of staff



6. Focus On—ill Health Retirement

Current active members who have at least 2 years membership, and become permanently incapable of doing their present job because of ill health may be able to receive a pension.

This provides you, as an employer, with an alternative option to dismissal.

If a current member thinks ill health retirement applies to them, they should complete form [AW33](#). But they must be leaving work because of permanent ill health. If dismissed for any other reason they cannot qualify for an ill health pension.

To qualify for ill health retirement benefits a member must:

- retire from pensionable employment because of illness or injury, and
- be permanently incapable of efficiently carrying out the duties of their employment because of illness or injury – **tier 1 pension**,

OR

- be permanently incapable of engaging in regular employment of like duration because of the illness or injury – **tier 2 pension**.

Tier 1 pension

If the member is assessed as being unable to carry out the duties of their own employment they will be entitled to the early payment of the retirement benefits they have earned to date without any reduction.

Tier 2 pension

If the member is assessed as being unable to do regular employment of like duration they will be entitled to the retirement benefits they have earned to date in addition to an enhancement on their;

- CARE scheme benefits based on 50 % of their prospective membership up to reaching the scheme's normal benefit age.



Focus On continued

Our medical advisers, in every case, will assess the medical evidence and advise whether the applicant is permanently incapable of either carrying out their present HSC duties or doing any regular work. If this is confirmed and we are satisfied they meet the rules for ill health retirement, we will pay a pension.

The ill health retirement application contains more information for the member and can be found here: [AW33](#)

The ill health retirement factsheet found [here](#) contains more details about the process and examples .

It also provides details about what happens if the member returns to work and what happens if the member is given a terminal diagnosis and it not expected to live longer than 12 months.

Practice managers/payroll admins/HR representatives can contact our department via email to hscpensions@hscni.net marked FAO GP admin team to enquire further about this process.



7. HSC Pension GP Admin Workshops

Over the summer, the GP team conducted 5 online pension admin workshops, designed to provide guidance for new practice administrators and a refresher for experienced administrative staff.

Numerous topics were covered across the 5 sections and feedback was positive.

There are currently no further online sessions planned. However, should the need arise, our team can arrange further sessions in the future.

We are still attending in person workshops arranged by local practice managers groups. Should your local group have a meeting planned in the coming months, and would like our team to attend to provide guidance on administering the scheme, please email your request to gpcertificates@hscni.net.

Your email should contain details of when and where the meeting is, how many attendees you expect there to be, and topics the group would like covered.

8. Member Details

Employers need to ensure they are updating the HSC Pension Service of any changes to members personal details on a regular basis.

We use the GP55a year end information to ensure that all information is up to date and accurate on our system.

It is therefore very important that the information entered into your GP55a and any other forms is accurate, up to date and relating to the member stated.

Please ensure that before you submit any information that it is double checked so that no errors occur.



9. 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

By Telephone: 028 7131 9111 Option 3

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: hscpensions@hscni.net

