



HSC Pension Service

Provided by



Business Services Organisation

GP STAFF NEWSLETTER

CONTENTS

1. Department of Health Consultations
2. Annual Benefit Statements for Practice Staff (ABS21)
3. Email Distribution
4. Focus On - Scheme Membership
5. Previous Focus on for Reference Purpose
6. Contact Us



HSC (P) 03-21/22

Dec 2021

1. Department of Health Consultations

On Monday 6th December the Department of Health launched 2 consultations relevant to the HSC pension Scheme. They are the consultation on the McCloud Remedy, relating to the reforms of Public Sector Pension Schemes introduced in 2015 and the consultation on the structure of Member Contributions moving forwards under a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Scheme model.

Full details on the consultations including information on how to respond can be found on the Department of Health Website at [Consultations | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations)

Please ensure all staff and stakeholders are informed of the consultations and provided with details on how to access and respond.

2. Annual Benefit Statements for Practice Staff (ABS21)

Where the GP55A 20/21 has been received and verified as correct, the information has now been uploaded to individual staff records and the Annual Benefit Statement (ABS), for each active scheme member has been produced.

The ABS21 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.

Where the annual GP55A has been received after the regulatory deadline of the 31st May 2021, or where an outstanding query on an earlier submission has been raised but remains unanswered the ABS is not guaranteed to have been produced as part of our ABS21 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 ABS21 is therefore likely to be delayed.

3. Email Distribution

We email the Practice Managers regarding important information on the scheme and any updates and to query monthly returns.

We generally use the Practice Manager email address from the Global address list – this ensures that if a Practice Manager is off on leave or on an unforeseen absence that the email is still being sent to the Practice Manager account. If you are using using a personal email address with an extension at your practice such as firstname.lastname.Z00000@gp.hscni.net we would request that you also check the generic Practice Manager email account such as PracticeManager.Z00000@gp.hscni.net This reduces queries regarding your remittance advice especially following adjustments in any month.

We currently manage 3 generic email accounts to assist us with the work for GPs, this in addition to our own personal email accounts. The generic boxes enable us to receipt submissions and help us to manage work flows and ensure that no emails for routine pension issues are being unanswered when team members are out of office for temporary or prolonged periods.

4. Focus On - Scheme Membership

A new section added to our Practice Newsletter in recent publications is the 'Focus On' section where we provide support on areas where additional assistance may be required. Please let us know by email at hscpensions@hscni.net if there are any areas of administration you would like us to cover in subsequent Newsletters. *This quarter we are going to focus on "Scheme Membership"*

We have had numerous queries recently from Practice Managers who are unsure of the procedures for new starters and leavers when it comes to pensions.

Scheme Membership

Joining the Scheme

All eligible staff should be enrolled into the HSCPS on the first day of their employment. They are afforded 'Practice Staff' HSCPS rights. They also have the freedom to opt out but should be re-enrolled after a certain length of time as part of the GP Practice Auto Enrolment responsibilities. GP Practices have a duty to make their staff aware of their pension rights. Anyone seeking advice should be referred to an independent financial advisor.

The relevant joiner form for 'Practice Staff' is the [J2 Form](#); **this must not be used for GPs or non-GP Providers.**

If a new member joins/transfers to the practice or auto-enrolment applies, the Practice Manager is responsible for completing a [J2 Form](#) (Scheme Joining form)

Please be aware that the 'Date started Current Pensionable employment' on the [J2 Form](#) refers to the date the member started contributing to the pension scheme **within your practice**, regardless of any previous or on-going pensionable membership they may have with another practice or trust.

If the joining member of your practice is part-time you need to confirm how many hours per week they work as a fraction over their whole-time equivalent hours.

For example, if an employee joined your practice on a contract of 18 hours per week and the full time contract was 37.5 hours per week, this would be expressed as 18.00/37.50.

Please be aware that it is possible for a member to hold two or more pensionable employments at the same time within various practices/trusts. These combined posts can be pensionable up to the whole time equivalent hours. We would ask that all practice managers monitor pensionable hours and liaise with members who hold part time pensionable positions with more than one employer.

Whole time equivalent salary is the amount an employee would earn if they worked full-time. So if an employee works 18 hours per week, the amount that they would earn if on a fulltime contract must be recorded.

Please ensure that all forms are signed and stamped by an authorised signatory and stamped with the practice authority stamp.

The completed forms can be scanned and emailed to us at hscpensions@hscni.net or alternatively can be sent by post to the address detailed at the back of this newsletter.



4. Focus On - Scheme Membership - cont

Auto-Enrolment

Please be aware that it is the Pension Regulator who governs auto-enrolment.

If a new member joins/transfers to your GP Practice (regardless if they have previous membership with another practice or trust) or auto-enrolment applies, the Practice Manager is responsible for completing a [J2 Form](#) (Scheme Joining form) – but only forward same at the end of the ‘opt out period’.

There are a few reasons why employees should not be auto enrolled.

- They are in receipt of a HSC Pension
- They are in receipt of a HSC Tier 2 Ill health pension
- Aged over 60/65 with preserved HSC Pension Benefits
- They have another whole time pensionable post with another HSC Employer
- They have already reached maximum HSC Pensionable service

Should the member wish to opt out of the scheme within the ‘opt out period’ then the member of staff must complete a [SD502](#) form - Application to leave the Scheme. The [SD502](#) form is retained at the GP Practice along with the J2 form as evidence that the member opted out. If a [J2 Form](#) is received in the HSC Pension Service a record will be created and a Termination of Scheme Notice form will be needed to end their service.

If contributions have been deducted and recorded through the GP1 Process within the ‘opt out period’ then the contributions can, through the GP1 process, be refunded to the practice by way of a negative line for each employee on your next GP1 submission.

If a member wishes to opt out of the scheme after the ‘opt out period’ the Practice Manager must complete a [Termination of Scheme Membership Notice](#). If the member has less than 2 years service they may wish to consider a transfer of pension benefits or apply for a Refund of Contributions [REF-\(1\)](#)

Leavers/Termination of Scheme Membership (T55A's)

There are a number of scenarios that would result in a Practice Manager having to complete a Termination of Scheme Membership Notice.

This form must be completed and sent to HSC Pension Service when:

- An active member in the HSC Pension Scheme leaves your practice
- An active member in the HSC Pension Scheme decides to opt out.
- An active member in the HSC Pension Scheme is retiring from your practice.

We are frequently asked for guidance on how to complete the Termination of Scheme Membership notice form. Please see below explanations for completion of relevant fields.



4. Focus On - Scheme Membership - cont

Number 8. Start date of current period of superannuable employment within Pay Office. This is the date the employee started paying contributions from their salary. Please note some members opt out of paying contributions, so this date will not necessarily be their first day of employment within the practice.

Number 9. Last deemed day of Superannuable Service. This is the date the employee ceased to pay contribution's i.e. opt out, retired, leaver.

Number 11. Rate of employee contribution. This is the rate of contribution the employee pays towards the scheme.

Number 12. What category is the member currently serving in Most GP Practice staff would fall under the "Normal Member" category. However for those Practice Nurses who meet the criteria to be awarded "Special Class", the Practice Manager must breakdown the periods in which they are deemed Special Class. See factsheet on [Special Class](#)

Number 14. If you have a member who is part-time, their hours must be detailed and included in table (i) and table (ii) as detailed below;

Table (i)

Contracted Hours—This should be the employees contracted hours e.g. 1 week 18.75.
Standard Hours—This is the WTE i.e. the number of hours the employee would work if they were full time. i.e. 37.5.

Start Date—This would be the date the member started working the contracted (part-time) hours.

Table (ii)

Year ended 31/03—This would be the financial year in which the member has left employment. For example if the member left in December 2021 then year end would be 31/03/2022.

Total Hours worked—This should be the actual number of pensionable hours the member worked within the financial year, i.e. April to date of leaving.

Number 18. Certification

This must be signed by an authorised signatory and also stamped with the practice authority stamp.

5. Previous Focus on for Reference Purpose

Application for Scheme retirement benefits (AW6) & T55a - COMPLETION – EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITY

[GP-Staff-Newsletter-Q1-June-2021.pdf \(hscni.net\)](#)

Pensionable Pay including all deemed pay

[GP-Staff-Newsletter-Q2-2021.pdf \(hscni.net\)](#)

Arrangements over the Christmas period

Please note HSC Pension Service will be closed over the Christmas period on the following dates:

27th December

28th December

3rd January

The Practitioner Team would like to take this opportunity to convey our appreciation for your ongoing support and co-operation over the last year. We wish you all a safe and Happy Christmas period and we look forward to working with you again in 2022.



5. 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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Find us on Facebook - HSC Pension Service

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

