



EMPLOYER TECHNICAL UPDATE

HSC Pension Service

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1. Partner Nomination

From 1 April 2008 Scheme members may nominate a partner to receive a surviving partner pension on their death. A member, who is not currently married or in a civil partnership with anyone else, may make a nomination if they fulfil the conditions stated in the declaration section of the non-married partner nomination form [PN1](#).

It is important that members inform us of their current status and supply details of their spouse or civil partner, if they have one. This information is used in the event of the death of the member/pensioner and informs us if there are any survivor's benefits payable if they die before their spouse or civil partner. Having these details will speed up the payment of any survivor's benefits due and will also put less strain on their dependents at that time. Further details can be seen in the [Partner Nomination Factsheet](#) available on our website

2. Tiered Contributions for Scheme Years 2015/2016 through to 2018/2019

Details of the planned employee and employer contribution rates in respect of the Scheme years starting 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 through to 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 are detailed below.

Member contribution rates before tax relief (gross) from 1 April 2015

The table below sets out the member contribution rates that will apply in both the 1995 and 2008 Sections, as well as the new **2015 Scheme** from **1 April 2015** until **31 March 2019**:

Tier	Full-Time Pensionable Pay used to determine contribution rate	Contribution rate (before tax relief) (gross) 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2019
1	Up to £15,431.99	5.0%
2	£15,432.00 to £21,477.99	5.6%
3	£21,478.00 to £26,823.99	7.1%
4	£26,824.00 to £47,845.99	9.3%
5	£47,846.00 to £70,630.99	12.5%
6	£70,631.00 to £111,376.99	13.5%
7	£111,377.00 and over	14.5%

As you will see there are still seven contribution tiers.

2. Tiered Contributions for Scheme Years 2015/2016 through to 2018/2019

The rules on the application of contribution rates remain unchanged.

The general basic rule is that the tier for existing Officers and Practice Staff Scheme members for 2015/2016 is based on their 2014/2015 full year whole time equivalent (WTE) pensionable pay, unless there has been a change in circumstances.

This table should be used for new joiners and staff who have a change in their circumstances from 1 April 2015. Please note that it is their annual whole time equivalent pensionable pay that must be used when assessing their contribution rates.

The employer's contribution rate will change from 13.3% to 16.3% from 1 April 2015 in respect of all Scheme members.

Disclosure - Notifying Members of the New Rates

Under Disclosure legislation all employees must be notified of the changes, not just scheme members. To alert employees to the revised contribution rates and to assist employers in communicating this information, the HSC Pension Service website has been updated with the latest details of contribution rates and specific factsheets for further information.

Employees can be directed to the updated contribution tables on our website at:
<http://www.hscpensions.hscni.net/members/members/factsheets/>

Whilst HSC Pension Service will inform the larger payroll providers of these changes, you must ensure that systems are in place for the correct deduction and collection of contributions.

3. Lifetime Allowance: Loss of Enhanced Protection and Fixed Protection 2012 and 2014 because of the 2015 HSC Pension Scheme

As the 2015 Scheme is a new scheme, rather than a new section of an existing scheme, HMRC have confirmed that Enhanced Protection, Fixed Protection 2012 and Fixed Protection 2014 will be lost when a member joins or moves to the 2015 Scheme and starts paying pension contributions. To inform members about this impact and possible action to take we have published a new factsheet on our website.

It is important that you bring this [factsheet](#) to the attention of all high earning employees and GPs as soon as possible.

4. Salary Sacrifice

In the 2015 HSC Pension Scheme, pension benefits are built up on a year by year basis based on actual pensionable earnings in each year. This means that entering into or continuing any salary sacrifice arrangement (e.g. Childcare Vouchers, Lease Car Schemes etc) that reduce gross pensionable earnings will have a negative effect on the amount of pension built up in that year.

To explain more about this and to provide a simple example of the impact of salary sacrifice, we have published a new [factsheet](#) on our website.

Please update any literature you have about salary sacrifice to reflect these new arrangements.

5. Employer Services

Employer Services enables employers to view pension data remotely. Employers are reminded that they should use the Employer Self Service tools to calculate a member's projection of benefits. If you have not already been set up on Employer Self Service and would like to request access please email hscpensions@hscni.net.

6. Public Service Pension Scheme History

In preparation for the introduction of the new pension scheme on 1st April 2015, it is essential that HSC Employers are aware of the effect that previous membership of another Public Service Pension Scheme may have when planning the timing of the move of a HSC Pension Scheme Member to the new scheme post April 2015.

The date for the move is especially important as it will ascertain whether a member can retain their final salary link or not for any periods when they were not in HSC employment.

In the near future, HSC Pension Service in conjunction with HSC employing authorities will carry out an exercise to identify all those scheme members who joined after 31st March 2012 who may be affected by this rule, to collect details of previous membership of a PSPS. Further guidance and documentation will be issued to employers shortly to advise on the timing and detail of the exercise.

7. HSC Pension Service Communications Strategy

Your Future in Our CARE

The HSC Pension Service has a dedicated communications strategy which has been updated to include communications around Pension Reform. The website has also been updated with a microsite dedicated to Pension Reform information. These details can be viewed by accessing the following link: <http://www.hscpensions.hscni.net/scheme-reform/>.

8. Employers' Forum

The next Quarterly Employers' Forum is on Wednesday, 26th March 2015 at 10:30 am in the Conference Room, Waterside House, 75 Duke Street, Londonderry. We would be grateful if all employers could forward names and contact details of the appropriate representative within their area by emailing Regina Peoples at regina.peoples@hscni.net.

Tele Conference facilities will be available for those who cannot attend any meetings in person. These details will be issued with the invites ahead of the meeting.

Distribution List:

The Chief Executive of the HSC Board & HSC Trusts

The Director of Finance and Director of Human Resources of the:

HSC Board;

The Business Services Organisation;

The Patient and Client Council;

The Public Health Agency;

NI Blood Transfusion Service

HSC Trusts;

Each Special Agency;

GP Practices;

Dental Practitioners;

Out of Hours Providers;

Directional Bodies; and Staff Representative Bodies.

Employers are reminded to inform HSC Pension Service hscpensions@hscni.net of further representatives to be added to the distribution list for the Employers' Forum or Employer Technical Updates.

How to 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

9.00am to 5.00pm – Monday to Thursday; 9.00am to 12.00pm Friday

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