



HSC Pension Service

Provided by



Business Services Organisation

EMPLOYER NEWSLETTER

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July 2020

1. COVID-19 - Impact to Services - Ill Health Retirement Applications

As you are aware there is an ongoing issue with the assessment of applications for consideration for Ill Health Retirement. This process is carried out by the Occupational Health Service (OHS) a branch of the Department of Finance. Unfortunately due to ongoing resource issues, the OHS has been unable to provide a full service.

Originally only cases which were deemed to be of a serious or terminal nature were being assessed. As of 26th June OHS have confirmed that they are prepared to also assess those cases where the member is in or about to enter financial hardship, i.e. moving on to a no pay scenario.

HSC Pension Service is working with OHS to find a long term solution to this issue and will keep employers updated of the position.

2. Coronavirus Act 2020 - Change to Pension Legislation

Following the introduction of the Coronavirus Act 2020 a number of temporary suspensions have been made to the HSC Pension Scheme Regulations. These suspensions are listed and summarised below.

- Omission of Regulation 84 of The Health and Personal Social Services (Superannuation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 and equivalent in 2008 & 2015 Schemes
The omission of this regulation broadly means that the rule restricting recent retirees from working any more than 16 hours per week in HSC Employment in the first month following their retirement is no longer applicable.
- Amendment of Regulation 85 of The Health and Personal Social Services (Superannuation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995
The amendment of this regulation broadly means that members of the HSC Pension Scheme who retired whilst holding Special Class Status will temporarily have the restriction on their earnings allowed on re-employment with the HSC removed.

These amended regulations remain in place until notice is given by the Government. HSC Pension Service will inform employers once any changes are to be made.



3. Pension Workshops & 1-1 Sessions - COVID-19 Implications

As a result of the ongoing issues with COVID-19 and in the interest of staff health and wellbeing HSC Pension Service has taken the decision to postpone all Workshops and Staff Engagement sessions for the foreseeable future.

As and when guidance from government/Department of Health decrees or when the situation changes HSC Pension Service will liaise with employers to arrange future sessions etc.

HSC Pension Service will continue to provide One to One pension consultations BY PHONE for those staff that have already been allocated an appointment. We will contact each individual to confirm.

The role of the Pension Liaison Team in providing support, guidance and assistance for employers regarding any HSC Pension Service issues will remain in place and staff can be contacted via e-mail at erin.mcnamara@hscni.net or john.coyle@hscni.net or by telephone at 028 713191111 (option 5)

If you have any issues and wish to contact the HSC Pension Service please use the following contact details:

General Enquiries – hscpensions@hscni.net

Annual Allowance queries – aaqueries@hscni.net

General/Dental Practitioners – gpcertificates@hscni.net

Member Self Service enquiries – mssqueries@hscni.net

4. Procedure for Applying for Commuted Benefits over NRA

If a member has reached their Normal Retirement Age (NRA) they are not eligible for Ill Health Retirement. However if that member is suffering from an illness and has a life expectancy of less than 12 months, that member can apply to have their Normal Retirement Benefits commuted to a one of lump sum payment.

These members must apply by submitting forms [AW34](#) and [AW34-A](#) to HSC Pension Service, the usual Ill Health Retirement Application form AW33 *is not required*.



5. Cancelled Retirements

As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic and the need to retain experienced staff, HSC Pension Service has found that there have been an increased number of cancelled or suspended retirements.

If you have any members of staff who have either cancelled or postponed their retirement date can you please let the Payroll Pension Team know as soon as possible.

An e-mail containing the member's name and staff number should be sent to aw6.est.ppt@hscni.net

You must also ensure that the member's termination date is amended on HRPTS.

When a new retirement is agreed please inform the Payroll Pension Team by confirmation e-mail to aw6.est.ppt@hscni.net

6. New Scheme Forms

HSC Pension Service has updated the catalogue of forms used to claim Survivors benefits payable in the event of the death of a scheme member.

The forms can all be completed on-line, however a signature is still required by the applicant. Please use the new forms available on the Scheme website at [Bereavement Forms](#)

7. Member Self Service

HSC Pension Service would ask employers to encourage their employees to register and sign up to the Member Self Service (MSS) portal available on the HSC Pension Service website.

The MSS Portal allows members to view their pension record including Service History, Annual Benefit Statement, Annual Allowance Data View etc.

HSC Pension Service has developed a number of new calculators which will make it easier for members to forecast their potential benefits at retirement. Members will need sight of their latest Annual Benefit Statement which holds information required for input to the calculator.

This should reduce the number of pension related queries for employers.



8. Two months & two metres...How we did it!

HSC Pension Service were contacted recently to provide a “good news” story during this period of the pandemic. Heather Dougherty (Senior Operations Manager in HSC Pension Service) has collated information from the respective teams within the branch, with some further input from others. When all the information was pulled together, it is very impressive in what could be achieved in the initial months of the “new normal”.

You can read the full article in the Member Newsletter or the Employer Technical Update

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

Due to COVID-19 we are operating on temporary cover

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

