



HSC Pension Service

Provided by



Business Services Organisation

GP STAFF NEWSLETTER

Please note this newsletter is provided to practice managers, payroll admins and finance managers responsible for administering the HSC Pension Scheme rules to the practice staff within GP practices/federations.

It is intended to advise and remind practices of procedures for this process and should not be given to the practice staff themselves.

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HSC (P) 02-24/25

September 2024

1. Annual Benefit Statements for Practice Staff (ABS24)

Where the GP55A 23/24 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 has been produced. The Annual Benefit Statement 2024 (ABS24) 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, members who contact HSC Pension Service asking for a posted ABS24 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 17th May 2024, 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 ABS24 process for active scheme members. HSC Pension Service administrators will refer any queries from these members back to the practice manager. Subsequent production of the ABS24 is therefore likely to be delayed.

Important note regarding the Annual Benefit Statement 2024.

Any member affected by the McCloud judgment has had the first phase of the judgement applied to their record, known as [rollback](#). Any service that was in the 2015 CARE scheme from 01/04/2015 to 31/03/2022 ,(actual dates are unique to each member, but most will fall within these dates) will now have been moved to their “legacy” scheme. This is their original scheme before they were moved to the 2015 CARE scheme.

As a result of this change, a significant amount of members will see a change to their benefits if when compared to previous statements. All previous statements were correct at the time, but should no longer be treated as accurate.

The benefits accrued in their legacy scheme (1995 or 2008) will have increased.

The benefits accrued in the CARE scheme (2015) will have decreased

Any member who moved to the 2015 CARE scheme on 01/04/2022 due to having previous protected status, will not see any change to their benefits statement compared to normal expected year on year changes.



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.

3. New Authorised Signature Form

From September 2024, we have introduced a new authorised signature form that allows a small organisation employer (GP Practice, Federations etc.) to nominate an accountancy firm to submit forms to the HSC Pension Service on behalf of the employer.

This change will streamline the services for employers and HSC Pension Service scheme administrators by removing the need for accountants to return forms to the employer for signing and submitting.

The new authorised signature form can be found on our website here: [Authorised Signature](#)

The following points should be considered when using an accountant to sign the forms.

- The employer understands that it is they, not the accountant firm, responsible for the information (the same as currently with practice managers submitting data, it's the employers' responsibility to ensure the information is correct).
- The employer is responsible for arranging an agreement with their accountants to submit on their behalf—any additional fees incurred are at the expense of the employer.
- HSC Pension Scheme administrators will continue to make first requests for information to employers directly, the practice can then deem if the request can be handled internally, or if it needs referred to their accountant. Any follow ups will be made to the accountant.
- Information submitted by accountants must be submitted via the firms email address.
- Digital signatures are acceptable on forms, but there must be a clearly printed name to identify who submitted the form.
- All submissions that have been signed by an accountancy firm, must have someone from the employment CC'd into the email so that the employer has a record of the submission.



4. 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 \(hscni.net\)](#).

Please note 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.

5. GP1 submission

The regulatory requirement for payment of contributions is no later than the 19th of the month following the applicable worked month. Your direct debit is therefore processed on the 18th of each month and relates to the previous months GP1.

To allow our team to process the GP1s on time, allowing time for review and queries, the GP1 must be submitted no later than the 6th of each month. Submission beyond this deadline causes extra work for multiple teams within HSC Pension Service, and a number of team in the Department of health.

You must therefore ensure that your GP1 is submitted no later than the 6th of each month. Employers who submit their form late on a consistent basis will soon be contacted to advise of late admin fees that will be applied to their direct debits.

6. Contacting Us

Whilst our phone lines are open daily our preferred method of communication is by email. Email queries can be logged to individual member 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



7. Focus On—Employer responsibilities

Both the HSC Pension Service and employers have responsibilities on administering the scheme for all members.

The Employer Charter outlines the specific responsibilities for the employer and their nominated representative, as well as the HSC Pension Service responsibilities to the employer and timeframes associated with requests.

All employers and their representatives should read the Employer Charter and familiarise themselves with it.

The employer representatives are the person or persons responsible locally for the administration of the pension scheme, as nominated by the employer. This is normally confirmed on the authorised signature form. It can be the practice manager, payroll administrator etc.

It should be pointed out that the Employers Charter is always changing to meet the needs of the regulations.

Please read the Employer Charter below and if you have any questions regarding it, please let us know.

It should be noted that the employer charter is created for all employers, and some terms may not be familiar as different employers may process and report information separately.

[Employer Charter](#)



8. HSC Pension GP Admin Workshops

Employer Workshops

The HSC Pension Service GP Admin Team continue to attend workshops organised by local employer groups, practice manager forums etc.

The content we are able to cover for these workshops relates to how the employers process the pension locally (Payroll, GP1, T55a etc.).

Member Workshops and 1-1's

If any members wish to attend a workshop regarding the scheme, how it works or have a 1 to 1, please contact our department to arrange. There will be a cost associated with this workshop.

It may be more cost efficient to organise one of these workshops via your local federation, as they can organise more practices to be in attendance

9. 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.

The GP55a is submitted in March—May of each year, but is not loaded to record until July. If the member changes details after the Gp55a submission, but before the upload, the upload will change the members details back to the data held on the GP55a.

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.



10. 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

