

PUBLIC HEALTH TRANSFER TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT – TREATMENT OF PENSIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: Why has this decision been made?

As part of the overall programme of transfer and movement of staff resulting from the Health and Social Care Act, we wanted to give as much certainty and reassurance to staff as possible. This decision allows you to keep your NHS Pension and is also the simplest to administer and bears the least burden on the public purse. All parties (local government and NHS trade union representatives; Local Government Association; NHS Employers; the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department of Health) have signed up to this decision.

Q2: Will local authorities have to accept that I can remain part of the NHS Pensions Scheme when I transfer?

A: Yes. The Local Government Association has agreed that those staff currently working in primary care trusts who pay into the NHS Pension Scheme should be able to do so once they transfer.

Q3: Will I be able to remain in the NHS Pension Scheme indefinitely?

A: As long as you remain in your current role then this is expected to be the case.

Q4: Will I be able to remain in the NHS Pension Scheme if I move jobs once I am in local government?

A: For staff who move posts to work on a public health function (for example on promotion) within the local authority or to another local authority we are considering what the options might be. A small working group involving all the key parties, including trade unions, has been established and will report later in the year. These options will also be considered for new staff joining local authorities.

Q5: What if I moved back into the NHS or to another organisation like Public Health England? Can I take my pension with me?

A: If you move to an NHS organisation, you will be able to retain access to the NHS Pension Scheme. Where you move to public health organisations that are not part of the NHS (for example Public Health England) the position is currently being considered.

Q6: Will my contributions change once I move to local government?

A: No, if you remain in the NHS Pension Scheme. Your new employer will pick up the employers' contributions. Employee contributions will stay in line with current bands (which are based on salaries). Any further changes would be part of any wider change to the NHS Pension Scheme but not be imposed as a result of this transfer.

Q7: Will I be able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme if I want to?

A: Under existing arrangements, if you are allowed to be in the NHS Pension Scheme you are not eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. As noted, the pension arrangements for staff who move posts are currently being considered through a partnership working group.

Q8: If at any stage I move to the Local Government Pension Scheme, what will happen to my NHS Pension benefits?

A: If you move to the Local Government Pension Scheme, you will have the option of transferring your NHS pension benefits into the Local Government Pension Scheme through the Public Sector Transfer Club. Under the club arrangements, you will receive credits in the Local Government Scheme that are broadly equivalent to the value of your benefits in the NHS Pension Scheme. More detail on the public sector transfer club can be found at: <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/pensions/transfer-club>

If you choose not to transfer your benefits then your NHS pension would be frozen at the point of departure from the scheme.

Q9: I'm a member of staff in a primary care trust and am not transferring to a local authority. What is happening to my pension?

A: This decision agreed between the Department of Health and the Local Government Association in conjunction with trade unions, is specifically for staff performing public health functions and transferring from primary care trusts to local authorities. Decisions about the treatment of other staff in any future cases as a result of the Health and Social Care Act will be considered separately and taken in line with current policy, and this decision does not set a precedent for other transfers.

Q10: Will this decision (to allow continuity for the NHS Pension Scheme) be affected by the wider Hutton Review of pensions?

A: All public sector pensions are being considered by the Hutton review and there may be future impact on any pension scheme offered by different parts of the public sector. This does not affect this immediate decision but you will, of course, be kept informed of any proposed changes.

Q11: Where can I get more information about local government and NHS pensions?

More information on the Local Government Pension Scheme can be found at:

www.lgps.org.uk

Information on the NHS Pension Scheme is available on the NHS BSA website at:

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pensions

Gateway number: 17654