



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

# **NHS Pension Board summary of minutes: 17 August 2023**

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# Administrator Data and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Performance

An overview of the KPIs and administrator performance data was provided.

It was reported that there were two failed KPIs, and one near miss in First Awards. There has been an increase in the number of complex cases (Practitioner) and it was noted that skills in Practitioner are limited but there has been some external training mitigating against the risk, which is going very well.

Child Allowance – there was a small number of cases failed: 5 out of 70 in May and 9 out of 118 in June relating to 4 to 5 individual families, due to administrator error.

Opt outs – it was noted that the current tables will be obsolete with the development of the Opt Out Tool, and reports will be published monthly on the website to provide an overview of trends and particular aspects; details will be provided quarterly in the PB Report.

Quality Assurance – KPI was exceeded throughout the quarter.

Complaints and Internal Disputes Resolution (IDRs) – it was reported that volumes are static, and more work is having to be done to look at root causes.

Pension Ombudsman cases – there were two cases partly upheld:

1. The member complained that NHSBSA held incorrect information about her membership of the NHS Pensions Scheme which prevented her from accessing her TRS and that she was led to believe she could only obtain a capital value of her benefits by applying for payment. The Adjudicator's Opinion upheld Miss L's complaint in respect of the incorrect membership information, and failure to enable access to her TRS and respond to her queries which amounted to maladministration, resulting in D&I. It also upheld her complaint as trivial commutation information was not provided until she had applied for payment of her benefits. The benefits in payment were calculated correctly. It was recommended that £500 was paid in respect of D&I caused. TPO upheld the Adjudicator's decision.

2. The member complained that she had received several incorrect benefit statements on which she based her decision to retire. She said that these statements should be honoured, and she should be compensated for the distress and upset she had been caused. The Adjudicator's Opinion upheld the complaint in respect of D&I caused and directed a payment of £500. However, he said that it was reasonable for her to have checked her benefit statement and noticed the discrepancy in her membership in respect of her added years contract, which had ceased several years earlier but was still being treated as active. In addition, she should have spotted the discrepancy in benefits quoted

of £3k on her pension and £5.5k on her lump sum. He did acknowledge the IDR1 response was 5 days late and her June pension payment was also late, and it took a week to sort out the problem. Although NHSBSA accepted the Opinion, the member did not and made further representations. Her case was passed to TPO for his Determination. He agreed with the findings of the Adjudicator but added that she had suffered a loss of expectation, compounded by the poor level of service in respect of the period that incorrect membership information had been held.

Breaches of Law – there was a case where a member was not put into the Pension Scheme and their General Practice had said that they had opted out. The employee contributions have been paid but the GP refused to pay his honoured membership – waiting for TPR instruction.

## **Business Improvement Initiatives**

A presentation was provided of the Business Improvement Initiatives, noting that early work has concentrated on identifying all sources of feedback and then analysing for themes. From that analysis a priority list has been identified to be worked on:

- Website
- POL
- CCS
- Queries
- AA
- Scanning
- Estimates
- Simplification
- TRS
- PCSE

Overall, the website feedback is poor and many comments are received about it being difficult to navigate and then to understand the content; work has already commenced on trying to improve the offering.

Simplification - Pensions in general are very complex and heavily burdened with legislation and the NHS Pension, with its multiple schemes, even more so. Trying to balance the need to provide this technical information (often as obligated by law) but still enable the general population to understand it is very difficult. It is recognised that website content, letters and even conversations between staff and customers often use too much technical language that people do not understand and there are also issues around the jargon and multitude of acronyms that are used.

The CFIT team will begin a programme of reviewing the language and detail used across all mediums, with an overall aim of simplifying where possible – or at least to provide further explanation when there are legal requirements to provide the technical language.

## **Compliance Report**

Good progress had been made on recommendations, with 28 implemented in the quarter.

Activity plans for the next period are:

- Additional Pension Casework
- Deferred Member Process

## **Member Communications**

A presentation was provided outlining the improvement and engagement activities; there is a lot of communication activity around Flexible and Partial Retirement.

## **Update on New Regulations, Guidance or Consultations**

Updates were provided on:

- Up-rating member contributions – first cycle
- Removal of Special Class
- Flexible Accrual
- Partial Retirement
- McCloud

- Communications approach

## **Deep Dive Presentations**

The following Deep Dive presentation was provided:

- Finance Deep Dive presentation provided by Lisa Thwaites, Pensions Financial Operations Manager, and Angela Lowin, Pensions Finance Analyst/Accountant

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