

# NHS Pension Scheme: GP Practice Administration Guide

This guide is intended for General Practitioners, Practice Managers and 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers who are responsible for managing Practice Staff pension contributions and member records. This guide has been provided following requests from Practice Staff who may not have been aware of the entire range of obligations an employer has to perform regarding the NHS Pension Scheme for their staff.

*Note: The term 'Practice Staff' excludes GPs and non-GP providers*

## Deadlines for information and contributions

As an NHS employer you have a statutory duty to:

- Send Scheme contributions to us within 19 days of the month following the month in which the earnings were paid to the member. The preferred method of payment is by submission of the GP1 form each month via POL, this then initiates a Direct Debit set up. The GP1 is only available via e-forms. And can be accessed using this link: [Pensions Online \(POL\)](#).

*Note 1: See the Pensions Online Section below for details on how to register for Pensions Online (POL)*

*Note 2: For any queries regarding the setting up of a Direct Debit to pay over contributions or any changes that are required to existing Direct Debits please contact [Xafinity Paymaster](#).*

*Note 3: Payments for GP Providers, non-GP Providers, salaried GPs, locums and registrars should be made via the PCT and not included on the GP1 form.*

- Keep records of all contributions deducted from salaries and wages, and update individual member pension records within 2 calendar months of the end of the financial year and upon someone leaving the Practice or the Pensions Scheme (by submission of the SD55 form). Please note that this is required in addition to the monthly GP1 forms. The SD55 form can be accessed via [Pensions Online \(POL\)](#).

Further information about contributions and membership can be found in the [Annual Leave](#) factsheet, [Sick Leave](#) factsheet and [Maternity Leave](#) employer FAQs. (A Maternity Leave factsheet will be available to view soon in the Employers Toolkit section of the NHS Pensions website.)

## Eligibility

**Every** salaried NHS employee has the statutory right to join the Scheme unless they voluntarily 'opt out' by completing form [SD502](#). The decision tree in the [Scheme Guide](#) will assist you in determining which Section the employee can join, so you can enter the employee's details on form SS10GP on [Pensions Online \(POL\)](#). Please note that form SS10GP should be completed for all employees (except GPs and non-GP Providers) to register them with the Scheme.

The [Scheme Guide](#) is an information booklet for all scheme members, which you should make your staff aware of either by printing a copy or by sending them a link. You can also request hard copies from the [stationery order line](#). The guide provides a general overview of the scheme's rules and benefits for the member.

## Contribution Rates

### Employer

The employer contribution rate is 14% of the member's pensionable pay.

### Employee

From April 2008 the employee's contribution rates changed to tiered rates based on their pensionable pay. There are four rates of member contribution ranging from 5% of pensionable pay for the lowest earners to 8.5% of pensionable pay for the highest. The thresholds at which the rates change are linked to nationally agreed pay rates at set levels on salaries equivalent to someone working full time. Details on the tiered rates can be found [here](#). More information is also available in the [employer FAQs](#) and the [employee FAQs](#).

*Note: There are different rules for GPs and non-GP Providers*

## Pensions Online (POL)

Pensions Online is an online tool on the internal NHS Network (N3) giving employers the facility to update and amend members records and make payments. It also provides employers with the functionality to access service history information and obtain estimates of retirement benefits at the touch of a button for their scheme members.

For details on how to register for POL and to see other frequently asked questions about POL please [click here](#).

## Additional Pension (AP)

The amount of benefits at retirement can be increased if the member pays extra contributions. The buying of additional pension (AP) is done by the member electing to purchase a set amount of annual pension for an agreed amount of contributions. These can be paid either as a lump sum or as a regular payment for an agreed period of time. [Click here](#) for further information on AP.

## Money Purchase Additional Voluntary Contributions (MPAVCs)

*(This option relates to existing contracts for members in the 95 section only)*

Lump sums or regular amounts can be paid in to a fund chosen by the member and invested by one of the providers selected by the scheme managers. Contributions are invested in accordance with the member's selection and a separate fund is built up. When

a member retires they can use this fund to provide an additional pension for the member, or the member and their dependants. The member could also take some of this fund as a lump sum. More information for members can be found in the [member's factsheet](#) and [member's FAQs](#). For employers, see [Employer FAQs](#).

## Added Years

Members of the 1995 section of the scheme who took out, or elected to take out an added years contract before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 may also be buying additional membership by lump sum or regular payments. These contracts may continue whilst members are in the 1995 section. This option is no longer available for new contracts in either section. Click here for further information on [added years](#).

## Transferring benefits in to the NHS Pension Scheme

The NHS Pension Scheme allows the member to apply to transfer previous pension rights into the NHS Pension Scheme if the member wishes (subject to HMRC approval.) It is important to note that if the employee has been a member of the NHS Pension Scheme elsewhere in the UK (Scotland / Northern Ireland) that the benefits will not transfer automatically to the scheme, an application must be made for a transfer.

The [Transfer Booklet](#) contains more information.

## Transferring benefits out of the NHS Pension Scheme

If a member leaves the NHS or the Scheme they may be able to transfer their benefits to:

- another occupational pension scheme
- a personal pension scheme
- an insurance company to buy an annuity contract
- a self-employed pension arrangement
- an overseas pension scheme
- a combination of these.

[Click here](#) for further details on transferring benefits out of the scheme.

## Refunds

If a member has been in the scheme for less than 2 years they can apply to have their contributions refunded. Tax and National Insurance deductions will be made before these are repaid to the member.

Click here for further information on [applying for a refund](#) and [form RF12](#). When the member returns the completed RF12 form you can submit the information using [Pensions Online \(POL\)](#).

## Ill health retirement

If the member has at least two years membership and are too ill to work in their present job they may be able to retire early and take their pension benefits. Further information for ill health retirement can be found [here](#), and in the ill health retirement [FAQs](#).

## Retirement & applying for benefits

When a member is retiring they will need to apply for their benefits using form [AW8](#). To ensure that the member receives their benefits on time it should be completed at least four months before their intended retirement date.

[Booklet R](#) gives the member information regarding the benefits payable on retirement from the NHS Pension Scheme.

Should you need to make a change to an employees pensionable pay after they have retired, an AW171 should be completed. This can be done using the form on [Pensions Online \(POL\)](#).

If access to Pensions Online (POL) is not possible most Pension Scheme forms can be found [here](#) or if not available on our website forms can be ordered from the [stationery order line](#).

### **LEGAL OBLIGATIONS**

Failure to remit contributions to the Scheme, complete relevant paperwork, update member pension records, or deny employees access to the Scheme constitutes a breach of the statutory NHS Pension Scheme Regulations and section 49 of the Pensions Act 1995. Section 48 of the Pensions Act 1995 and section 70 of the Pensions Act 2004 states that NHS Pensions has a legal duty to report any 'breaches of law' to the Pensions Regulator. If an individual is found guilty of a 'breach of law' they may be subject to a heavy fine, imprisonment, or both.

### **Useful links**

[Pension Scheme Forms](#)  
[Employers Contact Page](#)