

FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BULLETIN:

Update on Administration of NIFRS's Pension Function

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Circular is to provide information on the changes in the administration of Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service's (NIFRS) Pension Function and the procurement of a new Pension System.

2 BACKGROUND

Pension Schemes:

NIFRS currently administers four Pension Schemes as set out in the relevant legislation, ie:

- (i) The Firefighters' Pension Scheme Order (Northern Ireland) 2007 (FPS);
- (ii) The New Firefighters' Pensions Scheme Order (Northern Ireland) 2007 (NFPS) and The New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (Modified Scheme);
- (iii) The Firefighters' Compensation Scheme Order (Northern Ireland) 2007; and
- (iv) The Firefighters' Pension Scheme Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2015 (CARE).

Outsourcing of Pension Administration:

In July 2015, NIFRS submitted a Business Case in respect of the Pension Function to the Department of Health and it was agreed to outsource NIFRS's Pension Function to the Health & Social Care Business Service Organisation (BSO) through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). This SLA is now in place, however it cannot be implemented until pension software is in place.

Procurement of Pension Software:

From 2007, NIFRS had used the Heywood's AXISe System, however this system was decommissioned and ceased to be supported from 31 December 2014. NIFRS subsequently commenced a tendering exercise to procure a replacement Pension Administration System and is currently in discussions regarding the Terms and Conditions of the contract with a provider. Unfortunately this process is taking a longer period of time than first envisaged.

3 NEXT STEPS

NIFRS will establish a Working Group, once the software has been procured, to manage the project of outsourcing the Pension Function to BSO and also the implementation of the Pension Software System. The group will:

- Develop a Project Plan with defined timelines;
- Identify Project risks and mitigation;
- Oversee/Assist in the data upload to the Pension System;
- Assist in a Data Cleansing Exercise;
- Monitor a Pilot System;
- Liaise with BSO in defining processes; and
- Ensure successful implementation of Project.

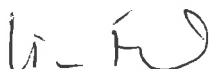
It is anticipated that the new Pension Software System will be implemented and the Pension administration transitioned over to BSO by September 2017 and at this juncture Annual Benefit Statements can be produced from the system.

Once the project is under way, members will be provided with updates to advise them of the current progress and what the changes will mean for them.

4 PENSION SECTION CONTACT DETAILS

Operational employees who are considering retiring or need pension information can still contact the Pension Section via the following email address pensions@nifrs.org.

Thank you for your patience throughout this process.



Josephine Kelly
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

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