

This factsheet is designed for the use of the National Health Service Superannuation Scheme (Scotland) and can be read in conjunction with the member's guide

Introduction

There are some things you may have to consider before completing your application for retirement benefits.

Depending on your circumstances, deciding what is best for you when you retire can be complex. This factsheet is intended to highlight a number of points to consider before making your application. The paragraphs below give a brief description of the subject.

Applications can take up to four months to process and you should make sure to send in your application in plenty of time. To reduce potential delays you should consider issues such as lump sum choice, transferring benefits into the scheme and taxation, before submitting your retirement application form.

If you are still a member of the National Health Service Superannuation Scheme (Scotland) (NHSS(S)), you can obtain the retirement application form (NHS:RET) from your employer. Please take time to read the guidance notes attached to the form. Once you have completed your part, please forward this to your employer to allow them to complete your pensionable pay details and other information required. Your employer will forward your completed application directly to us.

If you are no longer a member of the scheme and have preserved benefits, you can access the NHS:RET form from our website. Please supply us a photocopy of your birth certificate when you send us the completed application.

Scheme membership

There are currently two different sections of the NHSS(S). The 1995 section has a normal pension age of 60 and the 2008 section has a normal pension age of 65. You should be aware of which section you are a member prior to making a decision on retirement as this could affect the date on which your benefits are payable.

Type of retirement

You should be clear about what type of retirement is applicable to you before completing your application. The types of retirement available are:

Age retirement

Available from normal pension age of 60 or from age 65. Can be age 55 for certain 'special class' members.

Voluntary Early Retirement with Actuarial Reduction (VERA)

Available in the 1995 scheme from age 55 or a protected pension age of 50 and only from age 55 if you are in the 2008 scheme. However, in both sections pension and lump sum benefits are reduced actuarially depending on your age in years and months. Any reduction made at retirement remains payable for life.



Premature retirement

Available in the 1995 section from age 55 or a protected pension age of 50 and only from age 55 if you are in the 2008 section. However, your employer must certify that your employment has come to an end because of redundancy.

Ill Health retirement

You can apply for ill health retirement, however, this does not mean you would automatically qualify. Payment of a pension on the grounds of ill health can only be made following an assessment by the independent Medical Adviser appointed by SPPA. Members leaving NHS employment on ill health grounds will not automatically qualify for pension payments. For further information see the ill health factsheet on our website.

Partial Retirement

You can apply for Partial retirement if you are a member of the 2008 section, are aged 55 or over, reduce your pay by at least 10% for a period of at least 12 months and remain in at least one employment, if you have more than one. You must take at least 20% of your accrued benefits and leave at least 20% remaining.

Lump sum choice

You may choose to give up some of your pension to increase your lump sum or to provide you with a lump sum. For each £1 of pension that you give up, you will receive £12 of lump sum subject to the HMRC maximum. See the Lump Sum Choice factsheet for further information.

Taxation

There are restrictions that you may need to be aware of which may affect your benefits such as Annual Allowance, Lifetime Allowance and Recycling. See the Taxation factsheet for further information.

Transferring benefits into the scheme

If you are in active service you may be able to transfer in benefits from a comparable NHS scheme (e.g NHS England and Wales) anytime up to your normal pension age, which is age 60 for the 1995 section and age 65 for the 2008 section. Leaving this until you complete your retirement application may result in a delay in payment of your benefits. It is important to note that your benefits will not transfer automatically to the scheme. You must apply in writing for a transfer to be made.

Additional Pension

If you elected to purchase additional pension and have not completed the contract at the time of your retirement you have two options. You can either receive the proportionate credit based on the payments already made or purchase the remainder of any outstanding additional pension by lump sum prior to retirement. See the Additional Pension factsheet for further information.

Working after retirement

If you return to employment following retirement, the payment of your pension may be affected. The effect of this is different depending on which section of the NHS scheme you were in and the date when you ceased employment. You should notify SPPA's Payroll team before you return to work and they will provide you with your earnings limit. This is the amount that you can earn before your pension is affected. If you fail to do this an overpayment of pension may result which you would have to repay. See the Working after Retirement and Returning after Ill Health factsheets for further information.

Allocation

Allocation is giving up or surrendering part of your pension at retirement to provide for a beneficiary after your death. The scheme already has provision for a pension to be paid to a spouse/registered civil partner and nominated non legal partner. Allocation is an amount paid in addition to the normal death benefits. This means that you give up part of your pension at retirement to provide additional pension for a nominated dependent after your death. If you wish to allocate you must request this and be accepted by SPPA prior to retiral. See Allocation factsheet for further information.

Pension payments

Your payments will be made on the last banking day of each month and are paid directly into the bank account you nominate when completing your application form. Payment is made monthly, in arrears and you will receive 1/12th of the annual amount. However, the first payment will be a proportion of one month's payment if your pension starts part way through the month. If we are in receipt of all the relevant information on time, lump sum payments (if applicable) will normally be paid into your nominated bank account within one month of your date of retirement.

You can nominate a bank account out with the UK.

Questions

Factsheets are designed to give a brief overview. They do not cover every aspect and further guidance can be obtained from the member and employer guides. Full details are contained in the rules of the scheme. If you are unclear about any aspect of this factsheet, you can get in touch with us through the Contact Us details on our website: www.sppa.gov.uk