

Dear Pensioner

The last year has been tremendously challenging for SPPA. All our NHS pension payroll business transferred from Paymaster to SPPA and although there were some teething problems, the transfer has been successfully implemented. Some of you may have been inconvenienced by the transfer of business – please accept my apology if that was the case. I have since increased the staffing levels on the pension payroll team by almost 50% and members should now notice a difference in the service that we offer you.

SPPA aims to provide a first class service to everyone and to that end, we are making some changes to your Annual Pensions Increase (API) Statement to make the information easier to understand. We hope this improves the information you receive from us

In addition, we are improving the information held on our website to make it easier to find. The web site contains important information if you are planning to return to teaching employment after your retirement. This can be found at [www.sppa.gov.uk](http://www.sppa.gov.uk).

In April and May you will receive your payslips. The April payslip will show the pension you will receive in April, with pension increase applied from the **7<sup>th</sup> of April**, when it becomes effective, to the end of that month. Your May payslip shows the monthly value of your pension for a full month. This will be the normal monthly rate of pension for the rest of the year.

Last year, the SPPA undertook a member survey. This was our second survey, and almost 95% of those who took the time to respond, indicated that they were satisfied with the service we provided. This suggests to me that, although we did have some teething problems on pension payroll, the vast majority of our business was carried out on time and accurately.

Perhaps you would like to see more information on the web? Alternatively, perhaps there are any particular items you would like to see in this annual newsletter? Please write to me with any of your suggestions.

**Ian Clapperton**  
Director of Operations

### 2008 Pensions Increase

An increase to your pension will be payable if you are over age 55 **or** if the pension is an ill health, widow's, widower's or a dependents allowance.

If you are due an increase on your pension the new rate will be payable from **7 April 2008**. Your Annual Pension Increase statement will follow shortly with full details of the new annual rate of your pension. You will receive a lower percentage increase if your pension started on or after 23 April 2007.

If you retired after 1978 and also receive a State pension your increase may be affected by the application of Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) rules. This means that you may not receive the full increase from the SPPA, as part of your increase may be paid with your State pension. This is because your occupational pension scheme was contracted out of the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS). Please refer to your statement from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for confirmation.

Your first payment received on or after 7 April 2008 will only include the increase from that date. **Your next payment will include the full increase.**

### Your P60

Your P60 is included with this Newsletter.

Your P60 will give you details of the pension we have paid you and the tax deducted in the tax year 2007/2008.

The amount before tax shown on your P60 is usually different from the annual rate paid for that year. This is because:

- the first payment you received in the tax year included one or more days before the last increase on 9 April 2007
- your pension started during the tax year
- your pension was not paid in full for the whole of the tax year.

### Important Changes and Reminders

#### Changes in Tax rules

HM Revenue & Customs tell us how much tax to take from your pension. The Government has announced Tax changes for the Financial Year 2008/2009 which may affect you. If you have any questions on the effects that this has on your pension, please contact HM Revenue & Customs directly.

HM Revenue & Customs, Centre 1, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G79 1AA or telephone 0845 0703 703

You will need to quote your National Insurance Number and PAYE reference, which can be found on your pension advice note or form P60, as well as your SPPA reference number.

#### Lifetime Allowance 2008

The Lifetime Allowance for the Financial Year 2008/2009 has been increased to £1.65 million. Further information will be provided to you in your Annual Pensions Increase letter which will be issued shortly. If you require further information please visit our website at [www.sppa.gov.uk](http://www.sppa.gov.uk) or contact an Independent Financial Advisor.

### Going back to work in the STSS

If after retiring you start re-employment as a teacher you **must** inform us. We will then advise you of your 'Earnings Limit'. This will tell you how much you can earn before your pension is affected. Any overpayment of pension due to re-employment will have to be repaid.

### Dependents Allowances

If the payment you receive from us is in respect of a dependents allowance, you **must** let us know immediately when you cease full time education or training, or if there are any other changes in your circumstances. Whether the change affects your allowance will be determined by the date of your award (see web site for further detail). Any overpayment will have to be repaid.

### Remarriage, living together as husband and wife or entering into a civil partnership

If you receive an STSS widows or widower's pension and you decide to re-marry, live with another person as husband and wife or register a civil partnership you must let us know. It may affect your pension.

### Advice for your Next of Kin

**Please tell your next of kin or other representative that in the event of your death they must inform SPPA as soon as possible. The pension payable to you is due up to and including the date of death. Pension payments made after that date are not due and any overpayment must be repaid.**

Where your pension is paid direct to a bank or building society account we will ask the bank to refund any pension paid after the date of death. If you have your pension paid to a joint account it is important that the other account holder is aware of this. At the same time we will advise your next of kin or personal representative of our action.

If your surviving partner is eligible for a pension, an application form will be issued promptly.

### What to do if things go wrong

We make every effort to get things right. However, occasionally things go wrong and it is a cause of great concern when this happens. For that reason we treat all complaints with urgency and do our utmost to put matters right as quickly as possible.

Please telephone or write with details of your concern. If you telephone we will try to give you an answer straight away. If we cannot do so at the time we will tell you why and explain what we have to do next. We will contact you again within 15 working days to bring you up to date with the situation.

If you write to us we will try to give you a full reply within 15 working days. However, sometimes we are unable to do so because, for example, we have to contact another organisation. In this case we will send you an interim reply. This will explain what we are doing, tell you who is handling your complaint, and when we expect to send you a full reply.

If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint please write to the Director of Operations, at the address below, who will look into the matter urgently.

If you remain dissatisfied, you can get help from the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO). You may also take your case to the Pensions Ombudsman. Details can be obtained by contacting us.

### National Fraud Initiative

SPPA participates in the National Fraud Initiative. The purpose is to confirm entitlement to pension and other benefits such as housing benefits. This involves the checking of the database for NHS and STSS pensioners in Scotland against other databases held by public bodies, including the Department of Work and Pensions. The benefit to you is that we no longer need to carry out the annual check on a sample of our pensioners to confirm that they are still entitled to receive an NHS or STSS pension.

### Contacting SPPA Payroll

Please do not use e-mail to notify us of a change in your personal details e.g. a change of address or banking details. A change to your bank details must be notified to us in writing; however we can accept a change of address notification by telephone.

**SPPA Payroll, 7 Tweedside Park, Tweedbank, Galashiels, TD1 3TE**

**Telephone 01896 893049 Facsimile 01896 893214**

### TEACHERS SUPPORT SCOTLAND

Teachers Support Scotland is a charity dedicated to improving the wellbeing of training, serving and retired teachers. Working in schools and online the charity works with teachers to improve various aspects of their professional and personal lives. For further information please visit [www.teachersupportscotland.info](http://www.teachersupportscotland.info)

Teacher Support Scotland would like to contact you by mail later in the year to explain the services they provide and to ask for your support. If you would like to be excluded from this mailing please call on 0131 220 0872.

**Please do not contact Scottish Public Pensions Agency about the work of Teachers Support Scotland.**

A copy of this Newsletter has been posted onto our website, which can be visited at [www.sppa.gov.uk](http://www.sppa.gov.uk). If you would like a larger print version of this newsletter, please contact SPPA Payroll – 01896 893049.