



Single Scheme Administration Project

Quarterly Bulletin – Issue 19

December 2020



An Roinn Caiteachais
Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform

Welcome

Welcome to Issue 19 of the quarterly bulletin of the Single Scheme Administration Project.

This edition includes:

- a link to an advance copy of the forthcoming annual Scheme survey;
- notification of change to the Normal Retirement Age
- an update on the Single Scheme Databank;
- a review of Single Scheme training activities in 2020

Annual Scheme Survey

We will be sending out a link to the annual survey to all Relevant Authorities in early January seeking data as at 31 December 2020 on your Single Scheme members. The primary objective of the survey is to obtain total membership numbers in order to accurately calculate Pension Authority fees, for payment by DPER on behalf of all Relevant Authorities. We will take the opportunity to check in on other areas of scheme administration, including data relating to levels of compliance (annual statements etc.). The deadline for receipt will be **22nd January** and a return by all Relevant Authorities is mandatory. ***An advance draft of all of the questions that will be asked is available on our website [here](#) to allow you to make advance preparations.***

Budget 2021 and Single Scheme Normal Retirement Age

The *Normal Retirement Age* for members of the Single Scheme is directly linked to the eligibility age for the *State Pension (Contributory)*, administered by the Department of Social Protection and Employment Affairs. As part of Budget 2021 it was announced that the eligibility age for the *State Pension (Contributory)* will change. This means that the *Normal Retirement Age* for members of the Single Scheme will also change. Once this change has been legislated for in the Social Welfare Bill 2021 this Department will communicate with Relevant Authorities on how this will impact on all areas of Single Scheme administration.

Single Scheme Databank

Onboarding to the Single Scheme Databank continues to progress in waves, with 90 Relevant Authorities onboarded to date. Wave 5 bodies are completing the final File Uploads in December and Wave 6 onboarding commenced in November, with their first uploads due next week. A big **Thank you** to all the staff in those Relevant Authorities for their engagement and for working to collate their data to ensure on-time uploading of files to the Databank during these challenging times.

We intend to onboard all remaining Relevant Authorities to the Single Scheme Databank by mid-2021. With this in mind, it is time for Administrators to familiarise themselves with the material available on the [Single Scheme website](#) (including Scheme File Templates and Training supports) and to continue to progress the preparation of Membership and Benefits Payment Data Files for all Scheme years since 2013.

National Implementation Steering Committee

Oonagh Buckley, D/Justice (Chair);
Colin Menton, D/PER (SRO);
Barry O'Brien, D/PER;
Paul Bolger, D/Health;
Des Dowling, D/Defence;
Eithne Fox, HSE;
Deirdre McDonnell, D/Education & Skills;
Doncha O'Sullivan, D/Justice;
Emma Reeves, D/Housing;
John Ryan, NSSO

DPER Project Team

Deirdre O'Neill, Project Manager
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2020 Training Workshops

The project team provided 17 webinars throughout October and November covering all 6 main areas of single scheme administration. Everybody who expressed an interest in Single Pension Training was invited to training.

Thanks to all for taking time to answer our short questionnaire at the end of each module. **99%** Attendees found the webinars either **Good, Very Good or Excellent**. We appreciate the feedback you gave and we will take on board some of the suggestions if we continue using webinars in 2021.

If your organisation requires any new members of staff to attend any of the training modules, please email singleschemequeries@per.gov.ie advising which modules are of interest and the desired number of places. It is important that you do contact us in this regard so that we can gauge interest and determine the number of sessions and types of modules to make available. As a reminder, the current webinar training programme includes:

- Module A:** Recruitment and Onboarding
- Module B:** Leaving Employment
- Module C:** Annual Administration Activities
- Module D:** Retirement Benefits Administration
- Module E:** Death Benefits Administration
- Module F:** Purchase and Transfer of Retirement Benefits

Please note that priority for spaces will be given to administrators who have not yet attended that specific training module.

Online Technical Supports and Guidance

Administrators should continue to consult the dedicated Single Scheme website www.singlepensionscheme.gov.ie in the first instance for any technical queries. In recent months a series of training videos for Pensions Administrators has been published to the Training Video Library. Key website resources include:

Administrator FAQ*
Training Video Library
Single Scheme Circulars and Legislation
Single Scheme Booklets (standard and uniform grades)
Member Benefits Estimator Tool (standard and uniform grades)
Lifecycle Event Toolkits
Employer Calculation Tools

**updated version 5 published September 2020*

For further information or to be added to/removed from the circulation list, please email singleschemequeries@per.gov.ie. For technical queries, please consult with online resources or a senior colleague prior to raising a query. Please include your Relevant Authority identification number in any correspondence **and ensure that any personal member data is fully anonymised.**

We wish to thank everyone for their assistance with the project this year and to wish all a peaceful festive break - we look forward to working with you in 2021

