

Single Scheme Administration Project

Quarterly Bulletin - Issue 4

March 2017



Welcome

Welcome to the fourth quarterly bulletin on the Single Scheme Administration Project. This bulletin aims to share information with all public service administrators involved in Single Public Service Pension Scheme operation regarding project work underway in this area.

Project Purpose

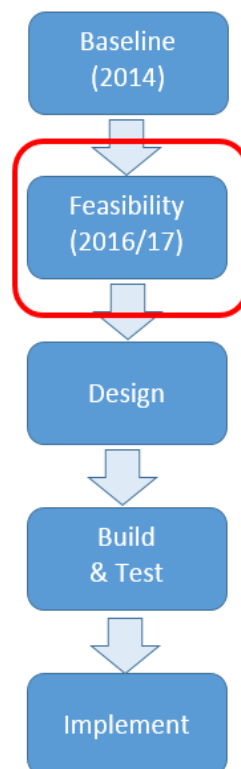
The current project is examining various options for improving the long-term administrative arrangements for the Single Scheme. The outcome from this work will be a recommendation to Government on a preferred option for implementation.

Project Status

We are now at an advanced stage of completing the Feasibility Study into the options for administration of the Single Scheme. These have been assessed from the perspectives of member experience, cost to implement and operate and ease of administration.

The Project team is currently working with the Programme Board to finalise the recommendations, which include both short and long-term actions. These will form the basis of a Memorandum which will be brought to Government for decision in the coming weeks.

The outcomes and details on the next phase of work will then be communicated to all organisations involved.



State Pension Rate Changes

A quick reminder that the Contributory State Pension is changing from €233.30 to €238.30 per week from Friday 10th March and will need to be factored into the calculation of contributions and referable amounts.

Programme Board

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Planning, Community and
Local Government

DPER Project Team

Martina Hennessy, Project
Manager

David Hardiman

Michael McKeown

Fergal Carty

Finbar Ó hAnnracháin

Contact:

singleschemequeries@per.gov.ie

31st December 2016 Single Scheme Member Survey

In line with previous years, DPER asked each Relevant Authority (RA) to complete a short survey on their numbers of Single Scheme members for the end of the year. This generates some key statistics on the scheme, and is also necessary in order for the Pension Authority fees for all scheme members to be paid centrally. We would like to thank everyone for responding in a timely manner.

No CPI adjustment

The 2016 inflation outcome report by CSO was 0% (i.e. no change), indicating no CPI-based adjustment of 2015-accrued referable amounts. [Circular 2 of 2017](#) gives further details. The amounts up to 2014 will still need to be adjusted by 0.1% as set out in last year's circular ([Circular 13 of 2016](#)).

Policy Updates

A Cache of Circulars

There has been a flurry of circulars on the Single Scheme issued in the last quarter, all of which are available online:

Date	Topic	Document Reference
21 December 2016	Employer Contributions (see note below)	Circular 28 of 2016
31 January 2017	Consumer Price Index - impact on Single Scheme	Circular 2 of 2017
3 February 2017	Enhancement of benefit on retirement on medical grounds	Guidance Note 1 of 2017
3 February 2017	Accrual of Referable Amounts on Sick Leave	Circular 3 of 2017

The circular in relation to accrual of referable amounts while on sick leave allows any Single Scheme member who is or has been on sick leave at half rate of pay, to accrue Single Scheme pension benefits on the same basis as if they were absent on sick leave on full pay for that period. Their contributions and referable amounts are both based on their full rate of pay. The guidance note on retirement on medical grounds provides more detailed information on the pension and lump sum benefit enhancement in cases of retirement or discharge on medical grounds.

Employer Contributions

Please note, as stated in [Circular 28 of 2016](#), that the Employer Contributions' Circular is *not* applicable to the majority of organisations within the Single Scheme. It is relevant to organisations that are self-financing and/or where employees are engaged in activities that are mainly or wholly self-financing, i.e. mainly financed from sources other than the Central Fund (directly or indirectly). DPER will be in direct contact with those organisations impacted by it.

FAQ Reminder

There is a FAQ to address common queries on the implementation of the scheme posted to the Department's website by the Policy Unit. It can be found on the Single Scheme webpages, along with all related circulars and other materials <http://www.per.gov.ie/en/single-scheme/>.

For further information or to be added to/removed from the circulation list, please email singleschemequeries@per.gov.ie. Please include your Relevant Authority identification number in any correspondence.