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| Circular Number: | FPSC 12/2006 | Date Issued: | 05/10/2006 |
| Action: | For Information and Action | | |
| Title: | <i>FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME</i> | | |
| Issued by: | Martin Hill Local Government and Firefighters' Pensions Division | | |

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| Summary: | This circular advises FRAs that: 1) a Firefighters' Pensions Discussion Forum has been set up; 2) the 'Nomination of Dependent Partner for Survivor Pensions' forms can be issued to retained and volunteer firefighters; and 3) workshops on the NFPS options exercise have been arranged. |
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| Addressed to: | Please Forward to: |
| The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority | Pension and human resources managers |
| The Chief Fire Officer | Medical/Occupational health managers |

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Firefighters' Pension Scheme Website: www.communities.gov.uk/firepensions

1.0 The Firefighters' Pension Scheme and New Firefighters' Pension Scheme - Discussion Forum

- 1.1 The DCLG are providing us with the facility to run a discussion forum for firefighters' pension arrangements. This will operate within the DCLG's main discussion forum (www.localvisionforum.net).
- 1.2 With ongoing amendments to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) and the introduction of the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (NFPS), we have taken the view that the discussion forum will be a useful tool for HR and pension administrators in FRAs to discuss issues relating to firefighter pensions. The main benefits will be:
- Administrators will be able to discuss amongst themselves problems and concerns which they are facing;
 - Any response that we give on any question raised will be available to all administrators who access the site.
- 1.3 The DCLG Forum is an open access site so that any comments posted on it can be read by anyone who accesses it; however, contributors to any of the discussion threads are required to register online and all comments that are submitted are read by moderators to ensure that they comply with the forum discussion rules before they are placed in the relevant discussion thread.
- 1.4 **For firefighters' pension topics, we have decided that only HR and pension administrators should be able to comment. This means that when registering we expect contributors to provide relevant information about their position and contact details. Contributions when posted will not need to identify the person or their authority, this will be a matter for individual choice.**
- 1.5 Firefighters are welcome to access the site and read the comments.
- 1.6 The first firefighters' pension topic which we have introduced for discussion relates to the 'options exercise' which will start in January 2007. We therefore invite HR and pension administrators **"to consider and discuss the questions they anticipate will be raised during the options exercise"**. This will enable us to prepare suitable Q&A briefing for distribution with the packs which FRAs will be required to send to all firefighters.
- 1.7 This discussion thread will be closed on 30th November. We will then set up further discussion threads to support administrators during the options exercise. We can initiate new discussion threads at any time and if you think that this would be helpful please let us know the issue(s) you would want discussed.
- 1.8 We will not necessarily respond directly on every point raised, but we will endeavour to submit guidance/advice in response to recurring themes and to submit comments where this may be helpful.

- 1.9 You will be able to access the front page by clicking on the hyperlink on the firefighters' pension section of the DCLG website at www.communities.gov.uk/firepensions or by visiting www.localvisionforum.net.

2.0 Nomination of Dependent Partner for Survivors Pension

- 2.1 In paragraph 1.12 of FPS Circular10/2006, we recommended that any members of the FPS considering transferring to the NFPS to secure benefits for an unmarried partner should complete a nomination form as soon as possible. This will ensure that they would be covered in the interim period between 6 April 2006 and the commencement of the options exercise. We attached at Annex B to that circular a letter for FRAs to issue to all current members of the FPS.
- 2.2 We have since received enquiries with regard to the position of retained/volunteer firefighters who were in post prior to 6th April 2006. We would recommend that they be included in this exercise. As with regular firefighters, completing a form at this stage does not mean making a binding commitment to join the NFPS. If a retained / volunteer firefighter does not opt to join the NFPS the declaration form will simply lapse at the end of the options period.
- 2.3 A copy of the form along with guidance can be accessed via [Nomination of Dependent Partner](#) .

3.0 Dates for NFPS Options Workshops

- 3.1 We are arranging regional workshops to help HR and pension administrators prepare for the options exercise. At the workshops, we will outline the options which will be available to regular and RDS firefighters; the processes which will need to be followed; and the documentation which will be available.
- 3.2 The following dates have been fixed:
- South West 2nd November
 - Wales 7th November
 - West Midlands 8th November
 - London & the South East 10th November
 - East Midlands 14th November
 - North West 15th November
 - Scotland 22nd November
 - East Anglia 27th November
 - North East 29th November

- Yorks & Humberside 30th November

- 3.3 You should receive information about your regional workshop through a regional contact. If you do not, please let us know and we will arrange for you to be provided with details.
- 3.4 If you are unable to attend the relevant regional workshop, you will be welcome to join one of the others. Again, let us know and we will ensure that you are provided with the necessary details.

Martin Hill