

## NHS PENSION SCHEMES 06/2017

**WHO SHOULD READ:** NHS HR and Payroll Managers  
NHS Occupational Health Professionals  
GP Practice Managers  
Direction Bodies  
Practitioner Service Division (PSD)  
Dental Payments  
Trade Unions

**ACTION:** For information

**SUBJECT:** 1. Change of Medical Advisory Services Provision for SPPA  
2. Change to who can authorise Form AW8/MED

The purpose of this circular is to:

- Notify employers of the change in provision of Medical Advisory Services for SPPA
- Advise employers on a change to required authorisation of form AW8/MED - the medical report form completed in support of a member's application for ill-health retirement

### PROVISION OF MEDICAL ADVISORY SERVICES TO SPPA

From 1 April 2017, Duradiamond Health Care, (DHC) are providing medical advisory services to SPPA after completing a successful contract awarding process.

Formed in 2002, DHC is one of the largest independent Occupational Health (OH) providers in the UK, working with over 300 clients to deliver innovative and targeted OH solutions across a wide variety of sectors. They are a multi-disciplinary consultancy company, owned and managed by healthcare professionals.

DHC are accredited to SEQOHS, ISO 9001, ISO 18001, ISO 14001, and ISO 22301 standards and every member of their team plays a key role in meeting the exacting expectations and standards set by these management systems.

Employers should not notice any difference to existing procedures when referring ill health applications to SPPA.

Employers should note that applications must be submitted to SPPA 4 months before the intended retiral date and any incomplete or out of date applications will be returned.



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## CHANGE TO FORM AW8/MED FORM

Employers are asked to note that the [AW8/MED form](#) has been amended so that it can be completed by a Senior Occupational Health Nurse where an Occupational Health Doctor is not available.

Also available on the website is the document "[A Guide to Ill-Health Retirement](#)" which has recently been updated to include references to the new 2015 CARE pension scheme.

### Background to Change

When a member wishes to apply for early payment of their pension on the grounds of ill health they are required to submit form AW8 and the accompanying form AW8/MED. If the member is in NHS employment, the AW8/MED form is currently completed and signed by an Occupational Health Doctor.

The Scottish NHS Pension Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) recently considered a submission on behalf of the Senior Occupational Health Managers Group for NHS Scotland. The Group requested that consideration be given to allowing form AW8/MED to be completed by a Senior Occupational Health Nurse rather than an Occupational Health Doctor, as there were some difficulties in getting the forms signed off by a doctor .

The SAB were asked to consider the fact that Occupational Health Nurses now function at a higher level and were managing highly complex caseloads. Occupational Health Nurses are the people who also support the employee who is unable to return to work due to ill health. They currently gather the medical information and specialist reports, conduct work place visits, monitor the health of the employee and advise management on the appropriateness of redeployment.

The SAB noted that the limited availability of Occupational Health Doctors to consider and sign off the information provided to them was in some cases causing delays in processing the applications for members. It was also noted that five Health Boards now had a nurse led Occupational Health service.

After considering the case put forward, the SAB considered the proposal was consistent with the Scottish Government's policy for finding new ways of working, and would drive and reinforce NHS Scotland's commitment to working to a maximum capability. They also felt that this approach would provide a more timely service for the members whilst also ensuring that the quality of medical information provided with the form was maintained.

Having considered this request the SAB agreed that this change should be introduced but also agreed to monitor the quality of information provided and review the position 12 months after implementation.



**Sarah Butler**  
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**11 April 2017**

**Contact information**

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[Sharon.liptrott@gov.scot](mailto:Sharon.liptrott@gov.scot) for enquiries regarding changes to completing the AW8/MED.

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