

**POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN
IRELAND PENSIONS BRANCH
ADMINISTRATION:**

**INTERNAL DISPUTE
RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

POLICY OWNER	Director of Resources
HPE REFERENCE NUMBER	340240
VERSION NUMBER	2
DATE OF LAST REVISION	February 2018
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	January 2019

The Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) as Scheme Manager for the three Police Pension Schemes, currently in operation, is responsible for managing and administering the schemes. The NIPB delegates the administration of the schemes, including pension payments, to PSNI Pensions Branch. The Injury on Duty Award Scheme is administered by the NIPB's Police Administration Branch, however, payments in respect of awards are also delegated to PSNI Pensions Branch.

The Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 requires all occupational pension schemes to introduce formal internal dispute resolution (IDR) procedures for dealing with disagreements between scheme members and the scheme administrators. The procedures set out in this policy formalise and refine existing arrangements in line with the requirements of the Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. This procedure is effective from 13th December 1995.

These arrangements give a member or member's beneficiary the right to receive a written explanation of a decision made in response to a complaint about PSNI Pension Branch's handling of any matter relating to the payment of a pension or award. Reference to a member includes former or serving police officers.

WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT

The following category of individuals may raise a complaint under this policy:

- Serving Police Officer
- Former Police Officer
- A widow, widower, civil partner or adult partner of a former police officer
- A child or dependent of a former police officer
- A representative on behalf of one of the above categories

These arrangements will be available to active members of the scheme; those with deferred pensions; retired members; dependants of deceased members; those eligible for membership of the scheme; and anyone claiming to fall into one of these categories.

An application may be made or continued on behalf of an individual by a representative nominated by the person concerned, (e.g. a staff association representative or a solicitor). An application may also be made or continued on an individual's behalf when a person dies, or is a minor, or is incapable of acting for him or herself.

- In the case of death, by the personal representative; and
- In any other case, by a member of the individual's family, or some other person or body suitable to represent him or her.

HOW THE COMPLAINT IS PROCESSED

A report detailing the facts of your case will be prepared by PSNI Pensions Branch and/or Board officials and will include a response to each of the points raised in your complaint. A file will then be passed to the Director of Resources to review and reach a decision.

Your complaint will then be considered by the Director of Resources and a determination made, including direction on any actions to be taken.

APPEALS NOT CONSIDERED UNDER THE PSNI PENSION SCHEMES INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

It should be noted that appeals under Regulation H2 of the PSNI Pensions Regulations 1988; Regulation 68 of the Police Pensions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 and Regulation 206 of the Police Pensions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 are specifically excluded from the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures by Regulation 9(c) of the Occupational Pension Schemes (IDRP) Regulations 1996.

Also excluded are disagreements in which proceedings have already begun in any court or tribunal, or in which the Pensions Ombudsman has already commenced an investigation into a complaint or dispute referred to him or her.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Contact point for Complaints and Appeals

To ensure that complaints and appeals are not confused with general enquiries all complaints and appeals under the NIPB internal dispute procedures should be addressed to:

Director of Resources (IDRP)
Police Administration Branch
Northern Ireland Policing Board
Waterside Tower
31 Clarendon Road
Clarendon Dock
Belfast
BT1 3BG

Receipt of the complaint

An acknowledgement will be issued by the NIPB Secretaries Office within 2 working days of receipt of the complaint advising it has been passed to the Chief Executive. The acknowledgment will outline the timeframes for a decision and response and include details of the Pensions Advisory Service.

Time limit for making complaints

All complaints should be made within six months beginning immediately after the date on which the subject matter of the complaint occurred.

Director of Resources consideration of complaint

An application to the Director of Resources for a decision on a complaint must be made in writing, signed by or on behalf of the person making the complaint and must include details of the disagreement on which a decision is being sought. For example, in the case of a complaint relating to the calculation of a pension – specify the type of pension, when it should be paid from, the disputed amount etc.

Individuals should provide their full name, address, date of birth and service number (if a member beneficiary - of the former officer). A representative or relative acting on behalf of an individual must in addition, provide their full name, address, and state their relationship to the individual. The application must be signed by or on behalf of the complainant.

The decision by the Director of Resources will be taken within 40 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. The decision will be communicated within 15

working days thereafter. Where it is clear that this will not be possible, an interim reply will be sent, explaining why there is a delay and when a full reply can be expected.

The Director of Resources' determination will set out the basis for the decision and where the complaint is upheld, will make directions for actions to be taken.

Conflicts of Interest

Where a conflict of interest arises in the Director of Resources considering a complaint under this procedure an independent assessor, for example the NIPB's Chief Executive, will be appointed.

USEFUL CONTACTS

If you require assistance with your complaint or are not satisfied with the outcome you may wish to contact the Pensions Advisory Service, who provide free of charge advice:

The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS) Limited

The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS) Limited is available to assist scheme members with any difficulties which they fail to resolve with the Pension Administrator, as Scheme Manager. Their details can be found on their website, www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint you may wish to contact the Pensions Ombudsman Service (also free of charge):

Pensions Ombudsman Service

The Pensions Ombudsman Service is available to investigate and determine any complaint alleging injustice in consequence of maladministration in connection with any act or omission on the part of the Board in administering the PSNI Pension Schemes.