

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

**INTERNAL DISPUTE
RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

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. There will be two stages for dealing with complaints.

- The first stage will be taken by the Head of PSNI Pension Branch, the person responsible for the day to day administration of the Police Pension Schemes.
- The second stage is the right of appeal to the Director of Policy, Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB).

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.

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 63 of the Police Pensions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 and Regulation 214 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

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.

Application for a decision by the Head of PSNI Pensions Branch (First Stage)

An application to the Head of PSNI Pensions Branch for a decision on a complaint must be made in writing and must include details of the disagreement on which a decision is being sought. Individuals should provide their full name, address, date of birth and service number. 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 the Head of PSNI Pensions Branch 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.

Appeal to the Director of Policy, NIPB (Second Stage)

Individuals who are not satisfied with the decision made by the Head of PSNI Pensions Branch will have the right of appeal to the Director of Policy, NIPB. This appeal must be submitted within six months of the date of the notice of decision from the Head of PSNI Pensions Branch and must be signed by or on behalf of the person making the complaint. Individuals must provide their full name, address, date of birth and service number, together with a statement clearly setting out that it is an appeal and why they are dissatisfied with the Head of PSNI Pensions Branch's decision.

The Director of Policy will normally issue a notice of decision within 40 working days of the date of receipt of the appeal, and where this may not be possible; an interim reply will be sent explaining why there is a delay and when a full reply can be expected.

The reply from the Director of Policy will state to what extent the original decision by the Head of PSNI Pensions Branch has been replaced, or not replaced as the case may be. It will also set out the basis for the decision.

USEFUL CONTACTS

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

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.

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:

Head of PSNI Pensions Branch (IDRP)
Police Service of Northern Ireland
7th Floor, River House
48 High Street
Belfast
BT1 2RU

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