



NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 18

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The Government Standard

New Ministerial Team at DFID

At the beginning of September a new Secretary of State and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for DFID was announced.



Justine Greening

Justine Greening was appointed Secretary of State for International Development on 4 September 2012. On joining DFID she said “I am delighted that the Prime Minister has appointed me as your new Secretary of State. I know from my predecessor that I am taking over a Department full of highly capable and committed people.”



Lynne Featherstone

Lynne Featherstone joined DFID as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development on 5 September 2012. She said “I am delighted to be joining the Department for International Development as your new Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State. I look forward to working with the new Secretary of State, Minister of State and the rest of the department to transform the lives of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people.”

Alan Duncan remains as Minister of State.

National Fraud Initiative

Overseas Pensions Department is participating in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) 2012/13 data matching exercise carried out by the Audit Commission. We will provide the Audit Commission with the pension data we hold for all our pensioners so that they can compare our data with the information held by other public bodies to identify cases where pensions are still being paid despite the pensioner’s death.

OPD has a duty to protect the public funds we administer and this exercise will help us to detect and prevent fraud. This data matching exercise meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Further details may be found under our Department’s ‘National Fraud Initiative’ link.

Please note that you do not need to take any action in respect of this exercise.

Hong Kong Pensioners

If you are a Hong Kong pensioner who does not receive regular payments of SPOS or Sterling Safeguard or has yet to receive a payment, please remember to advise us immediately if you change your address or banking arrangements. This will help us to avoid any delay in making such payments that you may be eligible for in the future.

OPD's Performance in 2011/2012

OPD's work is regulated by quality and timeliness targets in a Service Level Agreement (SLA). Our performance against those targets in 2011/12 is outlined in the following table.

STANDARD	TARGET	ACHIEVED
Accuracy of Initial Calculation of New and Revised Awards	95.00 %	100%
Accuracy of Initial Payment Calculations	97.50 %	99.94%
Number of New Awards put into Payment Within 2 Weeks	97.50 %	99.46%
Timeliness of Payments by the Due Date	99.00 %	100%
Response to Enquiries Within 2 Weeks of Receipt	99.00 %	99.91%
Substantive Response to Complaints Within 5 Weeks	95.00 %	100%

We also measure our actual response times. In each category the target is 14 calendar days, but, although this was not achieved in every case, the average time taken was significantly less:

Category	Average Response
Processing New Awards	5 Days
Response to Enquiries	5 Days
Response to Complaints	12 Days

During 2011/2012

• Pensioner numbers	reduced by	6% to 14,438
• Staff numbers	reduced by	15% to 19
• Unit costs	increased (on average) by	5%

Further information on our workload and performance is detailed in OPD's Annual Report, which is available on DFID's website - www.dfid.gov.uk. A printed copy may be ordered by writing to Overseas Pensions Department, or by e-mail from hopd@dfid.gov.uk.

Customer Survey Results

OPD issues a survey questionnaire to every pensioner six months after his or her first pension payment. During 2011/12, we issued 272 forms, of which 152 (56%) were returned. The conclusions were that:

- 97% of respondents rated our service overall as either very good (82%) or good;
- 74% described our staff as helpful, 83% as efficient and 64% as friendly;
- 95% thought our written replies were either very good (72%) or good;
- 96% thought the service provided on the telephone was very good (78%) or good;
- 1% of respondents described our overall performance or any aspect of our written replies or telephone service as less than satisfactory.

Annual Declaration of Entitlement (ADE) and PI Memorandum

Some pensioners have still not returned their ADE. This was sent to all pensioners attached to their P60 as part of the same mailing in April. Pensioners are required to detach, complete and return the ADE as soon as possible, but retain the P60, which provides details of pension and income tax paid. If you have not already done so, you should return the ADE sent to you in April or the yellow reminder sent in June, as soon as possible.

ADEs are posted in batches throughout April, so please do not contact us about non-receipt until the end of that month. We continue to receive many hundreds of P60s returned to us in error still attached to the ADE, which we then have to send back. Please remember to detach your P60 before returning the ADE. Please also note that we no longer acknowledge receipt of ADEs.

PI Memoranda are issued towards the end of April each year, so please do not telephone about these before then..

Payment of Overseas Pensions Increases

If you are in receipt of a pension which remains the responsibility of an overseas government, whether paid directly by that government or by Crown Agents, you must notify us immediately if there is any change to your pension by the award of a pension increase. The SPOS payable to you by this department has to be adjusted in respect of such increases and failure to notify us could result in an overpayment of SPOS. Please note that you do not have to notify us of any pension increases awarded by the Government of Hong Kong as we have an arrangement with that government to provide us with this information.

Large Print and Audio Tape

For the benefit of those pensioners with poor or failing eyesight we can supply the newsletter or other correspondence from OPD in large print or on audio tape. We are also happy to receive messages by audio tape if that is more convenient. If either of these facilities is of interest to you please contact us.

OPD Complaints Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service you should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve the problem direct with the appropriate Section in OPD. If you are not satisfied with the response from the Section, or if your complaint is of a serious or complex nature, you should write direct to OPD's Complaints Officer, who will carry out a full investigation and issue a substantive reply, normally within two weeks. Where this is not possible an interim response will tell you when you can expect a decision. That will usually be within five weeks.

Our Action in Response to Complaints

We received 1 complaint during the year, which was deemed by our Complaints Officer to have no valid criticism of OPD.

Charitable Giving

OPD operates the Give As You Earn, (GAYE), facility whereby you may make voluntary donations from your pension to any registered UK charity via the Charities Aid Foundation. If UK Income Tax is deducted from your pension this method of charitable giving has the advantage that the donation to charity will be made gross of tax. This means that the tax on the donation will also be passed to the charity, thus increasing it's income.

Bereavement

Please tell your next of kin or other representative that in the unfortunate event of your death they must inform OPD without delay. The pension payable to you is usually due up to and including the date of death only. Payments made after that date are not due and any overpayment must be repaid. When your pension is paid direct to a bank or building society account we may first ask them to refund any pension credited after the date of death. If your pension is paid into a joint account it is important that the other account holder is aware of this.

Any payable orders received or still uncashed after the date of death should not be presented for payment. They should be returned, as action will be taken to cancel all outstanding payable orders as soon as we are informed of a death.

If there is any balance of pension due it will be notified to your next of kin or personal representative as soon as possible.

A pension for your spouse?

If you are unsure if an entitlement might exist for your spouse or if you wish an estimate of the amount which would be payable, please contact us. All enquiries should be sent to Overseas Pensions Department, Pensions Awards Section (Estimates).

An officer's service pension ceases completely on his death and no part of it is payable to any other person, unless he has previously allocated (given up) part of it. The pension paid to a dependant may well bear no obvious relation to the late officer's pension because the majority of overseas territories had separate arrangements for dependants' benefits. These pensions are usually based on the amount of contributions that the officer made to a separate Widows' and Orphans' pension scheme and to other actuarial factors.

To help us keep our records up to date please tell us about the death of a spouse or any other potential beneficiary under any of the pension schemes we administer. We should also be informed if your marriage ends in divorce.

Widows and Daughters Marrying

If you are receiving a dependant's pension from us as a widow or a daughter and you get married, please let us know as soon as possible, as your pension will need to be adjusted.

Christmas and New Year

OPD will be closed on 25 and 26 December, and again on 1 and 2 January. We will have a reduced staff covering urgent work and telephone calls on the days that we are open between 24

December and 31 December. We hope that you will bear with us over this period and contact us only if it is essential.

Contacting us

If you write to us please quote your **reference number**. It would also be helpful if you could include a **daytime telephone number** at which we can contact you. We will aim to issue a response to your enquiry within 14 days.

Our address, e-mail, telephone and fax numbers are

Overseas Pensions Department	Telephone:	+44 (0) 1355 84 4000
DFID	Fax:	+44 (0) 1355 84 3636
Abercrombie House	Email:	hopd@dfid.gov.uk
Eaglesham Road		
East Kilbride		
Glasgow G75 8EA		

Contacting us by e-mail, fax or telephone

Whilst we are happy to receive correspondence, including changes of address, by e-mail or fax, unless the matter is clearly urgent, it will be treated in the same way as written correspondence and we will aim to reply within 14 days. It may be necessary for us to reply by post to e-mailed or faxed correspondence for security reasons. This may take a little longer but we are acting to safeguard your interests.

Please **do not** use e-mail or fax to notify us of a change in your banking details. **Changes to these details must be notified in writing for security purposes.**

DFID's telephone switchboard service is contracted out and no longer staffed by our own people. If you telephone the main switchboard it would be helpful to learn of any difficulties in being transferred to OPD. Please also note that all telephone numbers in OPD have a voicemail facility for out of hours messages to be left. If leaving a message please state the time and date

Department for International Development and OPD

DFID

DFID, the Department for International Development: leading the UK government's fight against world poverty. Since its creation, DFID has helped more than 250 million people lift themselves from poverty and helped 40 million more children to go to primary school. But there is still much to do.

1.4 billion people still live on less than \$1.25 a day. Problems faced by poor countries affect all of us. Britain's fastest growing export markets are in poor countries. Weak government and social exclusion can cause conflict, threatening peace and security around the world. All countries of the world face dangerous climate change together.

DFID works with national and international partners to eliminate global poverty and its causes, as part of the UN 'Millennium Development Goals'. DFID also responds to overseas emergencies.

DFID works from two UK headquarters in London and East Kilbride, and through its network of offices throughout the world.

From 2013 the UK will dedicate 0.7 per cent of our national income to development assistance.

UKaid is the logo DFID uses to clearly label when UK funds are being spent on help to developing countries.

OPD

Overseas Pensions Department (OPD), an executive department of the Department for International Development (DFID), is responsible for the administration and payment of pensions and related benefits to former expatriate colonial civil and public servants and their dependants – including those derived from service in a civil or military capacity in former British India and the Sudan public service. OPD is also responsible for the formulation of the British Government's policy on overseas pensions and UK pension increase supplements.

The majority of pensions now paid by OPD derive mainly from two policy initiatives by the British Government; a 1962 agreement to supplement the pensions to certain former colonial civil servants; and a 1970 announcement that the British Government would assume responsibility from overseas governments for the payment of pensions due to expatriate colonial civil servants who had mainly been appointed by, or on behalf of, the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The element of these pensions arising from service after independence, together with certain widows' pensions, are financed from capital sums which have been paid over to the British Government by the overseas governments, or by funded pension schemes which have been wound up, to cover their future liabilities. The British Government meets the cost of the pre-independence element of pensions, and the cost of those widows' and dependants' pensions that do not derive from a funded scheme.

In 2011/12 our total expenditure on overseas pensions was £95 million and the cost of administration was £0.591 million. As at 31 March 2012, our pensioners numbered 14,438.

OPD encompasses three main areas of work:

- Our Pensions Awards staff determine eligibility for a pension or other benefit, calculate and authorise payment of that award in accordance with the provisions of the relevant UK and overseas pensions legislation, and deal with all enquiries about those awards.
- Our Payments staff obtain and verify the necessary payments details; administer and make payment of the pensions; deal with all changes and enquiries about the payments, and issue and verify the details provided on the Annual Declaration of Entitlement (ADE).
- Our Business Support staff monitor and report our expenditure and liabilities; maintain our computer payroll system; provide a records management service; keep our procedures and guidance manuals up to date; and monitor and report our performance under our Service Level Agreement (SLA).

OPD also oversees developments in UK public service pensions' policy. We are responsible for developing policy on overseas pensions and pensions increases (including the drafting of new legislation); and dealing with legal and other challenges on the interpretation of the various ordinances under which we operate.

A copy of OPD's 2012 Annual Report is available on the DFID website at www.dfid.gov.uk. A printed copy may be ordered by writing to Overseas Pensions Department, or by e-mail from hopd@dfid.gov.uk.

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If you wish to contact DFID about an issue **other than your pension**, then the contact details you need are:

1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE
Abercrombie House, Eaglesham Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8EA

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7023 0000
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7023 0019
Public Enquiry Point: 0845 300 4100, (from outside the UK: +44 1355 84 3132)

DFID website: www.dfid.gov.uk
Email: enquiry@dfid.gov.uk