



**An Bord Pinsean -
The Pensions Board**

Authority for Pensions

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EU Pensions Directive

The first EU Pensions Directive was adopted in 2003 and all Member States were required to bring this into force in their national legislation by 23 September 2005. Ireland has implemented the Directive through inclusion of statutory requirements in the Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2005 and underlying Regulations. Complementary tax changes were also introduced in this year's Finance Act.

The Directive sets a common minimum level of supervision across EU Member States. The impact of this on Irish pension schemes is mainly in the area of detail rather than principle since national legislation already broadly complied with the Directive's requirements.



Anne Maher
Chief Executive

The other aspect of the Directive is that it allows pension schemes to operate "cross-border". This means that a pension scheme can be established in one EU Member State which provides benefits to employees working in one or more other Member States. Effectively, this facilitates pan-European pension schemes to be established. It is not yet clear how much activity this will generate but it may be a catalyst for major pension change.

The Pensions Board is pleased that Ireland is ahead of most other EU Member States in responding to the Directive and implementing its requirements. We hope that this Bulletin and our website will help to introduce the changes.

The Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2005 – Part 3

Part 3 of the Social Welfare and Pensions Act, Sections 27 to 37, provides for amendments to the Pensions Act, 1990 which are necessary to provide for the transposition of EC Council Directive 2003/41/EC of the European Parliament and of Council of 3 June, 2003 on the activities and supervision of Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provision (IORPS) and generally referred to as the IORPS Directive. The IORPS Directive provides a framework for the operation and supervision of occupational pension schemes and allows IORPS established in one EU Member State to be sponsored by employers in another Member State.

Part 3 Sections 27 to 37 have been commenced with effect from 23 September 2005 by **Commencement Order S.I. no 591 of 2005**.

Furthermore, the Minister for Social and Family Affairs in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Section 3 of the European Communities Act 1972 (No 27 of 1992) and for the purpose of giving effect to the IORPS Directive has made the following Regulations:

- **Occupational Pension Schemes (Cross-border) Regulations, 2005 S.I. No 592 of 2005**
- **Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment) Regulations, 2005 S.I. No 593 of 2005**
- **Occupational Pension Schemes (Trustee) Regulations, 2005 S.I. No 594 of 2005.**

Part 3 of the Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2005 also provides for additional amendments to the Pensions Act to implement the recommendations from the Pensions Board to the Minister for Social and Family Affairs on foot of a review of the Funding Standard. The Minister, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Sections 5, 42 (as amended by Section 28 of the Pensions (Amendment) Act 2002 and 49 (as amended by Section 31 of the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2005) of the Pensions Act, 1990 has made Regulations entitled :

- **Occupational pension schemes (Funding Standard)(Amendment) Regulations, 2005 S.I. No 595 of 2005**

which implement a number of the recommendations of the Board's review of the Funding Standard and also comply with some of the requirements of Articles 10 and 11 of the IORPS Directive.

Section 29 of the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2005 amended Section 7A of the Pensions Act to ensure that, where guidance, as specified in Regulations, is issued by the Society of Actuaries in Ireland, it may not be altered by the Society without Ministerial consent. To give effect to this requirement, the Minister for Social and Family Affairs in exercise of the powers conferred in him by Sections 5 and 7A (as amended by Section 29 of the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2005) has made the following Regulations:

- **Occupational Pension Schemes (Professional Guidance) Regulations 2005 S.I. No 603 of 2005**

Preservation of Benefits Regulations

Section 34 of the Pensions Act, 1990 provides that a member of a funded scheme who is entitled to a preserved benefit, should be entitled to the transfer of an amount of money from the scheme by making an application in writing to the trustees of the scheme. An amendment has been made to Section 34(2) of the Act by way of regulations to provide that such transfer payment shall be calculated in accordance with the guidance note issued by the Society of Actuaries in Ireland in relation to transfer payments. These Regulations, made by the Minister for Social and Family Affairs, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Sections 5 and 34(2) of the Pensions Act 1990 (as amended by Section 23) of the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2004, are entitled:

Occupational Pension Schemes (Preservation of Benefits) (Amendment) Regulations, 2005 S.I. No 604 of 2005.

All of the Regulations listed above come into operation on 23 September 2005.

There follows in question and answer format an explanation of the main features of the Regulations.

Occupational Pension Schemes (Cross-Border) Regulations 2005

FAQs

GENERAL

What is Part XII of the Pensions Act?

This is a new insertion of the Principal Act in order to comply with the cross-border requirements of Directive 2003/41 EC on the activities and supervision of institutions for occupational retirement provisions (IORPs Directive). Article 20 of the Directive establishes that an IORP (in the Irish context is a pension scheme) can provide cross border services anywhere in the European Union or the EEA.

What constitutes cross border activity?

The Directive allows employers to contribute to an IORP in another Member State. Also, an IORP in any Member State must be allowed to accept contributions from employers located in another Member State.

Cross – border activity occurs where an IORP registered in Ireland accepts contributions from an employer based in another Member State or vice versa.

What does the “home Member State” mean?

The Member State in which the IORPs main administration and registered office is located or, if it does not have a registered office, its main administration.

What does the “host Member State” mean?

The Member State whose social and labour law relevant to the field of pensions applies to the relationship between the employer and member

Who is the home Member State Competent Authority in Ireland?

The Pensions Board is the ‘Home’ Member State Competent Authority.

What procedures must be followed by an Irish pension scheme seeking to operate cross border in another Member State?

To engage in cross border activity and accept contributions from an employer located in another Member State the trustees of the scheme must comply with:

- 1. Authorisation** and
- 2. Notification**

Occupational Pension Schemes (Cross-Border) Regulations 2005

FAQs

AUTHORISATION

An IORP that wishes to engage in cross border activity must first apply to the Pensions Board for authorisation. The conditions for authorisation are set out in Section 149 of the new Part XII. Authorisation is only required once –the IORP does not have to apply for authorisation on each occasion when it wants to engage in cross-border activity.

Example: Where a scheme registered in Ireland or a new scheme applying for registration wishes to accept contributions from an employer located in another Member State, it must first receive authorisation from the Competent Authority in its home Member State (e.g. The Pensions Board) to operate cross border.

The trustees must provide the Board with a written statement in the form (which is available from the Board upon request) confirming that the various requirements of the Pensions Act are complied with, when applying for authorisation. These are the:

- Disclosure requirements under section 54 of the Act;
- trustee requirements under section 59A of the Act and Regulations made thereunder;
- remittance of contribution requirements under section 58A of the Act;
- funding requirements under section 44 of the Act,

The trustees must also supply the Board with:-

1. The Actuarial Funding Certificate (AFC) where applicable
2. The Pensions Board Registration number of the scheme.

When is an AFC not required when seeking authorisation to operate cross border?

1. Where an IORP is a new scheme with no members ("shell" scheme) established for the purposes of accepting contributions from an employer in another Member State. This IORP will be required to produce an AFC within two years of the grant of approval to accept contributions.
2. Where the IORP is a defined contribution scheme.
3. Where the latest annual report contains a statement by the actuary that he is reasonably satisfied that if he were to prepare an AFC at the date of the last day of the period to which the annual report relates, he would certify that the scheme satisfies the funding standard

When is an AFC required to obtain an authorisation to operate cross-border

Where the latest annual report for an IORP does not contain an intervaluation statement or contains a negative intervaluation statement, the IORP will not be permitted to operate cross border until an AFC has been produced indicating that the IORP satisfies the funding standard. The AFC must be prepared with an effective date within the 12 months prior to the date on which the application for authorisation is made.

How will the trustees be notified if authorisation is granted?

Written communication will be issued granting authorisation.

Occupational Pension Schemes (Cross-Border) Regulations 2005
FAQs

Can contributions be accepted by the IORP from an employer prior to authorisation?

The trustees of an IORP must not accept contributions until such time as authorisation is granted.

NOTIFICATION

Section 151 of the new Part XII sets the criteria for when an IORP can accept contributions from a particular undertaking in another Member State. The trustees should notify the Pensions Board in writing that they wish to accept contributions and they must be authorised to engage in cross-border activity. The trustees must provide the following information in English and in the language of the host Member State:

1. the name and location of the employer from whom they propose accepting contributions.
2. the name of the relevant host Member State.
3. prescribed information as specified in the Schedule to the Regulations (this form is available from the Pensions Board upon request)

The Board has the right to request further information in relation to the notification.

When is notification granted?

The trustees of the scheme are informed by the Board that approval has been granted in respect of the employer specified in the notification unless the Board has reason to doubt that the proposed arrangement between the employer and the employees in the other Member State in respect of whom the employer proposes making contributions is compatible with the scheme. The Pensions Board has 3 months from the date of receipt of the last of its information requirements to inform the scheme whether approval has been granted or not. If no written communication is received by the IORP from the Board within the 3 month period, approval is automatically granted.

The only grounds on which approval can be refused is if there is reason to doubt that the proposed arrangement between the sponsoring undertaking and the individuals in respect of whom the undertaking makes or proposes to make contributions is compatible. In this case the Board shall inform the institution accordingly.

Is the receipt of notification from the Board that a scheme meets the requirements in respect of a particular sponsoring undertaking sufficient to allow the IORP to start accepting contributions from that undertaking?

No. The IORP must wait for a further period (see below) before it commences to accept contributions from the employer.

Occupational Pension Schemes (Cross-Border) Regulations 2005

FAQs

When can the trustees commence accepting contributions from the employer?

On the earlier of the following dates:

1. the expiry of 2 months from the date the IORP has received notification from the Board that approval has been granted,
or
2. the expiry of 2 months from the date on which the IORP is deemed to have received approval. This occurs where no written notification is received from the Board within the three month period from the receipt of all required information from the IORP,
or
3. the date the trustees of the IORP have received information from the Board in relation to the requirement of the social and labour law of the host Member State and any disclosure requirements and investment rules that are to be applied in respect of the Member State.

SMALL IORP

A small IORP is defined as an IORP that has less than 100 members (active and deferred members). Article 5 of the Directive provides that where a scheme wishes to operate cross border, they must comply with all the provisions of the Directive. Any schemes currently availing of the exemptions under

1. Section 44 (Funding Standard/frozen IORP in wind up)
2. Section 55 (annual report/IORP with <100 members may produce an alternative)
3. Section 56 (actuarial valuations)
4. Section 59(IB) (statement of investment policy principles)

must comply fully with these Sections of the Act if they wish to operate cross-border.

SOCIAL AND LABOUR LAWS (RELEVANT STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS)

Where an employer in any Member State (e.g. Ireland) wishes to contribute to an IORP in another Member State (e.g. Germany), the Irish competent authority (the Pensions Board) must notify the German competent authority of any relevant social and labour law applicable to the field of pensions with which the German IORP must comply in respect of its Irish members.

Section 148 of the new Part XII provides that such social and labour law (referred to in the Act as 'relevant statutory requirements') will be specified in Regulations. The Regulations specify what those requirements will be. These are as follows:

1. Part III of the Pensions Act relating to the preservation of benefits,
2. Part V relating to disclosure of information to members,
3. Part XI of the Pensions Act relating to the Pensions Ombudsman, and
4. In Part VI of the Pensions Act:

Occupational Pension Schemes (Cross-Border) Regulations 2005

FAQs

Section 59B relating to reduction of benefit, and
Section 59C relating to increases to pensions in payment.

Where an Irish IORP accepts contributions from an employer in another Member State, that IORP will have to comply with the Social and Labour Law of that Member State in respect of members in that State. This will mean that the external members will not have the Irish social and labour law (at 1 to 4 above) applied to them.

MISCELLANEOUS

UK/Ireland IORP (this is only applicable to a current IORP)

For purposes of Irish regulation, a UK/Ireland IORP is an IORP registered in Ireland which has members in the UK. Currently these schemes are regulated (for Irish purposes) under the Occupational Pension Schemes (Schemes with External Members) (United Kingdom) Regulations 2000, S.I. No. 470 of 2000.

There is a possibility that the UK/Ireland IORPs may fall under the remit of Article 20 of Directive 2003/41 in relation to cross border activity. At present we have advised the EU Commission that Ireland will continue to allow UK/Ireland IORPs to operate “as is” and without regard to Article 20 until the Board receives conclusive advice from the Commission as to whether or not such IORPs fall within the scope of Article 20.

For a full update please see the entry dated 12 August, 2005 under the News section on our website for the position of UK/Ireland schemes under IORPs.

Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment) Regulations, 2005

FAQs

To what schemes do these regulations apply?

All schemes except small schemes (i.e. those with less than 100 active and deferred members) must prepare a Statement of Investment Policy Principles (SOIPP). The remaining investment regulations apply to all schemes, except for single member schemes. This includes defined benefit and defined contribution, and both active and frozen schemes. Single member schemes are schemes whose rules limit membership to a single member (except where a Pension Adjustment Order applies), and where the member has control of the investment of the scheme. These Regulations do not apply to PRSAs. PRSAs are not occupational pension schemes for the purposes of the Pensions Act 1990, as amended.

Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment) Regulations, 2005 FAQs

What borrowing is allowed?

Schemes (apart from single member schemes) may not borrow except for short term liquidity reasons. This does not apply to borrowing already made before 23 September, 2005.

What information should be provided in a Statement of Investment Policy Principles?

The form and content of the SOIPP are not prescribed in the regulations or legislation. However, the regulations do set out minimum information that must be provided:

- (a) Investment objectives – the trustees should state what their investment policy is intended to achieve.
- (b) Investment risk measurement methods – different schemes use different approaches to assessing their investment risk, and no one approach is prescribed here. However, the Pensions Board would expect to see a written summary of how the trustees take risks into account in setting investment objectives, and in assessing investment performance.
- (c) Risk management processes to be used – the Board will expect a statement of how the scheme trustees manage ongoing investment risk. There are many possible approaches, but for example, the SOIPP may include the guidelines provided to the investment managers, and a policy statement relating to periodic review of investment performance and risk.
- (d) Strategic asset allocation with respect to the nature and duration of the pension liabilities – the Board would expect to see an account of how the nature of the liabilities of the scheme have been taken into account in setting the scheme's investment policy.

What requirements are imposed by Article 7(3)?

Article 7(3) imposes a general responsibility on scheme trustees to invest the assets of the scheme in a manner appropriate to the circumstances of the scheme. It is the view of the Pensions Board that the requirements of this regulation are similar to the obligations imposed on trustees under trust law.

What restrictions are imposed by the obligation to invest in regulated markets?

Article 7(4) states that the scheme assets must be invested 'predominantly' in regulated markets. Regulated markets are defined in Article 2. It is the Board's view that 'predominantly' means more than 50% of the assets of the scheme. Article 7(4) further requires that investment in markets that are not regulated should nonetheless be kept to prudent levels, i.e. there may be occasions or particular investments where a lower limit would be appropriate.

Note that property investment is not a regulated market. This applies even when the investment is made through a collective investment arrangement (see below).

Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment) Regulations, 2005 FAQs

Is investment in derivatives permitted?

Investment in derivatives is only permitted to reduce investment risks or to facilitate efficient management of the portfolio. The Board will expect trustees to satisfy

themselves (and where necessary the Board) that any investment in derivatives can be justified on these grounds.

How do the regulations apply to schemes invested in insurance policies or pooled investments?

Investments in insurance policies are governed by Article 7(7)(b), (c) and (d). There are different rules for non-linked and unit linked insurance policies.

For unit linked policies, compliance will depend on the fund or funds to which the policy proceeds are linked. So long as the assets underlying these funds themselves comply with the diversification and regulated market requirements, the investment in the insurance policy will be deemed to satisfy those same requirements. Thus, for instance, a typical insured managed fund is well diversified and primarily invested in equities and quoted bonds, and a policy linked to this fund would satisfy the regulations. On the other hand, were a policy wholly linked to a fund invested in unregulated shares, or in a single property, this investment would not satisfy the investment regulation unless it comprised only a reasonable proportion of the scheme's investments.

For non-linked policies, including with profit policies, the investment in the insurance policy will be deemed to satisfy the regulated market and diversification obligations if the policy proceeds are guaranteed to be at least equal to the sum of all the premiums.

Any annuity policies held by a scheme will be deemed to satisfy the regulations.

How will these regulations affect defined contribution schemes?

As stated above, these regulations apply to all schemes, including defined contribution schemes. Therefore the trustees must abide by the regulations in choosing the investments to be made available to scheme members, even where the members can choose from a number of investment alternatives. In particular:

- Trustees of defined contribution schemes with more than 100 active and deferred members must prepare and maintain an SOIPP.
- Trustees of all defined contribution schemes must choose scheme investments that are appropriate to the liabilities of the members.
- Trustees of all defined contribution schemes must ensure that the investments of each member comply with the regulations governing regulated markets, diversification, etc.

Occupational Pension Schemes (Trustee) Regulations 2005

FAQs

To what schemes do these Regulations apply?

These Regulations apply to all schemes under the Pensions Act 1990, as amended ('the Act'), including single member schemes.

Why is there a need for these Regulations?

These Regulations are required in order to comply with the requirements of Directive 2003/41 EC on the activities and supervision of institutions for occupational retirement provision ('IORPs Directive'). Article 9.1(b) of the IORPs Directive requires each Member State to ensure that institutions located in their territories are run by persons of good repute who have appropriate professional qualifications and experience or employ advisers with appropriate professional qualifications and experience. Section 59A(1) of the Act as inserted by section 34(c) of the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2005 addresses the aspect of good repute.

Section 59A (2) of the Act requires Regulations to be made:

- (a) providing that the trustees of a pension scheme shall possess, or employ or enter into arrangements with advisers who possess, the qualifications and experience specified in those regulations, and
- (b) specifying the circumstances in which trustees will be regarded as possessing the specified qualifications and experience referred to in paragraph (a).

Why do these Regulations only refer to the need for investment qualifications?

The Act and various other regulations already require appropriate professional qualifications in relation to the other aspects of running a scheme. The qualifications required for appointment as an actuary to a scheme are set out in the Disclosure Regulations (Article 5(8)) and a qualified auditor is required to audit the accounts of any scheme with over 100 members (to include deferred as well as active members) by virtue of (Article 4(2)) of the Disclosure Regulations.

The experience required is considered to be fulfilled by having the qualification and working in the area.

What must the trustees do to comply with these Regulations?

In order for the trustees to comply with these Regulations, they can either:-

- (1) enter into a contract with an investment manager to supply investment services to the scheme; or
- (2) they can satisfy the Board that they have appropriate qualification and experience to undertake the investment activity themselves:

Banks, insurance companies authorised to transact particular business under Directive 79/267 EEC and investment firms authorised in accordance with Directive 93/22 EEC fall within the definition of an investment manager in these regulations.

A scheme which has its resources invested directly in a life insurance policy is automatically in compliance with these regulations.

Where the trustees do not enter into a contract with an investment manager as defined above, they must be able to satisfy the Board that they have qualifications

Occupational Pension Schemes (Trustee) Regulations 2005
FAQs

and experience relevant to the investment of the resources of the scheme. The types of qualifications and experience required are not specified on these Regulations as it is considered that to do so might have the effect of preventing appropriate qualifications and experience (eg. those obtained in another Member State) from being considered by the Board.

Where a scheme has more than one trustee do each of the trustees of the scheme have to have the qualifications and experience?

No, it is sufficient for only one of the trustees to have the appropriate qualifications and experience. The requirement operates collectively and not individually.

How do the regulations work in practice?

Where the scheme has appointed one or more investment managers to advise on and invest the resources of the scheme, there is no obligation on the trustees to take any further action.

Where a scheme has not appointed an investment manager, the trustees of the scheme must demonstrate to the Pensions Board that they possess among their membership the appropriate qualifications and experience to assess and advise on investment options and execute the investment decisions in relation to the scheme's resources. In such circumstances, the Board's approval of the trustee qualifications and experience must be obtained in advance of the scheme's resources being invested. The requirement is an ongoing one, so should a trustee whose qualifications and experience have been approved by the Board resign, or otherwise cease to be a trustee, any new trustee appointed to fulfil the investment role will need to have their qualifications and experience approved by the Board. An application should be made to the Board on the form which is available from the Board.

Occupational Pension Schemes (Funding Standard) (Amendment)
Regulations 2005
FAQs

To what schemes do these Regulations apply?

These Regulations apply to all defined benefit and to any defined contribution schemes that do not buy annuities for retired members.

Why is there a need for these Regulations?

These Regulations are required in order to implement the recommendations of the Pensions Board's review of the Funding Standard as embodied in Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2005 and to comply with some of the requirements of Articles 10 and 11 of Directive 2003/41 EC on the activities and supervision of institutions for occupational retirement provision ('IORPs Directive').

Occupational Pension Schemes (Funding Standard) (Amendment)
Regulations 2005
FAQs

What is the effect of the Regulations?

Article 3(b) makes a number of changes to the contents and format of the Actuarial Funding Certificate (AFC)

Article 3(c) provides that the scheme actuary must comply with specified guidance when completing an AFC or certifying a funding proposal.

Section 31 of the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2005 amended section 49(3) to provide that an extension to the effective date of the AFC may be granted where the liabilities of the scheme are greater than expected due to specified factors and circumstances. Article 3(c) prescribes those grounds as follows:

- Adverse experience relating to price inflation or rates of interest underlying the actuarial values;
 - Adverse experience relating to increases in pensionable earnings;
 - Adverse experience relating to the payment of benefits other than long service benefits.
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Occupational Pension Schemes (Professional Guidance) Regulations 2005
FAQs

Why is there a need for these Regulations?

These Regulations specify particular guidance issued by the Society of Actuaries in Ireland which cannot be altered without the consent of the Minister for Social and Family Affairs.

It is fundamental to the Pensions Board's monitoring and supervision functions that professional standards in respect of the preparation of AFCs, funding proposals and the calculation of transfer values are complied with. For this reason certain guidance produced by the Society of Actuaries in Ireland has been specified. This specification (in particular that relating to preparation of actuarial funding certificates) also implements a requirement under Article 15 of the IORPs Directive.

The specification of this Guidance ensures that the Minister's consent will be required to alter the Guidance.

What professional guidance is specified?

The Regulations specify the following particular areas of actuarial guidance for the purposes of the Act:

- The preparation of actuarial funding certificates (section 42). This is relevant to defined benefits schemes only.

Occupational Pension Schemes (Professional Guidance) Regulations 2005
FAQs

- The certification of funding proposals (section 49). This is relevant to defined benefit schemes only.
- The calculation of transfer values (section 34). This guidance is relevant in the calculation of transfer values for both defined benefit and defined contribution schemes.

Occupational Pension Schemes (Preservation of Benefits)(Amendment)
Regulations 2005
FAQs

To what schemes do these Regulations apply?

These Regulations apply to all schemes where the members choose under Section 34(2) of the Act to opt for a transfer payment in respect of their preserved benefit.

Why is there a need for these Regulations?

They provide that any transfer calculation in the case of both a defined benefit and defined contribution should be calculated in accordance with the Guidance notes of the Society of Actuaries in Ireland.

This avoids disparity in the calculation of transfer payments other than as permitted by the Guidance notes.

Where can I get a copy of the recently introduced regulations?

Copies of the new regulations may be purchased from the Government Publications Bookshop, whose address is

Sun Alliance House
Molesworth Street
Dublin 2

Tel: 01-679-3515

A list of recent regulations is posted on our website under Regulations/Recent Regulations which contains explanatory notes. These notes are not part of the regulations and do not purport to be a legal interpretation.

It is the intention of the Department of Social and Family Affairs to have a pdf copy of all the IORPs regs available on their website (www.welfare.ie) early in the week of 26 September, 2005.

The Pensions Board's Legislation Service will also be updated to reflect the changes resulting from the recent regulations and the updates will be issued to subscribers in due course.

The Legislation Service is designed for pension practitioners and is available only by subscription. Subscribers to this service receive a consolidated text of Pensions Act, 1990 and the Regulations, including all amendments made to date. The text of the legislation is made available in loose-leaf format in a binder, which facilitates regular updating. For further information and an order form see our website under Publications/Legislation Service.

National Pensions Review

The Pensions Act requires the Minister for Social and Family Affairs to cause a report in relation to the extent of the application of occupational and other pensions, and in respect of such matters as the Minister considers relevant, to be prepared and furnished to him not later than September 2006. A copy of that report is to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas within six months after its preparation. This effectively requires a progress review of the changes introduced in the pensions system between 2000 and 2003 in response to the National Pensions Policy Initiative.

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs wrote to the Pensions Board in February 2005 asking the Board to undertake the full review of coverage and associated issues without delay, the review to include an examination of alternative systems to the present one and to make proposals designed to provide an adequate retirement income for all. The Board welcomed the opportunity for involvement in this important review. An interim progress report was presented to the Minister in June and the full report is due to be presented to the Minister in October.

Further information in relation to the overall scope and main components of the review can be located on our website www.pensionsboard.ie

PRSA Employer Questionnaire Update

The Board continues to give high priority to the monitoring of employer's obligations to provide access to PRSAs. As a follow up to last year's employer questionnaire project, the PRSA Unit has undertaken another nationwide mailshot in mid-September 2005 - this time to over 28,000 employers who failed to respond to last year's questionnaire. This year we have introduced a new means for replying via an online response facility on the Board's website. The Unit is currently processing replies to this mailshot.

No liability whatsoever is accepted by the Pensions Board, it's servants or agents for any errors or omissions in the information contained in this document or for any loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting as a result of any statement in this document.