

## **EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO**

### **The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

**SR 2015 No. 420**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to accompany the Statutory Rules (details above) which are laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 1.2. The Statutory Rules are made under powers conferred by sections 1(1), (2)(f), (3) and (4), 2, 3(1), (2), (3)(a) to (c), 8(1)(a), (2)(a) and (4), 18(1), (2), (4) and (5) to (9), paragraph 6 of Schedules 1 and 2, Schedule 3 and paragraphs 1(2)(ii), 2(2)(ii) and 5(1) of Schedule 7 to the Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

#### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1. The Firefighters' Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 ('the 2015 scheme') establishes a scheme for the payment of pensions and other benefits to or in respect of firefighters in Northern Ireland.
- 2.2. There are four elements to the regulations of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (NI) 2015. These include: scheme membership, funding arrangements, governance and transitional provisions. The regulations for scheme membership, funding and governance were made as one statutory rule on 24 February 2015 (SR. 2015 No. 78).
- 2.3. These Regulations now establish the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 in respect of Transitional and Consequential Provisions.

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1. This Department has policy responsibility for Firefighters' pensions, which are administered by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS). Firefighters' pensions have, in line with other public sector pension schemes in Northern Ireland, operated on the basis of parity with their counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales.
- 3.2. The purpose of this rule is to complete the implementation of the Public Service Pension Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, a reformed pension scheme for firefighters in Northern Ireland.

- 3.3 The reforms initially recommended by the independent Public Service Pensions Commission, which was led by Lord Hutton of Furness are set out in the 2014 Act.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1. The Regulations are based on the policy proposals for the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme, which were consulted on from 6 October to 30 November 2014. A copy of the consultation document and a summary of responses can be found on the DHSSPS website.

<https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-introduction-new-firefighters%E2%80%99-pension-scheme-april-2015>

#### **5. Equality Impact**

- 5.1. The Order will have no adverse differential impact on equality of opportunity.

#### **6. Regulatory Impact**

- 6.1. As the Order will impose no additional costs on businesses, charities or the voluntary sector a full Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been completed.

#### **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 In line with the reform of public service pensions, these changes will support the introduction of the reformed scheme which was implemented in April 2015 and designed to ensure long-term sustainability and affordability. There will be no additional costs for the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service arising from these Regulations.

#### **8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

- 8.1. It is the view of the Department that this Order is compatible with section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

#### **9. EU Implications**

- 9.1. Not applicable

#### **10. Parity or Replicatory Measure**

- 10.1. This Order will ensure Northern Ireland maintains parity with their counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales.