

PENSIONS UPDATE

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Gibraltar to consider Personal Pensions regulation

The Gibraltar Financial Services Commission (GFSC) published, on 4 June 2015, a new consultation paper on the regulation of Personal Pension Schemes. According to the GFSC's press release: "The paper has been developed at the request of HM Government of Gibraltar and is designed to support the further development of the market for personal pensions and ensure that personal pensions continue to be subject to appropriate regulation and investor protection".

The proposals have been drawn up by a pensions working group that comprises of representatives from the GFSC, HM Government of Gibraltar,

Income Tax Office, and the industry. The working group recognises the importance of continuing to strengthen Gibraltar's pensions regime, particularly given the recent fundamental changes to the UK's personal pensions' regime. The consultation period closes on 14 July.

Although trustees operating in Gibraltar are already subject to regulation, Sovereign views the regulation of personal pensions as a very positive step and one that will reinforce Gibraltar's position as a leading QROPS jurisdiction.

The press release and paper can be accessed [here](#).

Temporary Suspension of the ROPS list

HMRC's Pensions Newsletter for June 2015 announced a temporary suspension of its list of Recognised Overseas Pension Schemes (ROPS) until 1 July 2015. The newsletter states that: "the list of ROPS notifications will be temporarily suspended for a short period to allow the list to be reformatted. The ROPS notifications list will be available again from 1 July 2015. Please note that the reformatted list will look significantly different."

The suspension of the list is likely to lead to temporary delays in the processing of QROPS transfers during this period. The new list will see the removal of schemes unable to meet the new conditions to be a ROPS, including the minimum age of 55 for drawing retirement benefits.

The HMRC Pensions Newsletter can be accessed [here](#).

Timetable for Malta flexible benefits

The UK's new flexible pensions regime, brought into force under the Pension Schemes Act 2015 as of 6 April 2015, has now been live for nearly three months. Members of Malta QROPS will also be allowed to enjoy the new pension freedoms following the introduction of Malta's Retirement Pensions Act. This allows Malta QROPS benefits to mirror the UK rules.

Malta based pension providers are currently licensed under Malta's

Special Funds Act and have until 31 December 2015 to re-license under the new Retirement Pensions Act. Sovereign plans to offer the new flexibilities to its Malta QROPS members as soon as this re-licensing process is complete. It is likely that the Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA) will finish the process towards the end of the year.

Darren Whitley takes new role

Sovereign is delighted to announce the promotion of Darren Whitley to Director of Sovereign Pension Services (Gibraltar) Limited. Darren has been with the company for eight years and is a familiar face to Sovereign's clients and introducers across Europe. Although his new role will bring additional responsibilities, Darren will continue to spend much of his time on the road, providing the same pro-active and personal service to his clients across the region.

PenTech to launch Pension Transfer solution

The new UK Pension Schemes Act 2015 introduces a requirement for trustees of occupational schemes to check that a member, or survivor of a member, should have received "appropriate independent advice" before transferring their UK Defined Benefit (safeguarded benefits) schemes to, or converting them into, a Defined Contribution Money Purchase scheme.

This "appropriate independent advice" must come from a professional financial adviser who is both independent of the Defined Benefit scheme and authorised by the UK Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

Renowned pension technical specialists PenTech are nearing the completion of a solution that will be exclusive to Sovereign introducers. More information will follow shortly in a separate communication.

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