

Compensation FOCUS

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New Pension Services Delivery Model Gets Green Light

Project Team Begins Work on Implementation Plan

The Pension Services Delivery project team has been given the green light to proceed with implementation of a new pension services delivery model. The Human Resources Forum (HR Forum), a consultative and decision-making body for human resources issues, priorities and policies, approved the new model and work plan on March 19, 2003.

“Our current pension processes are based on 30-year-old solutions,” says Diana Dowthwaite, Manager of the project team. “It’s been increasingly difficult for pension administrators to cope with increased demands. We’re confident that the new model will provide a more effective and efficient way to deliver pension services.”

The new pension services delivery model received positive feedback during a cross-Canada consultation tour. A prototype of the model, based on industry “best practices,” was discussed in focus groups with 1,500

plan members, including representatives of PWGSC, and Compensation Advisors. Eleven cities and eight provinces were visited; 80 percent of the participants were from the regions.

The model follows industry best practices by suggesting that pension activities be centralized within the pension administration component of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

The key to the new model is to provide (where feasible) direct delivery of pension services to plan members, with the majority of services being delivered from a central point. Plan members will have various means of access, such as Web self-service, a call centre, e-mail and fax, as well as some opportunities for face-to-face counseling.

A number of important concerns were expressed during the consultations, including: the feasibility of retaining the option of

personal counseling; the availability of current, accurate data; and the requirement for having highly knowledgeable experts to deliver the service. Part of the project team’s task will be to find the best ways of addressing these, and other, concerns.

Diana Dowthwaite’s team has begun developing detailed transition and communication plans for the project; these plans will be implemented in stages over a period of three to five years. “Our guiding principle is clear,” Diana stresses. “Plan members must have access to the best expertise available, and must receive the best service possible, no matter where they live in Canada. Now we need to work out how that will be done, in consultation with departments and agencies.”

For additional information about Pension Modernization, please contact Diana Dowthwaite at: diana.dowthwaite@pwgsc.gc.ca.

There’s No “Wrong” Door: A User’s Guide to Compensation Sites

“Why do we need three different Internet and extranet sites for compensation information? Which one am I supposed to use?”

If you’ve wondered about questions like these, here’s a user’s guide to the three sites: *myHR*, PWGSC’s *Compensation Sector*, and the Human Resources Community Secretariat’s *Virtual Pay*.

Each of these sites has a different purpose, but all are linked to each other. In short, there’s no “wrong” door to the virtual warehouse of compensation information and working tools on the

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Public Works and
Government Services
Canada

Travaux publics et
Services gouvernementaux
Canada

Canada

Web. If one of these sites doesn't have what you want, it will point you to another one that does.

The site *myHR* (<http://myhr.gc.ca>) has the broadest scope of the three sites. It has been designed to be an authoritative, one-stop shop for Human Resources information of all kinds. This site is organized into three audience perspectives:

- Employees (information for everyone)
- Managers (tools to manage)
- HR Professionals (tools to support clients)

myHR

Susan Roberts, Manager of the e-HR Project, calls *myHR* a "context" site. While the other two sites have very specific information about compensation, *myHR* puts that information into context for its three audiences. "This site will help you figure out what compensation is all about, as well as a wealth of other topics," Susan says. To facilitate this task, the information is written in plain language.

For example, employees can click on "My Pay," which will tell them about pay policies, programs and initiatives, and will allow them to investigate details about their pay — including overtime, pay equity, union dues, and other information. Managers can check out topics such as "Filling Jobs," which provides them with information and tools to assist with the process of bringing people into their organizations. HR Professionals can select subjects such as "Compensation and Benefits," which gives them access to tools and forms, legislation and policy, best practices, FAQs, and other reference material that will assist them in helping employees.

Topics in *myHR* are linked to tools in relevant sites, such as in PWGSC's *Compensation Sector*, and in *Virtual Pay*. "The tools are created by the organizations that have primary responsibility for the subjects we cover," says Susan Roberts. "That's why our site is authoritative," she adds.

Compensation Sector

PWGSC's Compensation Sector (<http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/compensation>) is the only Government compensation site that can be accessed on the Internet. Like *myHR*, its target audience includes all Public Service employees. This site has a tighter focus, however; it concentrates on information about the Compensation Service Line's pay, pension and insurance products. These products include Compensation publications, directives, bulletins and communiqués, as well as other information of a general nature concerning the Service Line. Where appropriate, the site links to other sites containing information related to federal employee compensation. (Some of these links are not accessible via the Internet.)

The *Compensation Sector* site is also organized according to users' roles:

- Public Service Employee
- Compensation Manager or Compensation Advisor
- Public Service Line Manager
- Potential Recruit or New Compensation Sector Employee

This site has a wide variety of information and tools, for all of the above categories of users. The Employee category and the Compensation Manager or Compensation Advisor category have the largest amount of information, organized into sections on pay, pensions, insurance, retirement, and general information.

Employees can also find information on topics such as flexible working arrangements, and collective agreements. They can access forms and self-service tools such as the Pension Benefits Calculator, and the Service Buyback Estimator. Compensation Advisors rely heavily on the site for up-to-date information on everything from Compensation Directives, manuals and pay-rate implementation bulletins, to Regional Pay System broadcast messages. Many Compensation Advisors start their day with a visit to the "What's New" page!

"Our site is a work in progress," says Larry Lavitt, Manager of the Compensation Web Division. "We are always looking at ways to improve and enhance it." The latest addition is a "What's New" mailing list that keeps subscribers informed about new and modified Compensation Sector publications, services and information (see "What's New on the Web," in this issue.)

Virtual Pay

Virtual Pay (<http://publiservice.gc.ca/hr/ebs-sase/vps>) is the most recent addition to the collection of electronic resources on compensation. It is also the most specific of the three sites. Designed for the exclusive use of the compensation community, *Virtual Pay* is a road map to important checklists and calculators, with links to key resources such as policy documents.

The site's checklists detail all the steps that Compensation Advisors should take for different procedures (such as for initiating Acting pay). They also list and (wherever possible) provide links to the forms that need to be completed. These working tools are also authoritative, as the calculators are tested and approved by the Treasury Board Secretariat and PWGSC before being added to the site. They allow Compensation Advisors to compute employee compensation data such as continuous/discontinuous service, and employee entitlements such as maternity/parental allowance.

Virtual Pay will continue to expand its offerings. The ultimate vision for the site is as a "one-stop shopping" spot for compensation tools and references.

Which to choose?

So, which site should you choose? It all depends on your familiarity with compensation issues and procedures. The *myHR* site is a good place to start for those who need basic orientation. The *Compensation Sector* site allows you to "drill down" further for information and tools. Finally, *Virtual Pay* provides the most detailed menu of tools for Compensation Advisors. Because all three sites are linked, it's easy to get to what you need, no matter where you start!

Pay Modernization Initiative: Cross-Country Consultations on New Service Delivery Model

“Everybody knows the existing pay system needs to change,” says Gisele Dallaire. She adds: “It will take time, but people are excited that change is coming.”

Gisele is part of a PWGSC team that consulted the compensation community across Canada this spring about a proposed pay service delivery model. This draft model was developed with input from a wide spectrum of clients who responded to a 2002 survey about current pay systems and services, and the ways these could be modernized.

The key principles of the new model are:

- **Single data entry.** An interface will be developed between departmental Human Resources systems and the new Public Service Pay System (PSPS), in order to eliminate the need to enter the same data twice. When departmental Compensation Advisors input information into their HR systems, it will be fed directly through the interface and into the PSPS at near-real time. As an interim enhancement to the existing Regional Pay System (RPS), a two-way pay edit interface is currently being developed for departments using Human Resource Management Systems (HRMS). (See “Generic Two Way Interface Is on Its Way,” in Issue No. 50.)
- **Self service.** Employees as well as managers will be able to obtain and provide information, and initiate actions and

requests, by accessing relevant Web pages. For example, employees will be able to add or change their voluntary deductions, or their bank account information. We will also be supporting the ability of managers to approve acting pay and overtime. As a result, Compensation Advisors will be freed from many routine tasks, and will be able to devote more time to counseling employees. (Please note that some employee self-service functions will be implemented in the next few months, ahead of Pay Modernization.)

The new model was presented to the compensation community in visits to 11 areas across Canada between mid-March and the end of June 2003. Audiences included regional pay offices, the Association of Compensation Managers (ACM), heads of Human Resources, separate agencies, and Treasury Board representatives. Focus groups were held with both employees and managers.

“This is a ‘what’, not a ‘how’ model,” Gisele Dallaire explains. “We were looking for input right at the beginning, before things are cast in stone, and our participants appreciated that,” she notes. Changes have been made to the model as a result of the consultations.

“This is a long-term initiative,” says Gerry Racine, Manager of Pay Modernization. “We’re going to need the continued advice and support of the compensation community to make sure we get it right.” He adds: “The results will be worth it.”

For additional information about Pay Modernization, please contact Gerry Racine at: gerry.racine@pwgsc.gc.ca.

Compensation FOCUS

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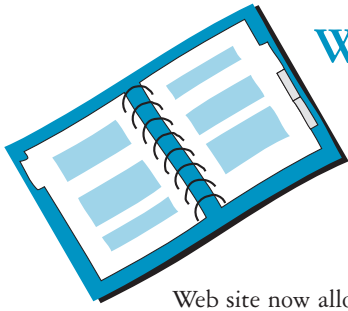
A Note about the Declaration of Health

Completed Declaration of Health forms for the Long Term Disability Plan contain information that falls within the exemption or exclusion criteria of the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*. That means that the Superannuation Directorate cannot open the forms in order to match a Declaration with an Application Card before sending them to the insurance provider.

Consequently, in order to make sure that each Declaration matches an Application Card, it's essential that Compensation Advisors identify the employee clearly on the outside of the self-sealable envelope.

For more details, please refer to the following notices:

- IAM 4-11-3, 4-14-3 and 4-27-2028-2; TB PSMIP Privacy Issues Information Notices dated September 2002



What's New On the Web?

A "What's New" mailing list service on the Compensation Sector

Web site now allows you to stay automatically and effortlessly informed of new and modified Compensation Sector publications, services and information.

It's easy to subscribe:

- Go to <http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/compensation/list/list-toc-e.html> and select the mailing list topic or topics about which you wish to be kept informed.

- Add your e-mail address, and then click on "Send." You will immediately receive a confirmation e-mail for each topic to which you subscribed.

Whenever a new or modified item from your chosen topic(s) appears on the site, you will be automatically notified via e-mail.

To modify or remove a topic or topics, simply visit the Mailing List Web page, choose the "Unsubscribe" option beside your previously selected topic or topics, then add your e-mail address and click on "Send."

If you change your e-mail address, you must first unsubscribe from your topic(s) using your old e-mail address. You then sign up again for your topic(s) using your new e-mail address.

Please refer any concerns relating to this mailing list service's functionality, or to the content of the e-mail messages, to the Compensation Sector Web Administrator at: CompensationWebAdmin@pwgsc.gc.ca.

Building Up the *Pension Benefits* Web Site: Results of the User Survey

A user survey about the Compensation Sector's *Pension Benefits* Web site has provided valuable information about ways to build on the site's current offerings. A total of 864 users responded to the survey, which concluded in February 2003.

"We are very pleased with the results," says Pierre Gauthier, Manager of the Pension Services Directorate (PSD) Web Development project team. "The survey was a great way to show that we were on the right track. But there is much more planned for the site to make it even better."

Pierre's project team has been developing Web initiatives since 2001. Their objective is to provide all pension plan participants with self-service tools and information that can assist them with their retirement planning.

The *Pension Benefits* site currently provides a Pension Benefits Calculator, which estimates future pension benefit amounts based on a retirement date chosen by the user. A pension plan participant can also determine his or her net pension amount based on geographic location and selected voluntary deductions, and estimate the cost of purchasing prior pensionable service through two new features of the Pension Benefits Calculator: the Gross to Net calculation feature, and the Service Buyback Estimator.

The purpose of the recent user survey was to ensure that the site meets or exceeds the needs and expectations of pension plan participants. The survey was the first opportunity (aside from the feedback option that is available on the site) to communicate directly with users by asking them specific questions about the tools and information provided.

The open-ended questions of the survey gave participants opportunities to say what they liked or disliked about the site's current offerings, and what they would like to see in the future. The number one request was to have access to users' actual data. They would also like: more pension information and scenarios; Transfer Value estimates; the ability to estimate part-time service; and links to outside organizations, such as the Canada Pension Plan.

"We've listened," says Pierre Gauthier. "Plans are underway to give pension plan participants, including those with part-time service, access to their real data. More tools and pension information, such as Transfer Value estimations, will be added to the site in order to assist plan members with their self-service retirement planning."

The *Pension Benefits* Web site can be found at: <http://compensation.pwgsc.gc.ca/pen-ben/>.

Insurance Training Program Update

The previous issue of *Compensation Focus* (#50) described the pilot testing of the new blended training modules for Disability Insurance Training. The blended training approach combines on-line learning and classroom learning. We are pleased to announce that these modules will be released for general access across Canada in September 2003.