

# Annual Newsletter 2002

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### DFID HAS A NEW MINISTER AND A NEW PERMANENT SECRETARY

Sally Keeble has taken over from Hilary Benn as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DFID and has overseas pensions matters among her portfolio of responsibilities. Ms Keeble has been MP for Northampton North since 1997. Prior to her appointment, she was a Minister at the former Department for Transport, local Government and the Regions. Reacting to the news of her appointment in May, Ms Keeble commented, "I am delighted. I am enormously interested in development issues and am thrilled to be given the opportunity to work in such a highly regarded Department, both within Whitehall and the international development community." Hilary Benn is now a Minister at the Home Office.

Suma Chakrabarti succeeded Sir John Vereker KCB as DFID's Permanent Secretary in February. Prior to his appointment Suma was DFID's Director General, Regional Programmes where he had responsibility for leading and managing over 1,200 staff in over 50 countries, devising and implementing a wide range of development programmes. Suma has also held appointments in the Treasury, Cabinet Office and Botswana. Sir John Vereker was appointed Governor of Bermuda in April.

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## OPD'S PERFORMANCE IN 2001/2002

OPD's work is regulated by the quality and timeliness targets stipulated in a Service Level Agreement (SLA). Our performance against those targets in 2001/2002 is outlined in the following table:

STANDARD	TARGET	ACHIEVED
Accuracy of Initial Calculation of New and Revised Awards	95.00 %	95.83 %
Accuracy of Initial Payment Calculations	97.50 %	99.95 %
Number of New Awards put into Payment Within 2 Weeks	97.50 %	99.90 %
Timeliness of Payments by the Due Date	99.00 %	99.99 %
Response to Enquiries Within 2 Weeks of Receipt	97.50 %	99.96 %
Substantive Response to Complaints Within 5 Weeks	95.00 %	100 00%

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:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Average Response</u>
Processing New Awards	6 Days
Response to Enquiries	5 Days
Response to Complaints	6 Days

During 2001/2002:

• pensioner numbers <b>reduced</b> by	4.2%
• staff numbers <b>reduced</b> by	9%
• running costs <b>reduced</b> by	9.6%
• unit costs <b>increased</b> (on average) by	0.22%
• customer satisfaction with our overall service <b>steady</b> at	84% very good
	15% good

Further information on our workload and performance is detailed in our Annual Report, which is also available on DFID's website - <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/>

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## CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS

OPD issues a survey questionnaire to every pensioner six months after their first pension payment. During 2001/2002, we issued 421 forms, of which 276 (66%) were returned. These were analysed by DFID's Statistics Department, which

concluded that:

- 99% of respondents rated our service overall as either very good (84%) or good (15%)
- 78% described our staff as helpful, 89% as efficient, and 64% as friendly
- 99% thought our written replies were either very good (82%) or good (17%)
- 98% thought the service provided on the telephone was very good (82%) or good (16%)
- In no aspect of our performance were we thought to be less than satisfactory

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## CHANGES OF ADDRESS OR PAYMENT DETAILS

If you change your address, bank or building society details, you **must** tell us straight away. Please do not use e-mail to notify us of a change in your personal details e.g. a change of address or banking details. Changes to personal details must be notified in writing.

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## A PENSION FOR YOUR SPOUSE OR MINOR CHILD

If a surviving spouse or minor child is likely to be eligible for a pension, the officer may have already sent us the appropriate application forms. **These should not be returned until the surviving spouse or minor child claims the pension.** If the application forms have not been issued in advance, these will be sent promptly following the notification of the death of the officer.

Some colonial schemes provide pensions for wives or children which are a percentage of the officers' pensions, but the majority are based on the amount of contributions the officer made to a Widows and Orphans Scheme and other actuarial factors. This means the dependant's pension may bear no obvious relationship to the late officer's pension. If you are unsure if an entitlement may exist for your spouse or minor child, or wish an estimate of the amount which would be payable, please do not hesitate to ask. All enquiries should be sent to Pensions Awards Section (Estimate), in room AH508.

Any officer whose dependants are not eligible for benefit, may still be able to make provision by allocating (i.e. reducing) part of his or her own pension. Details of this arrangement are available from Pensions Awards Section (Allocation), also in room AH508.

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

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## MAKING ARRANGEMENTS IN ADVANCE

No one wants unnecessary hassle at the sad time of bereavement. You can help by arranging with your next of kin or other

representative that in the unfortunate event of your death they inform OPD without delay. The pension payable to you is usually only due up to and including the date of death. So pension payments made after that date need to be repaid.

Where your pension is paid direct to a bank or building society account we may first of all ask them to refund any pension credited to the account after the date of death. If you have your pension paid to a joint account it is important that the other account holder is aware of this. Payable orders received or still uncashed after the date of death should not be presented for payment. These should be returned to OPD, as action will be taken to put a stop on all outstanding payable orders.

If there is any balance of pension or other payment due it will be notified and paid to your next of kin or personal representative as soon as possible. **We will advise your next of kin or personal representative of the action they should take.**

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## **WIDOWS OR UNMARRIED DAUGHTERS MARRYING**

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

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## **CONTACTING US**

When writing to OPD please make sure you quote your **reference number**. It would be helpful if you included a **daytime telephone number** if possible. We will aim to issue a response to your enquiry within 14 days. Please remember that if you telephone, fax or e-mail it may be necessary for us to reply by post for security reasons. This may take a little longer but we are acting to safeguard your interests.

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## **ANNUAL DECLARATION OF ENTITLEMENT (ADE)**

As this *Newsletter* was being prepared, 633 people had had their pensions suspended because we had not received their ADE. If you did not receive payment at the end of August, then please contact our Payments Section (Room 520) or email us at [hopd@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:hopd@dfid.gov.uk) as soon as possible.

From comments received, it would seem that some pensioners have not realised that the ADE was attached to the P60. All pensioners should note that their ADE and P60 are always sent attached together as part of the same mailing.

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## **THE OVERSEAS SERVICE PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION HAS NEW INTERESTS**

Founded in 1960 to protect the pensions of expatriate Colonial Service officers and their widows, the Overseas Service

Pensioners' Association (OSPA) has now moved on to add fresh activities intended to spread a clearer understanding of what the Colonial Service/Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service (HMOCS) was, what its members did, and why and how they did it and to what effect.

OSPA has sponsored and funded an ongoing Colonial Service Research Project at London University's Institute of Commonwealth Studies. This includes a programme of seminars and workshops for ex-HMOCS officers, academics and other researchers to present and discuss studies on Colonial Service topics. Anyone wishing to take part or to know more should contact OSPA. OSPA has also contributed to the cost of building the new library and archive at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol which will contain many records and objects from colonial days.

OSPA welcomes as associate members people who, not being overseas service pensioners, share in these aims and are interested in Colonial Service life and times. Pensioners who have not yet joined are invited to become OSPA members now.

All OSPA members receive the bi-annual journal containing reports on these activities as well as articles, reminiscences, and book reviews relating to Colonial Service life and times. For information about membership, or for other enquires, please contact:

Overseas Service Pensioners' Association

138 High Street, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1AX

Tel: 01732 363836

e-mail: [ospa@easynet.co.uk](mailto:ospa@easynet.co.uk)

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## **NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE**

Along with other organisations, OPD plans to take part in the NFI. The information we have will be checked against registered deaths to identify cases where pensions are still being paid despite the pensioner's death. These data matching exercises meet the requirements of Data Protection law.

Recent NFI checks by other pension paying organisations revealed a number of cases where a public service pensioner's death had not been reported to the pension paying department. This resulted in overpayments which had to be recovered and in some cases the police were informed.

Under the NFI arrangements, pensions data can also be matched against certain benefit payments such as Housing Benefit. This enables local authorities and the Benefits Agency to identify people who are receiving benefits but who have failed to declare their occupational pensions.

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## **CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR**

DFID will be closed on 25 and 26 December and again on 1 and 2 January. Furthermore, we will have only a skeleton staff covering urgent work and telephone calls on 23, 24, 27, 30 and 31 December because, like all good employers, DFID recognises that staff wish to be with their families over Christmas and New Year. We hope that you will bear with us over this festive period and contact us only if it is essential. Remember that you may use our answering machine for out of hour's telephone messages. The number is +44 (0) 1355 84 3759.

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## **OPD IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

Abercrombie House is about to undergo a complete refurbishment and, as part of this process, Overseas Pensions Department will be housed in temporary accommodation for some 14 - 18 weeks from the end of October. During this period, we can still be contacted at our current address and on our present telephone and fax numbers and e-mail addresses.

As this *Newsletter* was being prepared, the indication was that OPD's move into this temporary accommodation would take place over either the last weekend in October or the first weekend in November. Our return to our new permanent accommodation in Abercrombie House is therefore likely to be between the beginning of February and the middle of March 2003.

We do not anticipate any disruption to our service to pensioners during this period but please bear with us if there are any minor delays or glitches. These are most likely at the time of actually moving out of and back into Abercrombie House, but hopefully everything will go off smoothly.

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## **DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND OPD**

### **DFID**

The Department for International Development (DFID) is the UK government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. The Government first elected in 1997 has increased its commitment to development by strengthening the department and increasing its budget.

The central focus of the Government's policy, set out in the 1997 White Paper on International Development, is a commitment to the internationally agreed target to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, together with associated targets including basic health care provision and universal access to primary education by the same date. The second White Paper on International Development, published in December 2000, reaffirmed this commitment, while focusing specifically on how to manage the process of globalisation to benefit poor people.

DFID seeks to work in partnership with governments which are committed to the international targets, and seeks to work with business, civil society and the research community to this end. We also work with multilateral institutions including the World Bank, United Nations agencies and the European Community.

The bulk of our assistance is concentrated on the poorest countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. We are also contributing to poverty elimination and sustainable development in middle income countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and elsewhere. DFID is also helping the transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe to try to ensure that

the process of change brings benefits to all people and particularly to the poorest.

As well as its headquarters in London and East Kilbride, DFID has offices in many developing countries. In others, DFID works through staff based in British Embassies and High Commissions.

In DFID we value:

our ambition and determination to eliminate of world poverty

our ability to work effectively with others

our staff, their diversity and their need to balance work and private life

our desire to listen, learn and be creative

our professionalism and knowledge

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## 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.

Although the British Government has been responsible for the payment of pensions deriving from service in British India since 1955 the majority of the pensions now paid by OPD stem from two main policy initiatives by the British Government: a 1962 agreement to supplement the pensions to certain former colonial civil servants; and an announcement in 1970 that the British Government would assume responsibility from overseas governments for the payment of pensions due to expatriate colonial civil servants who, in the main, had been appointed by, or on behalf of, the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The post-independence element of these pensions, 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 2001-02 our total expenditure on overseas pensions amounted £127.164m to 24,264 pensioners. The cost of administering these pensions was £1.073m.

OPD encompasses three main areas of work:

- Our Pensions Awards Sections are responsible for determining eligibility for a pension or other benefit, for calculating and authorising payment of that award in accordance with the provisions of the relevant UK and overseas pensions legislation, and for dealing with all enquiries about those awards.
- Our Payments Sections 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 an annual Declaration of Entitlement.

- The Central Support Unit has responsibility for monitoring and reporting our expenditure and liabilities; maintaining our computer payroll system; providing a records management and typing service; keeping our procedures and guidance manuals up to date; and for monitoring and reporting 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); providing the secretariat for the Overseas Service Pensions Scheme Advisory Board, and dealing with legal and other challenges on the interpretation of the various ordinances under which we operate.

A copy of OPD's 2002 Annual Report is available on the DFID website at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/>. A printed copy may be ordered from Central Support Unit, Room AH520E, or by e-mail from [hopd@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:hopd@dfid.gov.uk).

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## WE NEED YOUR HELP

There may have been someone among your former colleagues who contributed to one of the Widows and Orphans Pension Schemes or Funds which we administer and whose beneficiaries are not aware of their entitlement to a pension. The person who contributed might not even have been on pensionable terms themselves. Do you know of anyone who might be in this situation?

If you do, please contact our Pensions Awards Section (Contingent Benefits) (Room 508) or email us at [hopd@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:hopd@dfid.gov.uk).

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## WEBSITE

A copy of this Newsletter has been posted onto our website, which can be visited at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/>. This also contains some other information about OPD as well as the wider role of DFID.

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Overseas Pensions Department - [Stuart Naismith](#) - Reviewed 19/03/2001