

Feedback: Special PSCBC Meeting held on 23 August 2021

Delays experienced in pension payouts by GEPF

The GEPF made a presentation (*attached*) to Council illustrating why members are experiencing delays with their pension payouts. It was noted that one of the factors causing delays is the incomplete and outdated documentation being submitted. In addition, delays are also experienced with responses from the South African Revenue Service as members' income tax is either not filed or incorrect. Members are urged to ensure that their details are updated on a regular basis and that tax returns are filed in time. Amongst other reasons indicated as a reason for the delay, was the staffing of the Government Pension Administration Agency (GPAA) and the increase in claims brought about by the pandemic. The GEPF indicated that this is being addressed with Treasury and will be resolved. In the interim, members must take note of rule 26 of the GEPF Law that addresses delays longer than 60 days and the interest that is payable and accrued as a result.

Retirement reform: Early access for partial withdrawal

The GEPF made a presentation indicating that the current amendments being made to laws regulating pension fund withdrawals are not applicable to the GEPF. It further indicated that it interprets the need for the amendments to cater for those who experienced a reduction in their income because of COVID-19. Labour engaged the employer on the stance and formally raised it as a proposal to amend the GEPF law as well to bring financial relief to public servants. This is noting that public servants were and are equally affected by the epidemic as all citizens in South Africa. The amendment of the law should also be a pre-emptive measure to ensure that public servants do not exit the service, especially those in critical sectors, to access their pension funds for financial relief and create further challenges as a result. The employer responded that it has only heard the formal request from labour to amend the GEPF Law at the meeting and will have to obtain a mandate on it from its principals. The employer undertook to respond to labour at the next meeting of Council for public servants to be included in the process.

Members will be kept informed.

GENERAL MANAGER