

## **Covid-19 update**

At the time of writing, we are all learning how to live and work in unusual circumstances. The Scheme's Administrator, Capita, has activated its business continuity plan and is continuing to deliver the normal services to members, albeit with some constraints on capacity and a focus on delivering the Scheme's immediate priorities, including paying our pensioners each month, dealing with death cases, settlements, processing imminent retirements and meeting regulatory and statutory requirements.

You can help at this time by only sending urgent requests to them – please make use of the members' online portal, which gives you access to information on your pension benefits. If you do need to contact the Administrator, we would ask that you do so by email [diageopensions@capita.com](mailto:diageopensions@capita.com) rather than by phone or post if you can for the time being.

If you do need to speak to someone urgently, please call 0333 222 0086 (from the UK) and 01 526 8759 (from Ireland).

When contacting the Administrator, it is helpful if you provide your full name, address and telephone number, date of birth and your NI number (UK) or PPS number (Ireland).

## **Pension Scams – be extra vigilant!**

A pension scam is when someone tries to con you out of your pension savings. Scammers can be articulate and financially knowledgeable, with credible websites, testimonials and materials that are hard to distinguish from the real thing. Scammers design attractive offers to persuade you to transfer your pension pot to them or to release funds from it. It is then generally invested in unusual and high-risk investments like overseas property, renewable energy bonds, forestry, storage units, or simply stolen outright.

Scam tactics include:

- contact out of the blue
- promises of high/guaranteed returns
- free pension reviews
- suggesting you can access your pension earlier than legally allowed
- pressure to act quickly

Unfortunately, there has been a recent surge in scams designed to prey on people's fears around Covid-19 and so we ask you to be extra vigilant at this time. Scammers have been trying to persuade people to transfer their pension, prompted by the volatility of the financial markets and the economic downturn. We urge any members looking to transfer their pension to exercise extreme caution and visit Scam Smart (<https://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart>) which has specific guidance relating to COVID-19. Whilst the FCA is a UK regulatory body, the guidance is generally helpful even to those outside of the UK. From an Irish perspective, Central of Bank of Ireland provides information on how to avoid financial scams and unauthorised activity generally (<https://www.centralbank.ie/regulation/how-we-regulate/authorisation/unauthorised-firms/avoiding-scams-and-unauthorised-activity>).