

Enhancements to Retro-pay functionality

In August we advised you of changes being made to Retro-pay following discussion with users. User Notice 596 was issued setting out actions NHS organisations needed to undertake to 'clear down' Retro-pay by the end of October, in preparation to commence the new process. Clear down is a one-off process required to tidy and stabilise the position going forward by identifying, and negating as appropriate, previous retro pay activities. These actions were important to enable NHS organisations to use Retro-pay to process back payments owed to most staff as a result of agreement on this year's pay awards for Non-Review Body staff.

With the confirmation on pay rates received on 17th October, Release 4.6.1 on 3rd November will include amendments to pay rates. Running the revised Retro-pay process during payroll processing in November or December will result in calculation and application of appropriate back-pay.

Going forward, the new Retro-pay process will provide a consistent approach for all Users and the changes bring further advantages. The time taken for the Retro-pay process, including checks, will be reduced by almost 50%, and Retro payments which are removed from the assignment set produced by the NHS Retro-Notifications Report will no longer re-appear in subsequent Retro-pay runs.

These changes are the result of user feedback and involvement, demonstrating our commitment to a partnership approach to developing ESR.



ESR and FIMS workforce reporting

From time to time, ESR Users express surprise that, after going live on ESR, they are still required to complete the workforce returns in FIMS (Financial Information Management System) for their SHA to forward to the Department of Health. Users have a strong expectation that this information should be sourced from the Data Warehouse.

Workforce data collected through FIMS:

1. WTE Staff in post across Staff Groups
2. Bank Staff paid and worked
3. Sickness absence recorded as days lost as a percentage of contracted available time
4. Staff turnover
5. Total payroll
6. Agency spend
7. Medical Locum spend
8. Recruitment spend.

During 2007/8, the final year of ESR implementation, the DH are investigating the possibility of a new data collection method based on ESR data.

The ESR Central Team and the DH are working together to identify the requirements, particularly in terms of data quality, which will determine if a transition to Data Warehouse collection is a possibility.

As ESR rollout progresses, the intention is to compare data from the warehouse from those SHA areas currently covered by ESR with the current workforce FIMS data. This will give an opportunity to gauge the accuracy of the data in the warehouse and in the event of there being a viable match, a decision will need to be taken about how ESR data may be used in the future.

Announcement

ESR News is pleased to confirm Simon Willcock's role as ESR Programme Director.



ESR Update

November Update from Programme Director, Simon Willcock

Wave 10 comprising 45 organisations and c102k employees have now completed their go live successfully, and paid their first monthly payroll on ESR at the end of October.

Wave 11 comprising 34 organisations and c71k employees completed their Local Solution Testing last month, and are working towards Readiness Assessment 3 at the end of this month.

Wave 12 comprising 32 organisations and c78k employees successfully progressed through Readiness Assessment 2 in October 2007, and will commence their Local Solution Testing next month.

Notably, there is increasing interest in the use of ESR as a source of reliable and comparable workforce information. The article below relating to FIMS (Financial Information Management System) sets out an example of this huge potential.

Issues around accuracy and timeliness will have to be resolved (workforce FIMS returns are collected 2 weeks after the end of the reported month, Data Warehouse information is available one month after the reported month). No decisions have yet been made and workforce FIMS returns should continue as normal but the potential for using ESR data is exciting.

Linking ESR with NHS Pensions

ESR and NHS Pensions Agency working together to improve the Interfaces

ESR has a number of interfaces with the NHS Pensions Division (NHSPD) system. Where the interfaces are enabled (dependant on the quality of Trust Pensions data), these allow ESR users to transfer data from ESR to NHSPD and vice versa electronically.

The NHSPD receives relevant details on new joiners and leavers through the interface, plus notification of any changes to terms and conditions. It also receives a year-end return for reporting purposes. Meanwhile, the NHSPD sends ESR confirmation of the employee's National Insurance, the NHSPD's Scheme Membership Number (SD number) and Employment Identifier.

Pensions Interface Guide

In response to feedback received from Users, a detailed guide has now been produced to explain how the automatic interface between ESR and the NHSPD works. It contains straightforward descriptions of all the outgoing and

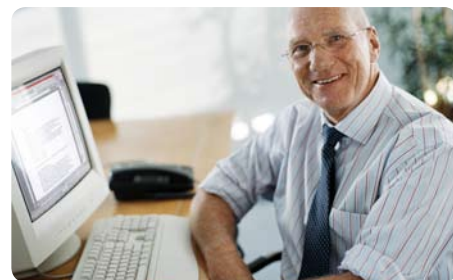
incoming data transfers, including the frequency of updating. Other topics covered include advice on how to resolve – or preferably avoid – some problems typically experienced and sensible actions to take prior to 'go live' (for Waves 11 & 12).

The NHS Pensions Interface Guide is now available in the Pensions section on Kbase. Anyone wishing to provide feedback or ask questions should contact maria.krick@mckesson.co.uk or mark.gibling@mckesson.co.uk.

Ongoing Pensions Work

A new report is being developed to show the details of the employee records sent to the NHSPD, as well as the frequency with which they are uploaded. This will assist NHS trusts in identifying what information is carried across to Pensions On-Line, the current admin system provided by the NHS Pensions Division.

The ESR team are also currently carrying out some modification work on the interfaces. This work involves making improvements to the existing Year to Date interface, due



to be released at the end of 2007/ early 2008. There is also activity to introduce a new Changes Interface and Reconciliation Interface within similar timeframes. Further details will be published in a User Notice shortly and the Pensions Interface Guide will be updated nearer the time.

Pensions Reform

On 21 September 2007, NHS Employers and the NHS trade unions announced the final agreement on a series of important changes to the NHS Pension Scheme. These changes do not come into effect until 1 April 2008, but the NHS ESR Team are working closely with all stakeholders to ensure that ESR will allow organisations to comply with the new scheme rules.

Any queries relating to Pensions On-line (POL) should be sent to pensions.online@pensionsagency.nhs.uk

Hot topics

Inter-Authority Transfer (IAT)

With only 2 Waves to go live now, some 521 NHS organisations are using ESR so, if your organisation isn't using IAT, the time is right to review the benefits of this functionality.

Visit Hot Topics on Kbase to see the updated list of 'live' NHS organisations which now includes Wave 10 sites who went live in early October. Check the list to see whether those NHS organisations you regularly recruit from are live with ESR.

Also in Hot Topics, you'll find a User Notice we have published, identifying those NHS organisations who we know, from interactions with the Benefits Realisation team, are using IAT to support their recruitment process.

Make sure you visit the IAT section in Hot Topics regularly for updated information as further Waves go live with ESR and more NHS organisations start to use IAT.

Reconciliation

Have you visited the Payroll and GL Reconciliation section on Kbase? We recently loaded a Best Practice Guide, a template Reconciliation Spreadsheet to support NHS organisations in their month on month reconciliation, and some Frequently Asked Questions.

More than 6 months into the Financial Year, if your organisation hasn't been undertaking month on month Payroll to General Ledger reconciliation then don't delay any further. Month on month reconciliation enables Payroll to be reconciled with the minimum amount of time and effort. Any errors can be corrected as they arise thus avoiding having to correct a large number of cumulative errors in a short space of time between the end of the financial year and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) deadlines.

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Recording CRB with ESR functionality

Ensuring organisations record accurate Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) data within ESR is essential for the monitoring of staff members who have had and should have had CRB checks carried out within the NHS. ESR enables employers to identify at Position level whether a CRB check is required for postholders, as well as the CRB status of the individuals concerned.

As a fundamental part of the NHS recruitment cycle, employers should carry out and record CRB checks at the point at which a candidate has been identified for a post. Although not a legal requirement, CRB checks are mandatory for all eligible new staff in line with the Department of Health's "Standards for Better Health". NHS Employers will shortly be issuing revised guidance on employment checking which provides an appropriate response to the recent incidents in Glasgow and London.

The CRB defines two levels of disclosure: standard and enhanced. As employers, NHS organisations are responsible for ensuring the correct level of disclosure is applied for AND the outcome is recorded.

In ESR the CRB status can be recorded in Navigator>Manage Applicants>Enter & Maintain>Others>Special Information under the Recruitment & Applicant Enrolment Administration User Responsibility Profile (URP). In order to monitor recording and manage the process of CRB checks the organization can run and manipulate the ad hoc discoverer report "NHS Employment Checklist" which will identify any gaps in the population of these fields.

Using ESR to record CRB information saves considerable time for the trust to analyse data otherwise held in a paper based format. It also enables trusts to assure themselves that robust governance arrangements are in place and being adhered to.

Case study: Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust



ESR – The vehicle for change

About the Trust

Operating from two main sites near London Bridge and Westminster, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust has c9,000 employees, including its bank staff. The Trust was one of the largest to go live in wave 8, in June 2007, and did so with OLM functionality and a fully operational Recruitment and Bank interface. In September they started piloting expansion pack modules including OLM, Talent Management and Self-Service with the intention to fully explore the benefits that can be made from the system. It is the Trust's intention to fully maximise the links to other Trust systems through the generic ESR interfaces.

The Approach

From the onset of the system implementation Guy's and St Thomas' have enjoyed overwhelming support, enthusiasm and commitment from their staff, in what has been a time of unparalleled change in the NHS. Sam Howe, Head of Reward and Information, maintains 'Without the full engagement and commitment of everyone involved we could not have achieved what we have. Everyone has risen to the challenge with a clear conviction of what ESR can bring to our organisation and our vision for the future'.

Key Lessons Learned

- There is no substitute for good planning and focused management of the transition
- Ensure the quality of data is maintained
- Instil the need for accuracy right through the process, from recruitment, through training, to employee termination as this has a direct impact on the quality of reporting
- Understand the system well
- Keep encouraging best practice
- Be brave and realistic
- Maintain good relationships across all departments (HR, Payroll, Training and Development) and encourage full engagement at all levels.

Looking Mid-Long Term

For the Trust, ESR was seen as a major vehicle for overall organisational process changes, and fundamental to their goal of improving efficiencies. 'ESR was given considerable focus at Board level because it was seen as integral to the objectives of the departments and Trust' says Sam, 'The potential benefits of ESR are being embraced by the team and a clear plan for full optimisation of its functionality has been set out over a realistic, phased period. ESR is helping us to look at the wider picture; at how our different departmental areas relate to each other and how we might look at different, more efficient ways of administering certain services to improve the employee's experience'.

Leading Workforce Thinking – NHS Employers' annual conference

Recognised as the key workforce event in the NHS, this year's annual NHS Employers' conference, held at the ICC in Birmingham from 9-11 October, attracted over 1,500 speakers, delegates, exhibitors and supporters from around the country. Following another period of significant change in the NHS and with workforce at the centre of the NHS agenda, 'people and productivity' became the main emphasis of the event.

Integral to the event was the exhibition, complementing the themes and generating further opportunities to network, share knowledge and discuss

issues. Of considerable interest was the ESR stand, staffed by members of the Benefits Realisation Team. It featured a rolling presentation on benefits which included the new film, featuring Northumbria Healthcare Foundation NHS Trust's use of ESR, and hundreds of updated Benefits CDs were distributed to visitors to the stand. Encouragingly, most queries and discussions centred on the extensive capabilities of ESR post go-live. OLM, Self-Service and the link with e-KSF were particularly hot topics.

Overall the three day event was very well received. It provided a valuable forum for networking opportunities,

generated lively discussion and offered a broad programme of professional development and policy update sessions.

Regular speaker sessions hosted by eminent health sector representatives such as the Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP, Secretary of State for Health, Clare Chapman, Director General of Workforce (DH) and David Nicholson, Chief Executive of the NHS in England, set the priorities for workforce for the coming year.

Next year's conference will be held from 4 - 6 November 2008 at the ICC in Birmingham.



Jo Edwards, Functional Consultant
– explaining ESR Benefits

Benefits Realisation events overview

Following the success of previous Benefits Realisation events held in London, Bristol and Birmingham, two further events were staged in Bolton on 3 October and in York on 5 October. Both proved once again to be well attended, with over 100 delegates at each event. All the events have been highly successful in offering opportunities for sharing, learning and

discussing personal experiences of ESR in realising the benefits of implementing the rich functionality of the system.

Guest speakers included: Jackie Parkington, Sefton PCT, Carol Robinson, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Chris Heward, Heart of Birmingham Teaching PCT. Alison Nell, who also starred in the new MSS

film, contributed with a presentation on the experiences of Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Feedback from the events has highlighted an increased enthusiasm in the Benefits Realisation agenda, encouraging organisations to invest further development and exploration of the ESR functionality.



BR team & audience at York event

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