

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NUMBER: 158 [NW164E]

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158. Ms S J Graham (DA) to ask the Minister of Finance:

- (1) Whether the Pension Redress Programme by Government Employees Pension Fund is still ongoing; if not, why not; if so, what is the total number of applications that
 - (a) were received to date,
 - (b) have been finalised and
 - (c) remain to be finalised;
- (2) whether he will furnish Ms S J Graham with the latest update on the application of Ms Sheila Cathleen Lewis [details furnished]? NW164E

REPLY

The Pension Redress Programme was an initiative negotiated and agreed to by parties to the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) through Resolution 7 of 1998. The programme aimed to address discriminatory practices by recognising non-contributory service as pensionable service for employees affected by past discrimination. The programme's implementation period started on 29 November 2002 and concluded on 31 July 2012, following PSCBC Resolution 3 of 2012, which set the final application deadline as 31 March 2012. The resolution of the programme was further defined under PSCBC Resolution 2 of 2018, which detailed the compensation methodology and marked the formal conclusion of the redress process for qualifying applicants.

Applications for the redress programme were submitted via the PSCBC. The Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) acted as the payment facilitator for the redress payouts but was not the initiating body of the programme. The decisions regarding the programme's commencement, operational framework, and conclusion were determined within the PSCBC framework, with the Government Pension Administration Agency (GPAA) responsible for processing applications and implementing payments. As such, the GEPF would not be able to comment on the reasons for the programme's conclusion beyond the PSCBC resolutions.

(a) Applications received to date

The PSCBC received a total of 150,444 applications of which 72 335 applications were identified as qualifying for the redress benefit. An independent audit was conducted to ensure the verification process was complete, fair, and accurate. This process involved

a detailed review to distinguish between qualifying applicants, error cases, and those not meeting the eligibility criteria. Following the completion of the audit process, 53,717 records were identified as qualifying applicants and 18,618 error cases were noted.

As part of the implementation process, the GPAA undertook a meticulous re-verification of cases against the resolutions and pensionable periods recorded on the administration system. This was to ensure the utmost accuracy and fairness in the redress allocation. This re-verification process led to various outcomes, including:

- Error cases initially identified that later met the qualifications for approval;
- Approved/Error cases that, upon re-verification, did not qualify due to overlapping pensionable service;

As a result of this thorough process, the total number of approved cases was updated to 58,324, with the initial 17,045 error cases undergoing further review. Hence a total of 75 369 applications have been processed to date.

(b) Applications that have been finalised

Of the initially approved cases, 58,123 applications have been finalised and processed for redress. Of the error cases revisited, 5,982 (35%) were reclassified from error to approved, 6,348 (37%) remained as error cases, and 4,715 (28%) were determined not to qualify (DNQ), hence a total of 68 820 have been finalised.

(c) Remain to be finalised;

As we continue to work towards the finalisation of the Pension Redress Programme, a small fraction of cases remains outstanding. Specifically, of the approved cases, 201 remain unresolved. Additionally, 6,348 cases have not been resolved due to their initial classification as error cases. A targeted approach has been implemented to address these error cases, involving the redistribution of error letters by the GPAA to facilitate departmental engagements and case resolutions.

Moreover, there are a small number of members who, despite applying within the stipulated timeframe, were not included in the final costing of the Redress Programme. These cases, while few, are being carefully reviewed, and are addressed on a case-by-case basis.

The GEPP is committed to concluding these remaining cases with diligence and fairness, ensuring every eligible member receives due redress.

- (2) The GEPP cannot furnish details of the claim submitted by Ms Sheila Cathleen Lewis to a third party to maintain confidentiality as required by the GEP Law, PAIA and POPIA legislation. The GEPP has requested the GPAA to investigate the matter and will advise Ms Sheila Cathleen directly.