

## Important Announcement to members of the following pension schemes (“the Schemes”)

Ironstream Retirement Benefits Scheme

Chappell Crest Retirement Benefits Scheme

Herman and Peters Retirement Benefits Scheme

Grey Peak Retirement Benefits Scheme

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Since our appointment as independent trustee to the Schemes, Dalriada Trustees Limited (Dalriada) has issued a number of Announcements to members. The Announcements contain important information about the above named schemes and we thought it would be useful if we put all the key points into a single document.

### **Who is Dalriada and why did it get involved with the Schemes?**

Dalriada is a professional independent trustee who was appointed by the Pensions Regulator (tPR) to take over the running of the Schemes on 8 May 2013. Dalriada is experienced in dealing with pension schemes that have complex issues and / or have unusual investments.

Because it is an independent trustee, Dalriada is not linked in any way with the original trustees of the Schemes. Dalriada effectively replaced the original Trustees, Nidd Vale Trustees Limited, and was given exclusive powers to deal with the Schemes. The original trustees have had no involvement in running the Schemes since our appointment.

Dalriada was appointed because the Pensions Regulator (tPR) was concerned that the Schemes were being used for pension liberation.

Pension liberation occurs where individuals are encouraged to transfer their existing pensions to new schemes in the expectation of getting money from their pension fund before the minimum retirement age of 55. This is usually by way of a loan or some form of cash inducement.

Pension liberation can become fraudulent if members have not been given the full facts about the risks and costs involved.

Schemes used for pension liberation generally have high charges and often invest whatever money is left after these charges in risky and unusual investments. They also put members at risk of having to pay large amounts of tax. Pension savings benefit from tax relief because they are meant to provide benefits in old age. If individuals try and take money out of their pensions early, HMRC can charge tax on any payment at a rate of up to 55%.

The Pensions Regulator has been running a campaign warning of the dangers of pension liberation. Because schemes used for pension liberation are often just scams this campaign is now called "pension scams"-

[www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/pension-liberation-fraud.aspx](http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/pension-liberation-fraud.aspx)

### **Why do the Schemes need a trustee and what does a trustee do?**

Like most occupational pension schemes, the Schemes have been set up “under trust”. This means that the funds are held by “someone else” for the benefit of the members and the “someone else” is known as the trustee or trustees. So for the Schemes to operate at all they need to have a trustee in place.

Trustees of pension schemes have a lot of responsibilities, the main one being to act in the members’ interests.

Pension scheme trustees can’t do what they want with schemes. They must run a scheme as set out in the scheme’s trust deed and rules. Trustees must also know the laws and regulations which set out what pension schemes can and cannot do.

If something in a scheme’s rules contradicts something in law, trustees must do what the law says.

If it is not clear how trustees should apply the rules or the law to their scheme, they must take legal advice, and sometimes ask for guidance from the Court.

### **What did Dalriada do when it was appointed?**

On appointment Dalriada took control of the Schemes’ bank accounts. Dalriada also received copies of the member files in respect of the Ironstream and Chappell Crest schemes that were seized by City of London Police from the previous administrators (Conder Administration).

The Herman and Peters and Grey Peak schemes used different administrators (Yorvick) and their files were not seized by the police. We received member files from Yorvick directly in respect of these schemes.

Based on these records we have now created proper administration records on our computer systems.

This is something any company would need to do to be able to run and manage a pension scheme properly and be able to work out members’ benefits and provide the necessary benefit statements.

The fact that there did not appear to be a proper pension administration system or proper record keeping meant that the Schemes were in a very poor state of organisation at the time of Dalriada’s appointment, much worse than Dalriada is usually used to seeing when dealing with occupational schemes.

Again, Dalriada would expect financial records to be readily available in the case of conventional pension schemes. The need to construct financial records from scratch has meant a significant amount of extra work.

Dalriada has also spent time in identifying the various investments made by the Schemes.

### **What progress has been made in relation to the Scheme’s investments?**

Dalriada has been working to gain control of the investments made by the original trustee. These investments are considered high risk and unusual compared to those usually made by conventional pension schemes. In this case Dalriada is concerned that the investments will have little or no value ultimately which will impact greatly on the value of members’ benefits. This would reinforce the idea that the Schemes might simply be scams.

The Schemes invested in one key area:

**Quantum Life** – £8,000,000 was invested in this insurance company which is based and regulated in Liechtenstein. This money has been moved through various companies based overseas (Mauritius) to a number of investments we believe to be tied to 'emerging market' funds in India and to wheat farming in Australia.

Dalriada sought information from the previous trustees and the people responsible for the investments. Generally, they were unhelpful and uncooperative which has made it very difficult for us to properly understand how funds were held and what they are worth. At this stage, it appears that they are 'highly illiquid' and cannot be cashed in.

Dalriada continues in its quest to see if it will be able to get these funds back into the Schemes, and, at that time, what the investments are likely to be worth, if anything.

#### **What is the current position with regard to future legal action?**

Because of the nature of these Schemes, it is fundamental that Dalriada understand how these investments are performing and try to get some funds back into the Schemes. Should Dalriada be unsuccessful in having monies returned to the Schemes, it may be necessary to take Court action, as previously suggested. Dalriada will, however, keep members informed of events if Court proceedings were considered necessary.

#### **What is the current position with HMRC on tax?**

As previously advised there are potential tax charges involved with "pension liberation". Payments made to members may be treated as "unauthorised payments".

Pension schemes can make certain "authorised payments" as set out in law. For example, the cash sums paid when a member retires or the lump sum paid when a member dies. These lump sum "authorised payments" can usually be paid tax free. "Unauthorised payments" are subject to tax charges.

As before, however, it will take some time before the tax position for the Schemes can be established and Dalriada can determine what impact, if any, this might have.

#### **What is the latest position with regard to transfer values and member benefit calculations?**

It is vital that Dalriada understands the value of the investments made by the previous trustees. Until we can establish what funds we can get back from Quantum Life, we are unable to calculate the value of members' benefits, including transfer values. It may still be some time before we are in a position to do so.

Dalriada understands members' frustrations with the length of time being taken to resolve the issues but please be advised that we are doing all we can to get to a position of clarity as quickly as possible. As soon as we are at a point where we can calculate benefits, we will do so.

## **Member Documentation / Information**

Dalriada would like to thank those members who have forwarded correspondence or provided details connected to the Schemes. If you have not done so, we would welcome any material you feel would be appropriate to enable us to continue our investigations.

### **Current position**

Please be assured that we are devoting our full attention to this matter and will work closely and co-operatively with all relevant parties on your behalf and in the best interests of all members.

Finally, please be advised that we have set up a page on our website:  
[www.dalriadatrustees.co.uk/conder-quantum](http://www.dalriadatrustees.co.uk/conder-quantum) .

We have included Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on this page and will update the website when further information becomes available. We will also upload all Announcements to this page. As you will be aware, the costs of answering queries have to be met from the assets of the Schemes. In order to minimise these costs it would be very helpful if you could, in the first instance, check the FAQs to see if your question is answered there.

Should you, however, have any specific personal queries in relation to this Announcement, your membership of the Schemes or should you wish to provide us with further information, please contact us.

You can contact us as follows:

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