

20 March 2020

Our Ref: FOI7120

### **Freedom of Information: Right to know request**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 13 February 2020 for information on the number of regulated advice firms who have given up defined benefit (DB) pension transfer permissions. Full details of your request can be found in Annex A below.

We have considered your request in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and our response is outlined below.

We have interpreted your request to be for information specifically in relation to defined benefit (DB) pension transfers, as opposed to all of the other activities that fall within the ambit of the relevant regulated activity (Advising on pension transfers and opt/outs).

Permission to advise on DB pension transfers can be relinquished by either (a) removing the permission (Advising on pension transfers and opt/outs) entirely or (b) adding a limitation to the permission to exclude advice on DB pension transfers. On the Financial Services Register this would show as 'Limited pension transfer activity'.

In respect of the first part of your request, please find below the number of firms that gave up permission to undertake DB pension transfer activities between 1 April 2019 and 28 February 2020:

- Number of firms that did not previously have the limitation attached and withdrew the permission entirely – **121**
- Number of firms that added the non-standard pension transfer limitation to Advising on pension transfers and opt/outs – **677**

Therefore, for the relevant period, a total of **798** firms gave up permission to advise on DB pension transfers.

With regard to the second part of your request (how many of these firms had advised on a DB transfer before 1 April 2019), we can confirm that we only hold data for the period between 1 April 2015 and 30 September 2018, which we have outlined below. At present there is not a standardised regulatory return to collect the information and any data collection we do undertake requires an ad hoc data collection exercise. We collected data up to September 2018 as part of our review of defined benefit pension transfer advice.

We proposed to update this data with a new data return from firms in our Consultation CP 19/25. We are planning to publish rules following this consultation in the coming months.

Of the 798 firms detailed above, 376 reported that they had given advice on DB pension transfers between 1 April 2015 and 30 September 2018. Of these, 321 firms subsequently applied to add the limitation and 55 firms applied to remove the permission in its entirety.

If you are unhappy with this response, you have the right to request an internal review. If you wish to exercise this right you should contact the Information Disclosure Team within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you also have a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. Telephone: 01625 545 700. Website: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

Information Disclosure Team  
Financial Conduct Authority



## **Annex A**

*"I am seeking information on the number of regulated advice firms who have given up defined benefit (DB) pension transfer permissions.*

- *I would like to know how many advice firms have given up permission to advise on pension transfers since 1 April 2019*
- *Please specify how many of these firms that have given up their transfer permissions were making use of these permissions before surrendering them, i.e. how many of these firms had advised on a DB transfer before 1 April"*