**Forces Pension Society Head of Pensions**

The Forces Pension Society is a not-for-profit, independent membership organisation that looks after the interests of UK Armed Forces pensioners. It is a watchdog, a lobby group and a provider of professional advice to its membership, which comprises both serving and retired Armed Forces personnel. In recent years the Society has gone from strength to strength, with increasing membership (now well over 50,000), a strong independent voice and considerable influence and reputation. The Society has a full time staff of 14, supported by a number of consultants and is based in Vauxhall, South West London.

At the heart of the Society is the pension enquiry team which has steadily increased in strength over the last six years, from a single pension adviser to the current team of six. The team provides detailed technical pension advice to serving and retired Service personnel concerning the operation of the various Armed Forces Pension Schemes. The steady expansion of the team has been brought about by an increasing thirst for pension knowledge amongst all Armed Forces personnel; and this in turn has been the result of greater complexity, particularly driven by the introduction of a new Armed Forces Pension Scheme in 2015, which gave many personnel entitlements under at least two different schemes. The key task of the team is to field questions from FPS members and provide accurate, authoritative, clear and timely replies, allowing them to make informed decisions about their future service and choices. The Head of Pensions is responsible for the team’s leadership and management, ensuring consistency and timeliness of advice as well as ensuring that the team keeps abreast of new developments and trends.

The team conducts most of its work by email but also offers advice by telephone and face-to-face. Whilst the primary task of the team is to answer membership questions, it is also expected to analyse its work to identify trends and current issues so as to inform the wider work of the Society. The team also engages regularly with MOD in order to help resolve difficulties or mistakes. Members of the team are active participants in the Society’s wider briefing effort. There are two strands to this work; the team provides regular and detailed talks on pensions issues to those about to leave the Armed Forces, by arrangement with MOD. It also assists with the Society’s wider briefing effort in liaison with the Society’s Roadshow Manager. The Head of Pensions is responsible for allocating staff and coordinating the team’s briefing contribution in both areas. Through the Head of Pensions, the team also provides expert advice to the Chief Executive on issues of the moment and any ongoing campaigns.

The Head of Pensions will be expected to be a capable manager and leader with the equivalent experience associated with OF-4 rank, a background in Armed Forces pay and remuneration matters together with the interest in the issues, and the willingness to become a specific pensions expert in a reasonable timescale. The reputation of the Society rests upon the quality of its pension team and the successful candidate must enjoy both the confidence of the team and the external credibility to deal with members of the Society and the MOD alike. The Head of Pensions must be able to match the knowledge of the team members within short order, and ideally surpass it after a years’ tenure. This will require determined application. Military experience and a detailed knowledge of the Armed Forces will be essential.

**Person Specification**

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| **Professional Skills** | **Personal Qualities** |
| **Essential*** Ability to lead and direct a team of experts.
* Excellent communication and presentation skills including the ability to speak authoritatively and clearly both to individuals and in public, to write clearly and succinctly, explaining complex and technical issues in ways that can be easily understood.
* Highly numerate and either familiar with the various Armed Forces Pension Schemes or a background in Armed Forces pay and remuneration issues, together with an interest in this area and an ability to assimilate such information under the tutelage of the existing team.
* IT capable – particularly PowerPoint Excel and Outlook.
* Credibility when dealing with Society members.
* Ability to keep accurate records.
 | **Desirable*** Team player with a broad outlook, able both to advise on a one to one basis and to motivate and encourage the team.
* Self-motivated and enthusiastic
* Energy to sustain and develop current levels of activity.
* Well-organised with a strong eye for detail and accuracy.
* Ability to inspire trust in the team, Society members and outside agencies (MOD).
* Ability to assimilate new information quickly.
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Overall package of around £58,000 negotiable, depending on experience. The current norm amongst the team is to work from home for one day a week with additional days permitted on an occasional basis, but the Head of Pensions will be responsible for managing this balance. This post would be particularly suitable for someone with Pay Colonel or similar (SO1) experience.

Applications, to include CV and covering letter by COP Friday 8 Feb 19 to Chief of Staff hugof@forpen.co.uk and copied to JoanneFB@forpen.co.uk . For queries, phone 020 7840 6612 (COS). Aim is to conduct short list interviews in mid-February with successful applicant to be in post as soon as practicable thereafter.