

Testimonials

Our successful secondment programme has been running since 2005. Here you can read first hand accounts of the experience from people who have worked with us recently.



Jacqui Reid, Lawyer

'I was seconded into The Pensions Regulator's defined contribution (DC) team to provide legal support to the policy team on a wide variety of matters. I agreed to the secondment because I wanted to gain an insight into the regulator's strategy in a new and growing area of regulation. As an experienced lawyer, I was keen to not only provide 'reactive' legal advice within the organisation but to use my industry experience to help shape and refine the policy

team's thinking. I quickly discovered that there is never a dull moment in the DC team – the team is engaged, vibrant and rapidly expanding, with an array of new policies and strategies to match. They have always listened to and considered my advice and fully involved me in all aspects of a project. The result is that I have been able to take back to my firm a detailed understanding of DC regulation and the inside track on why The Pensions Regulator operates in the way it does – as well as making some good friends. My favourite thing about Brighton has to be its fantastic selection of places to have lunch and the occasional opportunity for an ice cream on the beach!'



Jamie MacKenzie, Business analyst

'I was seconded to The Pensions Regulator as a business analyst providing business and financial expertise to the multi-functional defined benefit (DB) regulation team, which included lawyers, actuaries and case managers. I took a leadership role in business negotiations and advised on strategy in relation to (i) investigations into scheme funding valuations; (ii) clearance applications; and (iii) the covenant implications of transactions and restructurings.

For a secondment to be successful it must work for all three parties (you, your firm and the regulator). I was attracted to the secondment as it was a unique opportunity to learn about the working practices, approach and organisational structure of the regulator as well as being a chance to use my experience and external perspective to assist with making improvements in policy and its future implementation.

During my secondment I dealt with a wide variety of cases and found the work both interesting and challenging. One of the highlights was developing and delivering a bespoke financial training programme, tailored to the regulator's operational activities. The programme was initially designed for case managers, but following positive feedback it was extended to the legal and actuarial teams and intelligence analysts.

As a result of my secondment I have developed strong working relationships with both the regulator and the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) and am able to provide clients and colleagues at my firm with a detailed understanding of the regulatory regime. This depth of insight is virtually impossible to accumulate without spending time working within the regulator on a day-to-day basis. I am now able to place myself in the regulator's shoes, which has been invaluable when advising clients (both corporate and trustee).

My daily commute was from London to Brighton. Everybody was extremely welcoming, Brighton has a relaxed feel and in my time there I developed a great affection for the city. Let's face it, there aren't many places in the UK where you can play volleyball on the beach after work!

I would definitely recommend a secondment to The Pensions Regulator. It is a unique opportunity to gain a comprehensive understanding of an organisation which is a key stakeholder in a wide variety of corporate activities. My secondment was career-enhancing as well as a rewarding and interesting experience. It also gave me the opportunity to develop valuable and lasting professional and personal relationships.'



Gareth Mackinder, Actuary

'I live on the south coast, so the opportunity to switch my hour and a half commute to work for a 15 minute cycle was very appealing! I know Brighton well and to have the opportunity to work in the centre was a real pleasure – the seafront is obviously well known but there is a good deal more to the city than that.

One of the driving reasons for me joining the regulator on secondment was for the opportunity to view occupational pensions from a different perspective. I have advised both trustees and corporate entities in my career so far but had never considered pensions from a regulatory point of view, specifically the risks faced by members and the PPF. I found the change in focus refreshing. I had also always been impressed with the message coming from the regulator and hoped to be able help out with the policy team.

I did a 12 month secondment, which allowed me to really get my teeth into some complex cases. A lot of cases could be dealt with very quickly, but some managed to keep me busy for the duration of my secondment and it was satisfying to be able to see these cases through. The regulator expects you to be able to hit the ground running so I quickly got a caseload allocated to me and had to get up to speed. The meetings and conference calls followed swiftly afterwards and became my favourite part of the job.

One of the real highlights of my secondment was working with a particular group of trustees to get to a solution that both they and the regulator were happy with, although obviously not all cases can end that way. In addition to working on recovery plan cases I worked on clearances and a number of notifiable event cases.

I finished my secondment with a much more thorough understanding of the scheme funding regime, having worked on many recovery plan cases and seen the different (and sometimes very innovative) approaches trustees used according to their circumstances. My employer has also benefited from the insight I've gained, both in terms of the practicalities of dealing with the regulator and in understanding how the it is likely to interpret trustees' actions and decisions.

I believe that having completed my secondment I am a more rounded actuarial consultant, and have certainly been able to use the skills I developed back in the advisory world.'