

2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme

2021 active benefit statement

Introduction

These notes provide more explanation of the information contained in your 2021 annual benefit statement.

News

Age discrimination court case

Important: Please note that this year's Annual Benefit Statement provides an estimate of your pension benefits built up in your current scheme membership to 31 March 2021.

On 20 December 2018, the Court of Appeal ruled in McCloud/Sargeant that the transitional arrangements introduced as part of the 2015 reforms to the Firefighters' and Judges' pension scheme were discriminatory and, therefore, unlawful. The Government subsequently accepted that this ruling applied to all the main public service pension schemes.

The Government has consulted on the changes needed to remove discrimination from the schemes and work is ongoing to make these changes. This work is complex and will take time. For further information please see the Written Ministerial Statement from 4 February 2021: [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

We understand that it will be disappointing to members that the current values of this year's statement will not be able to reflect the remedy choice between legacy and reformed benefits at this stage, however, the rules and systems are not yet in place to calculate benefits with discrimination removed. This means that it has not been possible to reflect the impact of the Court of Appeal ruling in this year's Annual Benefit Statements. Any projections on your pension entitlement are based on the assumption that your current membership will continue until your normal pension age.

All currently protected members will be placed in the 2015 Firefighter's Pension Scheme for service after 1 April 2022 (the end of the remedy period). Due to the software changes needed to illustrate this, it will not be possible to reflect this position in projected benefits this year.

You can find more information about removing age discrimination on the Firefighter's Pension Scheme Regulations and Guidance website: [Age discrimination remedy \(fpsregs.org\)](https://www.fpsregs.org)

When can I take my benefits?

The information provided in this statement is based on you leaving active membership the day before your NPA. You can choose to retire from age 55, however, your 2015 pension benefits will be reduced if you take them before your Normal Pension Age (NPA).

If you leave the 2015 scheme before benefits are payable, your NPA will change to become the equivalent of your state pension age.

This pension cannot be paid until you have left service.

If you take your pension before your NPA, reductions may be applied to your pension. If you take your pension after your NPA, increase will be applied. At any time, the Government may change the factors and methodology used to calculate the reductions and increases which may result in a corresponding change to the pension you are paid at retirement.

What options do I have when I take my pension?

When you take your pension you will have the option to exchange some of your pension for a tax free lump sum. We have shown the benefits based on not giving up annual pension and on giving up the maximum pension possible.

Partner's pension

If you have a spouse or civil partner, they automatically qualify to receive a pension if you die in service. This is a scheme benefit that is paid to surviving partners and will not reduce or affect your pension even if you do not have a partner.

If you have a partner and meet certain conditions, your partner may be eligible for a pension even though you are not married or in a civil partnership. You cannot nominate anyone else to receive a partner's pension.

You can use a nomination of cohabiting partner form, available from our website www.hants.gov.uk/pensions, if you are not married or in a civil partnership and wish to nominate a cohabiting partner.

A surviving partner's pension is shown if our records indicate you are in a partnership. This figure is only for illustration purposes and the actual amount paid may differ from the one shown depending on your circumstances and on the regulations that apply when a pension becomes payable. For example, if you are currently married but subsequently re-marry after you retire, your new spouse may not be entitled to as much pension as your original spouse was.

Your dependent children may also be eligible to receive a pension if you die in service and they meet certain conditions. Please see our website for more information.

Deductions from your benefits - Pension sharing order

The amount of surviving partner's pension shown includes all benefits due from your membership of the scheme, including any additional contributions which bought additional survivor's benefits, but will exclude any deductions due to a pension sharing order.

Death grant lump sum

If you die while contributing to the scheme, a death grant lump sum will be paid to:

- your spouse or civil partner, or
- your declared partner, at the discretion of the Fire Authority, or
- a nominee, if you do not have a partner, at the Fire Authority's discretion, or
- your personal representative, as part of your estate.

You can provide a nomination or update an existing one on the Member Portal. Alternatively you can complete a Death grant expression of wish form available from our website www.hants.gov.uk/pensions.

Your pensionable pay

Your pensionable pay was provided by your employer. If you do not agree with the amount shown on your statement, please contact your employer.

Lifetime Allowance

The LTA to the value of your combined UK registered pension schemes and some overseas schemes; the value shown relates to this pension.

Most people's benefits will not exceed the LTA, but we need to provide this information to everyone.

The information shown here is not a transfer value. To obtain a transfer value, please complete a cash equivalent transfer value form, available from our website. The value shown is based on the pension benefits on this statement only.

Annual Allowance

HM Revenue and Customs sets an annual allowance, which is the amount by which your benefits can increase in a year without being subject to tax. The standard annual allowance is currently £40,000. If you have exceeded the standard annual allowance limit in the year you will receive a Pension Savings Statement by 6 October 2021.

A tapered annual allowance may apply for people with adjusted income of £150,000 and over. If you think this applies to you, please contact us.

You can find more information about annual allowance on our website.