



Norfolk Pension Fund

A Brief Guide to the **Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)**

Employees in England and Wales

April 2021





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01603 495923 or email pensions@norfolk.gov.uk**

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Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

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Highlights of the LGPS

The LGPS gives you:

Secure benefits –

the scheme provides you with a future income, independent of share prices and stock market fluctuations.

At a low cost to you –

with tax-efficient savings.

And your employer pays in too –

the scheme is provided by your employer who meets the balance of the cost of providing your benefits in the LGPS.

You can look forward to your retirement in the LGPS with:

A secure pension –

worked out every **scheme year** and added to your **pension account**. The pension added to your account at the end of a **scheme year** is, if you are in the main section of the scheme, an amount equal to a 49th of your **pensionable pay** in that year. At the end of every **scheme year** the total amount of pension in your account is adjusted to take into account the cost of living (as currently measured by the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**).

Flexibility to pay more or less contributions –

you can boost your pension by paying more contributions, which you would get tax relief on. You also have the option to pay half your normal contributions in return for half your normal pension. This is known as the 50/50 section of the scheme and is designed to help members stay in the scheme when times are financially tough.

Tax-free cash –

you have the option when you draw your pension to exchange part of it for some tax-free cash.

Peace of mind –

your family enjoys financial security, with immediate life cover and a pension for your spouse, **civil partner** or **eligible cohabiting partner** and **eligible children** in the event of your death in service. If you ever become seriously ill and you've met the two years **vesting period**, you could receive immediate ill health benefits.

Freedom to choose when to take your pension –

you do not need to have reached your **Normal Pension Age** in order to take your pension as, once you've met the two years **vesting period**, you can choose to retire and draw your pension at any time between age 55 and 75. Your **Normal Pension Age** is simply the age you can retire and take the pension you've built up in full. However, if you choose to take your pension before your **Normal Pension Age** it will normally be reduced, as it's being paid earlier. If you take it later than your **Normal Pension Age** it's increased because it's being paid later.

Redundancy and Efficiency Retirement –

if you are made redundant or retired in the interests of business efficiency when you are age 55 or over you will, provided you've met the two years **vesting period**, receive immediate payment of the main benefits you've built up without any reduction for early payment (but any additional pension you have chosen to buy would be reduced if you are under your **Normal Pension Age** when you retire).

Flexible retirement –

if you reduce your hours or move to a less senior position at or after age 55 you can, provided your employer agrees, and you've met the 2 years **vesting period**, take some or all of the benefits you have already built up, helping you ease into retirement, although your benefits may be reduced for early payment.

The scheme

This guide is a short description of the conditions of membership and main scheme benefits applicable if you pay into the LGPS on or after 1 April 2014.

You can find out more about the scheme in the LGPS member videos: Pensions Made Simple available at www.lgpsmember.org

What kind of scheme is it?

The LGPS is a tax approved, defined benefit occupational pension scheme which was set up under the Superannuation Act 1972 (but, in the future, scheme rules will be made under the Public Service Pension Schemes Act 2013). The LGPS was contracted out of the State Second Pension scheme (S2P) until 5 April 2016; from 6 April 2016 the 'contracted out' status ended for all pension schemes due to the introduction of the single tier State Pension. The LGPS meets the government's standards under the automatic enrolment provisions of the Pensions Act 2008. The amount of pension you earn in a **scheme year** is worked out each year and added to your **pension account**. The total amount of pension in your **pension account** is revalued at the end of each **scheme year** so your pension keeps up with the cost of living. The LGPS is very secure because the benefits are set out in law.

Who can join?

The LGPS covers employees working in local government and for other organisations chosen to participate in it. To be able to join the LGPS you need to be under age 75 and work for an employer offering membership of the scheme. If you are employed by a designating body, such as a town or parish council, or by a non-local government organisation which participates in the LGPS (an **admission body**), you can only join if your employer nominates you for membership of

the scheme. Police officers, operational firefighters and, in general, teachers and employees eligible to join another statutory pension scheme (such as the NHS Pension Scheme) are not allowed to join the LGPS.

If you start a job in which you are eligible for membership of the LGPS you will be brought into the Scheme if your contract of employment is for three months or more.

- If it is for less than three months and you are, or during that period become, an Eligible Jobholder you will normally be brought into the scheme from the automatic enrolment date. If your employer issues you with a postponement notice, then your entry to the Scheme could be delayed by up to three months.
- If your contract is extended to be from three months or more, you will be brought into the Scheme from the beginning of the pay period after the one in which your contract is extended.
- If you opt to join by completing an application form, you will be brought into the Scheme from the beginning of the pay period after the one in which you opt to join.

If you are brought into the scheme you have the right to opt out. You cannot complete an opt out form until you have started your employment.

How do I know I have become a member of the LGPS?

On joining the LGPS a **pension account** (for each employment in the Scheme, if you have more than one) will be set up. **You should check your payslip to make sure pension contributions are being deducted.**

Can I opt-out of the LGPS and re-join at a later date?

Yes, you can opt out of the Scheme. If you are thinking of opting out you might first want to consider an alternative option, which is to move to the 50/50 section of the Scheme. The 50/50 section

allows you to pay half your normal contributions in return for half your normal pension build up. To find out more, see the section on **flexibility to pay less**.

If, having considered the 50/50 option, you still decide the LGPS is not for you, you can leave the LGPS at any time on or after your first day of eligible employment by completing our Employee Opt Out Form and give to your employer to action. You might want to take independent financial advice before making the final decision to opt out.

If you opt out of the LGPS before completing three months membership you will be treated as never having been a member and your employer will refund any contributions to you through your pay.

If you opt out of the LGPS with three or more months membership and before completing the two years vesting period you can usually take a refund of your contributions (less any statutory deductions) or transfer out your pension to another scheme.

If you opt out of the LGPS after meeting the two years **vesting period**, you will have deferred benefits in the Scheme. Generally, you will have the same options as anyone leaving their job before retirement, except you cannot take your deferred benefits unless you have left your job. If you re-join the Scheme you will not be permitted to join your deferred benefit with the **pension account** created when you re-join the Scheme. Instead, you will have two separate sets of pension benefits.

If you opt out, you can opt back into the Scheme at any time before age 75, provided you are eligible to join.

If you opt out of the LGPS:

- on the date your employer is first required to comply with the automatic enrolment provisions under the Pensions Act 2008, your employer will automatically enrol you back into the LGPS if you are an **Eligible Jobholder** at that time in the job you've opted out from, or
- if on the date your employer is first required to comply with the

automatic enrolment provisions under the Pensions Act 2008 you are not an **Eligible Jobholder** in the job you opted out from, your employer will, if you subsequently become an **Eligible Jobholder** in that job, automatically enrol you back into the LGPS from the **automatic enrolment date**.

Your employer must notify you if this happens. You would then have the right to opt out of the LGPS again.

If you stay opted out, your employer will normally automatically enrol you back into the LGPS approximately every three years from the date they have to comply with the automatic enrolment provisions provided, you are an **Eligible Jobholder** at that time.

Your employer can choose not to automatically enrol you if:

- you had opted out of the LGPS less than 12 months before the date you would have been automatically enrolled in the job, or
- notice to terminate employment has been given before the end of the period of 6 weeks beginning with what would have been the date you were automatically enrolled in the job, or
- your employer has reasonable grounds to believe, on what would have been the date they automatically enrolled you, you hold Primary Protection, Enhanced Protection, Fixed Protection, Fixed Protection 2014, Individual Protection 2014, Fixed Protection 2016 or Individual Protection 2016.

What do I pay?

Your contribution rate depends on how much you are paid but it's currently between 5.5% and 12.5% of your **pensionable pay**. If you elect for the 50/50 section of the scheme you would pay half the rates listed below. The rate you pay depends on which pay band you fall into. When you join, and every April afterwards, your employer will decide your contribution rate. If your pay changes throughout the

year, your employer may decide to review your contribution rate. Here are the pay bands and the rates from April 2021.

Contribution bandings 2021/22		
If your actual pensionable pay is:		You pay a contribution rate of:
Up to	£ 14,600	5.5%
£ 14,601	to £ 22,900	5.8%
£ 22,901	to £ 37,200	6.5%
£ 37,201	to £ 47,100	6.8%
£ 47,101	to £ 65,900	8.5%
£ 65,901	to £ 93,400	9.9%
£ 93,401	to £ 110,000	10.5%
£ 110,001	to £ 165,000	11.4%
£ 165,001	Or more	12.5%

The contribution rates and / or pay bands in the table above will be reviewed each year and may change in the future.

Do I get tax relief?

As a member of the LGPS, if you earn enough to pay tax, your contributions will attract tax relief when they are deducted from your **pensionable pay**. There are restrictions on the amount of tax relief available on pension contributions. If the value of your pension savings increase in any one year by more than the standard annual allowance of £40,000 (2021/22) you may have to pay a tax charge. Most people will not be affected by the annual allowance.

Does my employer contribute?

Your employer currently pays the balance of the cost of providing your benefits in the LGPS. Every three years an independent review is undertaken to calculate how much your employer should contribute to the scheme.

Is there flexibility to pay less contributions?

Yes, in the scheme there is an option known as 50/50 which allows you to pay half your normal contributions in return for half your normal pension - see the section on **flexibility to pay less**.

Can I pay extra contributions to increase my benefits?

You can increase your benefits by paying additional contributions, known as Additional Pension Contributions (APCs), to buy extra LGPS pension, or by making payments to the scheme's **Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC)** arrangement. If you want more information on these options, our contact details are on the back cover of this guide.

You are also able to make payments to a personal pension or stakeholder pension or free-standing AVC scheme of your own choice. You may wish to take independent financial advice before you make a decision about paying extra.

What if I've been a member before and can now re-join the LGPS?

If you re-join the LGPS and you have deferred benefits in another LGPS fund in England or Wales, your deferred benefits will normally be automatically joined with your new active **pension account**. You will have 12 months from re-joining the scheme to make a decision. Your employer may allow you longer to decide.

If you have deferred benefits in another LGPS fund in England or Wales because you opted out of the Scheme on or after 11 April 2015 you cannot join those benefits with your new active **pension account**. They will remain as a separate deferred benefit.

If you rejoin the LGPS in England or Wales and have a deferred refund this **must** be joined with your new active **pension account**.

What about any non-LGPS pension rights I have?

If you have paid into another non-LGPS pension arrangement or to the LGPS in Scotland or Northern Ireland, you may be able to transfer your previous pension rights into the LGPS (provided you are not already taking them as a pension). You only have 12 months from joining the LGPS to opt to transfer your previous pension rights, unless your employer and LGPS administering authority allow you longer.

What if I'm already receiving an LGPS pension – will it be affected?

If you are already receiving a pension from the Scheme, some or all of which you built up before 1 April 2014, and you are re-employed in local government or by an employer who offers membership of the LGPS you must tell the LGPS administering authority paying your pension about your new employment, regardless of whether you join the Scheme in your new position or not. They will let you know whether your pension in payment is affected in any way.

If you are receiving a pension from the Scheme, all of which you built up after 31 March 2014, and you are re-employed in local government or by an employer who offers membership of the LGPS, you do not need to inform the LGPS administering authority paying your pension as there is no effect on your pension in payment. The only exception to this is if you are in receipt of a LGPS ill-health pension of the type that is stopped if you are in any gainful employment. If this is the case **you must inform the employer who awarded you the pension** and they will let you know whether your pension in payment should be stopped.

Contribution flexibility

Flexibility to pay less

When you join the Scheme, you will be placed in the main section of the Scheme. However, once you are a member of the Scheme you will

be able to elect in writing, at any time, to move to the 50/50 section if you wish.

The 50/50 section gives you the ability to pay half your normal contributions in return for half your normal pension. This flexibility may be useful during times of financial hardship as it allows you to remain in the scheme, building up valuable pension benefits, as an alternative to opting out of the scheme.

A 50/50 option form is available from your employer or on our website at **www.norfolkpensionfund.org**. If you have more than one job in which you contribute to the Scheme, you would need to specify in which of the jobs you wish to move to the 50/50 section.

If you elect for 50/50 you would be moved from the next available pay period. You would then start paying half your normal contributions in return for half your normal pension during the time in the 50/50 section. When you make an election for the 50/50 section your employer must provide you with information on the effect this will have on your benefits in the Scheme.

If you were to die in service whilst in the 50/50 section of the Scheme the lump sum death grant and any survivor pensions would be worked out as if you were in the main section of the Scheme. If you are awarded an ill-health pension which includes an amount of enhanced pension, the amount of enhanced pension added to your **pension account** is worked out as if you were in the main section of the Scheme.

The 50/50 section is designed to be a short-term option for when times are tough financially. Because of this your employer must re-enrol you back into the main section of the scheme approximately three years from the date they first have to comply with the automatic enrolment provisions of the Pensions Act 2008 (and approximately every three years thereafter). If you wished to continue in the 50/50 section, you would need to make another election to remain in the 50/50 section.

There is no limit to the number of times you can elect to move between the main and the 50/50 section.

Flexibility to pay more

There are several ways you can provide extra benefits, on top of the benefits you are already looking forward to as a member of the LGPS.

You can improve your retirement benefits by paying:

- Additional Pension Contributions (APCs) to buy extra LGPS pension,
- **Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs)** arranged through the LGPS (in-house AVCs),
- Free Standing Additional Voluntary Contributions (FSAVCs) to a scheme of your choice,
- Contributions to a stakeholder or personal pension plan.

We can give you more information on the first two of these options. Our contact details are on the back cover of this guide. You may wish to take independent financial advice before deciding to pay extra.

Your pension

Your LGPS benefits are made up of:

- An annual pension revalued every year to protect against inflation, and
- the option to exchange part of your pension for a tax-free lump sum paid when you take your pension benefits.

How is my pension worked out?

Benefits built up from 1 April 2014

Every year, you will build up a pension at a rate of 1/49th of the amount of **pensionable pay** (and **assumed pensionable pay**) you

received in that **Scheme year** if you are in the main section of the Scheme (or half this rate of build up for any period you have elected to be in the 50/50 section of the Scheme).

The amount of pension built up during the **Scheme year** is then added to your **pension account** and revalued at the end of each **Scheme year** so your pension keeps up with the cost of living.

What pay is used to work out my pension from 31 March 2014?

The amount of pension added into your **pension account** at the end of the **Scheme year** is worked out using your **pensionable pay** which is the amount of pay on which you pay your normal pension contributions.

If, during the **Scheme year**, you had been:

- on leave on reduced contractual pay or no pay due to sickness or injury
- **relevant child related leave** or
- on **reserve forces service leave**

then, for this period, your pension is based on your **assumed pensionable pay**.

How is my pension worked out?

Let's look at the build-up in a member's **pension account** for six years in the Scheme.

Let's assume the member joins the Scheme on 1 April 2014, their pensionable pay is £24,500 in **Scheme year** 1 and their **pensionable pay** increases by 1% each year.

The cost of living (revaluation adjustment) for the end of the Scheme years ending 31 March 2015, 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017, 31 March 2018 and 31 March 2019 is 1.2%, -0.1%, 1%, 3% and 2.4% respectively. The cost of living (revaluation adjustment) for the following year is 2%.

Scheme Year	Opening Balance	Pension Build up in Scheme Year Pay / Build up rate	Total Account 31 March	Cost of Living Revaluation Adjustment	Updated Total Account
1 2014/15	£0.00	£24,500/49 = £500.00	£500.00	1.2% = £6.00	£500.00 + £6.00 = £506.00
2 2015/16	£506.00	£24,745/49 = £505.00	£1,011.00	0.1% = -£1.01	1,011.00 + -£1.01 = £1,009.99
3 2016/17	£1,009.99	£24,992.45/49 = £510.05	£1,520.04	1% = £15.20	£1,520.04 + £15.20 = £1,535.24
4 2017/18	1,535.24	£25,242.37/49 = £515.15	£2,050.39	3% = £61.51	2,050.39 + £61.51 = £2,111.90
5 2018/19	£2,111.90	£25,494.79/49 = £520.30	£2,632.20	2.4% = £63.17	£2,632.20 + £63.17 = £2,695.37
6 2019/20	£2,695.37	£25,749.74 / 49 = £525.50	£3,220.87	2.0% = £64.42	3,220.87 + £64.42 = £3,285.29

Benefits built up before 1 April 2014

On 1 April 2014, the LGPS changed from a final salary scheme to a career average scheme. If you joined the LGPS before 1 April 2014, you have built up benefits in the final salary scheme. These benefits are calculated differently, using your membership up to 31 March 2014 and your final year's pay.

For membership built up to 31 March 2008, you receive a pension of 1/80th of your **final pay** plus an automatic tax-free lump sum of three times your pension.

For membership built up from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2014, you receive a pension of 1/60th of your **final pay**. There is no automatic lump sum for membership built up after March 2008, but you do have the option to exchange some of your pension for a tax-free lump sum.

If you were paying into the LGPS on 31 March 2012 and were within 10 years of age 65 at 1 April 2012, you may qualify for an additional protection called **the underpin**. If you are covered by the underpin, you will get a pension at least equal to which you would have received in the Scheme if it had not changed on 1 April 2014.

The underpin can also apply if you were an active member of another public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 (and within 10 years of age 65 on 1 April 2012) if you subsequently join the LGPS and transfer your pension benefits from the other public service pension scheme into the LGPS.

If you are covered by the underpin a calculation will be performed when you stop contributing to the Scheme, or at your protected normal pension age if earlier. The purpose of the calculation is to check the pension you have built up is at least equal to the pension you would have received if the scheme had not changed on the 1 April 2014. If it isn't, the difference will be added into your pension account when your pension is paid to you.

The underpin calculation is slightly different if you have been in the 50/50 section of the Scheme at any time. The pension you would have built up in the main section of the scheme is compared with the pension you would have received if the scheme had not changed on the 1 April 2014.

More information on the underpin is available from the national website for LGPS members.

Can I exchange part of my pension for a lump sum?

You can exchange part of your annual pension for a one off tax-free cash payment. You will receive a £12 lump sum for each £1 of pension given up. You can take up to 25% of the capital value of your pension benefits as a lump sum providing the total lump sum does not exceed £268,275 (2021/22 figure). If you have previously taken payment of (crystallised) pension benefits, you can take 25% of your remaining lifetime allowance. Details of the maximum tax-free cash payment you can take will be given to you shortly before your retirement.

Taking AVCs as cash

If you pay **Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs)** via the LGPS you may be able to take your AVC fund as a tax-free lump sum.

This option will be available to you if:

- you take your AVC at the same time as your main LGPS benefits
- your AVC plus your LGPS lump sum is less than 25% of the overall value of your LGPS benefits (including your AVC fund) and
- the total lump sum doesn't exceed £268,275 (2021/22 figure) or if you have previously taken payment of (crystallised) pension benefits, 25% of your remaining lifetime allowance.

Details of these options will be given to you shortly before your retirement.

Retirement

When can I retire and draw my LGPS pension?

You can choose to retire and draw your pension from the LGPS at any time from age 55 to 75, provided you have met the 2 years **vesting period** in the scheme.

The **Normal Pension Age** in the LGPS is linked to your **State Pension Age** (but with a minimum of age 65). If the **State Pension Age** changes in the future then this change will also apply to your **Normal Pension Age** for benefits built up after 31 March 2014.

If you voluntarily choose to retire before, on or after your **Normal Pension Age** you can defer taking your benefits, but you must take them before age 75. If you take your pension after your **Normal Pension Age**, your benefits will be paid at an increased rate to reflect late payment.

If you built up membership in the LGPS before 1 April 2014 then you will have membership in the final salary scheme. These benefits have a different **Normal Pension Age**, which for most is age 65.

Will my pension be reduced if I voluntarily retire before my Normal Pension Age?

If you choose to retire before your **Normal Pension Age** your benefits will normally be reduced to take account of being paid for longer. Your benefits are initially calculated as detailed in the section called **How is my pension worked out?** and are then reduced. How much your benefits are reduced by depends on how early you draw them.

If you were a member of the LGPS at any time between 1 April 1998 and 30 September 2006, some or all your benefits paid early could be protected from the reduction if you have rule of 85 protection.

What if I lose my job through redundancy or business efficiency?

If you are aged 55 or over you will be entitled to the immediate unreduced payment of your LGPS benefits, provided you have met the two years **vesting period** in the Scheme. However, any additional pension paid for by Additional Pension Contributions (APCs) or by Shared Cost Additional Pension Contributions (SCAPCs) would be paid at a reduced rate if the retirement occurred before your **Normal Pension Age**. If you have bought additional pension by Additional Regular Contributions (ARCs), this would be paid at a reduced rate if the retirement occurs before your pre 1 April 2014 **Normal Pension Age** which, for most, is age 65.

What happens if I have to retire early due to ill health?

If you have to leave work due to illness you may be able to receive immediate payment of your benefits.

To qualify for ill health benefits:

- you must have met the two years **vesting period** in the Scheme
- your employer, based on an opinion from an independent registered medical practitioner appointed by them, must be satisfied you will be permanently unable to do your own job until your **Normal Pension Age** and you are not immediately capable of undertaking gainful employment.

Ill health benefits can be paid at any age and are not reduced for early payment. In fact, your benefits could be increased to make up for your early retirement if you are unlikely to be capable of gainful employment within three years of leaving.

Can I have a gradual move into retirement?

This is known as flexible retirement. If your employer agrees, from age 55:

- if you reduce your hours or
- move to a less senior position and

- provided you have met the two years **vesting period** in the Scheme you can take some or all of the pension benefits you have built up – helping you ease into retirement.

If you take flexible retirement before your **Normal Pension Age** your benefits may be reduced because of early payment, unless your employer agrees to waive all or part of the reduction. If your employer agrees to flexible retirement, you can still receive your pay from your job on the reduced hours or grade and continue paying into the LGPS, building up further benefits in the Scheme. Flexible retirement is at the discretion of your employer and they must set out their policy in a published statement.

What if I carry on working after my Normal Pension Age?

If you carry on working after your **Normal Pension Age** you will continue to pay into the LGPS, building up further benefits. When you eventually retire you will receive your pension unless you choose to delay taking it. Your pension must be paid to you by age 75. Your pension will be paid at an increased rate to reflect the fact it will be paid for a shorter time.

How does my pension keep its value?

Your pension is reviewed each year to protect against rises in the cost of living. Any increase is paid from the first Monday of each new tax year. If the cost of living is published as nil or negative then your pension will stay the same.

Pensions Increase is paid to all pensioners aged 55 or more, or at any age if you retired on ill health grounds or become permanently unfit for regular work after retiring. Pensions Increase will begin on the day after you leave pensionable employment. So if you left on 30 June, your increase next April would be calculated from 1 July onwards; and so it would be 9/12 (i.e. three quarters) of the full year's increase. Every April after that, you'd get the full year's increase.

Protection for your family

What benefits will be paid if I die?

Lump Sum Death Grant

If you die in service as a member of the LGPS a lump sum death grant of three times your **assumed pensionable pay** is payable:

If you leave with deferred benefits and you die before they come into payment, a lump sum death grant equal to five years' pension will be paid.

If you die after retiring on pension, a lump sum death grant will be paid if less than 10 years pension has been paid and you are under age 75. The amount payable would be 10 times the level of your annual pension prior to giving up any pension for a tax-free cash lump sum, reduced by any pension already paid to you and the amount of any tax-free cash lump sum you chose when you took your pension at retirement. There is a slight modification to this calculation for any part of the pension you are taking which relates to membership prior to 1 April 2014.

If you are an active member of the scheme, and have either a separate deferred benefit or are receiving a pension when you die, this may impact on the death grant payable.

If you are in the 50/50 section of the scheme when you die this does not affect the value of any lump sum death grant or pension for your **spouse, civil partner, eligible cohabiting partner or eligible children**.

Who is the lump sum death grant paid to?

The LGPS allows you to indicate who you would like any death grant to be paid to by completing and returning an expression of wish form. This form is available on our website at **www.norfolkpensionfund.org**.

The Norfolk Pension Fund, as the scheme's administering authority, however, retains absolute discretion when deciding on who to pay any death grant to. If you want more information, our contact details are on the back cover of this guide.

What will be paid to my spouse, civil partner or eligible cohabiting partner?

For each year of membership from 1 April 2014 to your date of death or leaving date for deferreds the pension payable to a spouse, civil partner or eligible cohabiting partner is the total of:

- 1/160th of your pensionable pay (or assumed pensionable pay)
- 49/160ths of the amount of any pension credited to your pension account following a transfer of pension rights into the Scheme, and
- 1/160th of your assumed pensionable pay for each year of membership you would have built up from your date of death to your Normal Pension Age.

For final salary membership built up **before** 1 April 2014 the pension payable to a spouse or **civil partner** is equal to 1/160th of your **final pay** times the period of your membership in the scheme up to 31 March 2014, unless you marry or enter into a **civil partnership** after retiring in which case it could be less.

For an **eligible cohabiting partner** the calculation is the same but the pension is only based on the period of membership after 5 April 1988 (plus any of your membership before 6 April 1988 for which you've paid additional contributions so it counts towards an **eligible cohabiting partner's pension**).

Will my cohabiting partner be paid a survivor's pension?

If you have a cohabiting partner, of either opposite or same sex, they will be entitled to receive a survivor's pension on your death if they meet certain criteria.

For an **eligible cohabiting partner's** pension to be payable, all the following conditions must have applied for a continuous period of at least two years on the date of your death:

- you and your cohabiting partner are, and have been, free to marry each other or enter into a **civil partnership** with each other, and
- you and your cohabiting partner have been living together as if you were a married couple, or **civil partners**, and
- neither you or your cohabiting partner have been living with someone else as if you/they were a married couple or **civil partners**, and
- either your cohabiting partner is, and has been, financially dependent on you or you are, and have been, financially interdependent on each other.

A survivor's pension would be paid to your cohabiting partner if:

- all the above criteria apply at the date of your death, and
- your cohabiting partner satisfies the Norfolk Pension Fund the above conditions had been met for a continuous period of at least two years immediately prior to your death.

Leavers without an immediate entitlement to benefits

If you leave your job before retirement and have met the two years vesting period you will have built up an entitlement to a pension. You will have two options:

- you can choose to keep your benefits in the LGPS. These are known as deferred benefits and will be revalued every year to protect against inflation, or

- you may be able to transfer your deferred benefits to another pension arrangement.

If you leave your job before retirement and have not met the two years vesting period, you will have three options:

- you will normally be able to claim a refund of your contributions, or
- you may be able to transfer your benefits to a new pension arrangement, or
- you can delay your decision until you either re-join the LGPS, transfer your benefits to a new pension arrangement, or want to take a refund of contributions.

Refunds of Contributions

If you leave with less than two years' Scheme membership, or opt out of the Scheme with more than three months but less than two years' membership, you will normally be able to take a refund of your contributions. There will be a deduction for tax and the cost, if any, of buying you back into the State Second Pension scheme (S2P) in relation to any membership before 6 April 2016. A refund of contributions must be paid within five years of the date you left the Scheme (or age 75 if earlier).

Deferred benefits

If you leave before your **Normal Pension Age** and you meet the two years **vesting period**, you will be entitled to deferred benefits within the LGPS. Your deferred LGPS benefits will be calculated as described in the **How is my pension worked out** section. During the period your pension benefits are deferred they will be revalued every year to protect against inflation.

Your deferred benefits will normally be paid unreduced at your **Normal Pension Age** unless one of the following happens:

- you transfer your deferred benefits to another pension scheme or arrangement.
- your benefits are paid early on health grounds if you are permanently incapable of doing the job you were working in when you left the LGPS and you are unlikely to be capable of undertaking any gainful employment within three years of the date you applied for your LGPS pension to be paid because of ill-health or by your Normal Pension Age, whichever is the earlier.
- you elect to receive your deferred benefits early from age 55 onwards, or
- you elect not to receive your deferred benefits at your Normal Pension Age and defer receiving your pension until later (although they must be paid by age 75).

Benefits paid earlier than your **Normal Pension Age**, other than on the grounds of permanent ill health, may be reduced to take account of their early payment and the fact your pension will be paid for longer. Benefits paid after your **Normal Pension Age** will be increased.

If you leave with deferred benefits and die before they come into payment a spouse's, civil partner's or, subject to certain qualifying conditions, an eligible cohabiting partner's pension and pensions for eligible children are payable.

What if I have two or more LGPS jobs?

If you have two or more jobs in which you pay into the LGPS at the same time and you leave one (or more) but not all of them, and you are entitled to deferred benefits from the job (or jobs) you have left, your deferred benefits from the ceased job are automatically transferred to the active **pension account** for the job you are continuing in, unless you elect to keep them separate. If you wish to keep your deferred benefits separate you must elect to do so within 12 months of re-joining the LGPS, unless your employer allows you

longer. If you are not entitled to deferred benefits from the job (or jobs) you have left, you cannot have a refund of your contributions and you must transfer your benefits to the **pension account** for the job you are continuing in.

Transferring your benefits

If you leave the Scheme and you are entitled to deferred benefits or a refund you can generally transfer the cash equivalent of your pension benefits into another pension arrangement or a new employer's pension scheme. This may even be to an overseas pension scheme or arrangement meeting HM Revenue and Customs conditions.

You cannot transfer your benefits if:

- you leave with less than three months' membership
- you leave less than one year before your **Normal Pension Age**.
- you elect to transfer less than 12 months before your **Normal Pension Age**.

These restrictions do not apply if you are transferring **Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs)**.

Your new pension provider will require a transfer value quotation which the Norfolk Pension Fund will guarantee for a period of three months from the date of calculation.

If you return to employment and re-join the LGPS after having previously built up LGPS pension then these deferred benefits will normally automatically be transferred to the active **pension account** for your new job, unless you elect to keep them separate. If you wish to keep your deferred benefits separate you must normally elect to do so within 12 months of re-joining the LGPS, unless your employer allows you longer.

If you re-join the LGPS after having previously left an LGPS employment without building up pension rights but you deferred taking a refund of contributions (normally if you had less than two

years membership) then this deferred refund **must** be joined with your new active **pension account**.

Transferring your benefits to a defined contribution scheme

Flexible benefits were introduced by the Government from 6 April 2015 to allow members of defined contribution schemes, who are over age 55, more freedom on how they take money from their pension pot.

The LGPS is not a defined contribution pension scheme, it is a defined benefit scheme. It is not directly affected by these changes. However, if you stop paying into the LGPS and you have three or more months' membership, then unless you are retiring with immediate effect due to redundancy, business efficiency or ill health, you will have the right to transfer your LGPS pension to a defined contribution scheme providing flexible benefits. The transfer must be completed more than 12 months before you reach your **Normal Pension Age** in the LGPS.

Please note you will be required by law to take independent financial advice if the value of your pension benefits in the LGPS (excluding AVCs) is more than £30,000. You are not required to take independent financial advice if the value of your benefits is less than £30,000. However, transferring your pension rights is not always an easy decision to make and seeking the help of an independent financial adviser before you make a final and irreversible decision to transfer could help you in making an appropriate decision.

There are four main options for members, aged over 55, who are in a defined contribution scheme which provides flexible benefits, including:

- purchasing an annuity
- flexi-access drawdown
- taking a number of cash sums at different stages
- taking the whole pot as cash in one go

Keep in touch – remember to let us know if you move house, our contact details are on the back cover of this guide.

Help with pension problems

Who can help me if I have a query or complaint?

If you are in any doubt about your benefit entitlements, or have a problem or question about your LGPS membership or benefits, please contact us. Our contact details are on the back cover of this guide. We will seek to clarify or put right any misunderstandings or inaccuracies as quickly and efficiently as possible. If your query is about your contribution rate, please contact your employer's personnel/HR or payroll section so they can explain how they have decided which contribution band you are in.

If you are still dissatisfied with any decision made in relation to the scheme you have the right to have your complaint reviewed under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure. There are also a number of other regulatory bodies able to assist you.

The various procedures and bodies are:

- **Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure**

In the first instance, you should write to the adjudicator appointed by the body who made the decision about which you wish to appeal. You must do this within six months of the date of the notification of the decision or the act or omission about which you are complaining (or such longer period as the adjudicator considers reasonable). This is a formal review of the initial decision or act or omission and is an opportunity for the matter to be reconsidered. If you are dissatisfied with the decision or their failure to make a decision you may apply to the Scheme's administering authority to have it reconsidered.

Our guide and application form explaining the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure including relevant time limits is available from our website at www.norfolkpensionfund.org.

- **The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS)**

TPAS provides independent and impartial information about pensions, free of charge, to members of the public. TPAS is available to assist members and beneficiaries of the Scheme with any pension query they have or any general requests for information or guidance concerning their pension benefits.

TPAS can be contacted:

In writing: Money and Pensions Service
 120 Holborn
 London
 EC1N 2TD

By telephone: **0800 011 3797**

Website: **www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk**
(where you can submit an online enquiry form).

- **The Pensions Ombudsman Service**

The Pensions Ombudsman deals only with pension complaints. It can help if you have a complaint or dispute about the administration and / or management of personal and occupational pension schemes.

You have the right to refer your complaint to The Pensions Ombudsman free of charge. Its determinations are legally binding on all parties and are enforceable in court.

Contact with The Pensions Ombudsman about a complaint needs to be made within three years of when the event(s) you are complaining about happened – or, if later within three years of when you first knew about it (or ought to have known about it). There is a discretion for those time limits to be extended.

The Pensions Ombudsman can be contacted:

In writing: 10 South Colonnade
 Canary Wharf
 E14 4PU

By telephone: **0800 917 4487**

Website: **www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk**
(where you can submit an online complaint form)

- **The Pensions Regulator**

This is the regulator of work based pension schemes. The Pensions Regulator has powers to protect members of work based pension schemes and a wide range of powers to help put matters right, where needed. In extreme cases, the regulator is able to fine trustees or employers, and remove trustees from a scheme. You can contact the Pensions Regulator at:

By telephone: **0345 600 7060**

Website: **www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk**

How can I trace my pension rights?

The Pension Tracing Service holds details of pension schemes, including the LGPS, together with relevant contact addresses. It provides a tracing service for ex-members of schemes with pension entitlements (and their dependants) who have lost touch with previous schemes. All occupational and personal pension schemes have to register if the pension scheme has current members contributing to the scheme or people expecting benefits from the scheme. If you need to use this tracing service please write to:

The Pension Tracing Service

The Pension Service 9

Mail Handling Site A

Wolverhampton

WV98 1LU

Telephone **0800 731 0193**

Website **<https://www.gov.uk/find-pension-contact-details>**

Don't forget to keep your pension providers up to date with any change in your home address.

Some terms we use

Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs)

These are extra payments to increase your future benefits. You can also pay AVCs to provide additional life cover.

All local government pension funds have an AVC arrangement in which you can invest money through an AVC provider, often an insurance company or building society. AVCs are deducted directly from your pay and attract tax relief.

Admission Body

An admission body is an employer that chooses to participate in the scheme under an admission agreement. These tend to be employers such as charities and contractors.

Assumed Pensionable Pay

This provides a notional **pensionable pay** figure to ensure your pension is not affected by any reduction in **pensionable pay** due to a period of sickness or injury on reduced contractual pay or no pay, or **relevant child related leave** or **reserve forces service leave**.

If you have a period of reduced contractual pay or no pay due to sickness or injury or you have a period of **relevant child related leave** or **reserve forces service leave**, then your employer needs to provide the Norfolk Pension Fund with the **assumed pensionable pay**. This is the pay you would have received during that time, unless during the period of **relevant child related leave** the **pensionable pay** received was higher than the value of the **assumed pensionable pay**. This requires a calculation to be carried out by your employer to determine what your pay would have been for the period when you were on reduced contractual pay or no pay due to sickness or the period of **relevant child related leave** or **reserve forces service leave**.

Assumed pensionable pay is calculated as the average of the **pensionable pay** you received for the 12 weeks (or three months if

monthly paid) before the pay period in which you went on to reduced pay or no pay because of sickness or injury or you started a period of **relevant child related leave** or **reserve forces service leave**. In calculating the average, any pay reduction due to authorised leave of absence or a trade dispute is ignored. If the pay you received in the 12 weeks (or three months if monthly paid) before the pay period in which you went on to reduced pay or no pay is materially lower than the pay you would normally receive, your employer has a discretion to use a higher pay in the calculation. Your employer must have regard to the **pensionable pay** you earned over the previous 12 months when determining what your normal level of **pensionable pay** is.

Once the average pay has been determined, the resulting figure is then grossed up to an annual figure and divided by the period you were on reduced pay or no pay for sickness or injury or on **relevant child related leave** or **reserve forces service leave**.

Assumed pensionable pay is also used to work out:

- any enhancement to your pension awarded as a result of ill health retirement
- any lump sum death grant following death in service, and
- any enhancement which is included in survivor benefits following death in service.

The **assumed pensionable pay** for these purposes is calculated as the average of the **pensionable pay** you received for the 12 weeks (or three months if monthly paid) before you died in service or before you left employment due to ill-health retirement. In calculating the average, any reduction due to authorised leave of absence or a trade dispute is ignored.

If the pay you received in the 12 weeks (or three months if monthly paid) before you died in service or before you left employment due to ill-health retirement is lower than the pay you would normally receive, your employer has a discretion to use a higher pay in the calculation.

Your employer must have regard to the pensionable pay you earned over the previous 12 months when determining what your normal level of pensionable pay is. If an independent registered medical practitioner certifies that, during the period used to determine **assumed pensionable pay**, you were working reduced contractual hours because of the ill-health which led to your retirement or death in service, the **assumed pensionable pay** will be calculated on the pay you would have received during that period had you not been working reduced contractual hours. The resulting figure is then grossed up to an annual figure.

Automatic enrolment date

This is the earlier of:

- the day you reach age 22 provided you are earning more than £10,000 (2021/22 figure) a year in the job, or
- the beginning of the pay period in which you first earn more than £10,000 (2021/22 figure) in the job, on an annualised basis, provided you are aged 22 or more and under **State Pension Age** at that time.

Civil Partnership (Civil Partner)

A **Civil Partnership** is a relationship between two people of the same sex or opposite sex (**civil partners**) which is formed when they register as civil partners of each other.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** is the official measure of inflation of consumer prices in the United Kingdom. This is currently the measure used to adjust your **pension account** at the end of every **Scheme year** when you are an active member of the Scheme and each April, after you have left the scheme, it is used to adjust the value of your deferred pension or pension in payment. The adjustment ensures your pension keeps up with the cost of living.

Eligible children

Eligible children are your children. They must, at the date of your death:

- be your natural child (who must be born within 12 months of your death), or
- be your adopted child, or
- be your step-child or a child accepted by you as being a member of your family (this doesn't include a child you sponsor for charity) and be dependent on you.

Eligible children must meet the following conditions:

- be under age 18, or
- be aged between 18 and 23 and in full-time education or vocational training (the Norfolk Pensions Fund can continue to treat the child as an eligible child notwithstanding a break in full-time education or vocational training), or
- be unable to engage in gainful employment because of physical or mental impairment and either:
 - has not reached the age of 23, or
 - the impairment is, in the opinion of an independent registered medical practitioner, likely to be permanent and the child was dependent on you at the date of your death because of mental or physical impairment.

Eligible cohabiting partner

An **eligible cohabiting partner** is a partner you are living with who, at the date of your death, has met all the following conditions for a continuous period of at least two years:

- you and your cohabiting partner are, and have been, free to marry each other or enter into a **civil partnership** with each other, and

- you and your cohabiting partner have been living together as if you were a married couple, or **civil partners**, and
- neither you or your cohabiting partner have been living with someone else as if you/they were a married couple or **civil partners**, and
- either your cohabiting partner is, and has been, financially dependent on you or you are, and have been, financially interdependent on each other.

Your partner is financially dependent on you if you have the highest income. Financially interdependent means you rely on your joint finances to support your standard of living. It doesn't mean you need to be contributing equally. For example, if your partner's income is a lot more than yours, he or she may pay the mortgage and most of the bills, and you may pay for the weekly shopping.

On your death, a survivor's pension would be paid to your cohabiting partner if:

- all the above criteria apply at the date of your death, and
- your cohabiting partner satisfies your pension fund the above conditions had been met for a continuous period of at least two years immediately prior to your death.

You are not required to complete a form to nominate your cohabiting partner. However, you can provide your pension fund with your cohabiting partner's details. Your pension fund will require evidence upon your death to check the conditions for a cohabiting partner's pension are met.

Eligible Jobholder

An **eligible jobholder** is a worker who is aged a least 22 and under **State Pension Age** and who earns more than the annual amount of £10,000 (2021/22 figure).

Final pay

This is usually the pay in respect of (i.e. due for) your final year of scheme membership on which you paid contributions, or one of the previous two years if this is higher, and includes your normal pay, contractual shift allowance, bonus, contractual overtime (but not non-contractual overtime), Maternity Pay, Paternity Pay, Adoption Pay, Shared Parental Pay and any other taxable benefit specified in your contract as being pensionable.

Normal Pension Age

Normal Pension Age is linked to your **State Pension Age** for benefits built up from April 2014 (but with a minimum of age 65) and is the age at which you can take the pension you have built up in full. If you choose to take your pension before your **Normal Pension Age** it will normally be reduced, as it's being paid earlier. If you take it later than your **Normal Pension Age** it's increased because it's being paid later.

You can use the Government's **State Pension Age** calculator (www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension) to find out your **State Pension Age**.

Remember your **State Pension Age** may change in the future. If it does, this would also change your **Normal Pension Age** in the LGPS for benefits built up from 1 April 2014. Once your LGPS pension is being paid to you, any subsequent change to your **State Pension Age** will not affect your **Normal Pension Age** in the LGPS.

If you were paying into the LGPS before 1 April 2014 your final salary benefits retain their protected **Normal Pension Age** - which for most is age 65.

However, all pension benefits paid on normal retirement must be taken at the same date, ie you cannot choose to have your final salary pension (built up before April 2014) paid at age 65 and your pension in your **pension account** (built up from April 2014) at your **Normal Pension Age** (which for benefits built up from 1 April 2014 is linked to your **State Pension Age** but with a minimum of age 65).

Pension Account

Each **Scheme year** the amount of pension you have built up during the year is worked out and this amount is added into your active **pension account**. Adjustments may be made to your account during the **Scheme year** to take account of:

- any transfer of pension rights into the account during the year
- any additional pension you purchased during the year
- any additional pension which is granted to you by your employer
- any reduction due to a Pension Sharing Order or qualifying agreement in Scotland (following a divorce or dissolution of a **civil partnership**) and
- any reduction due to an Annual Allowance tax charge you have asked the Scheme to pay on your behalf.

Your account is revalued at the end of each **Scheme year** to take account of the cost of living. This adjustment is carried out in line with the Treasury Revaluation Order index which is the rate of the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**.

You will have a separate pension account for each employment. That **pension account** will hold the entire pension built up for that employment.

In addition to an active member's **pension account** there are also:

- a deferred member's **pension account**
- a deferred refund account
- a retirement **pension account**
- a flexible retirement **pension account**
- a deferred pensioner member's account
- a pension credit account and
- a survivor member's account.

With the exception of a deferred refund account, these accounts will be adjusted by any debits for any Pension Sharing Order or qualifying agreement in Scotland (following a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership) and for any Annual Allowance tax charge you have asked the Scheme to pay on your behalf. These accounts are currently revalued each April in line with the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**.

Pensionable Pay

The pay on which you normally pay contributions is your normal salary or wages plus any shift allowance, bonuses, overtime (both contractual and non-contractual), Maternity Pay, Paternity Pay, Adoption Pay, Shared Parental Pay and any other taxable benefit specified in your contract as being pensionable.

You do not pay contributions on:

- any travelling or subsistence allowances
- pay in lieu of notice
- pay in lieu of loss of holidays
- any payment as an inducement not to leave before the payment is made
- any award of compensation (other than payment representing arrears of pay) made for the purpose of achieving equal pay
- pay relating to loss of future pensionable payments or benefits,
- any pay paid by your employer if you go on reserve forces service leave nor
- the monetary value of a car or pay received in lieu of a car (apart from some historical cases).

Relevant Child Related Leave

Relevant child related leave includes periods of:

- Ordinary Maternity or, Adoption Leave (normally first 26 weeks)
- Paid Additional Maternity or Adoption Leave (normally after week 26 and up to week 39)

- Paternity Leave
- Paid Shared Parental Leave
- Paid Parental Bereavement Leave

Reserve Forces Service Leave

This occurs when a Reservist is mobilised and called on to take part in military operations. The period of mobilisation can be up to a maximum of 12 months. During a period of **reserve forces service leave** you will, if you elect to stay in the LGPS during that leave, continue to build up a pension based on the rate of **assumed pensionable pay** you would have received had you not been on **reserve forces service leave**.

Scheme Year

The scheme year runs from 1 April to 31 March each year.

State Pension Age

This is the earliest age you can receive the basic state pension. **State Pension Age** for women was increased between 2010 and December 2018 to be equalised with the **State Pension Age** of 65 that applied to men up to December 2018.

State Pension Age equalisation timetable for women

Date of Birth	New State Pension Age
Before 6 April 1950	60
6 April 1950 - 5 April 1951	In the range 60 - 61
6 April 1951 - 5 April 1952	In the range 61 - 62
6 April 1952 - 5 April 1953	In the range 62 - 63
6 April 1953 - 5 August 1953	In the range 63 - 64
6 August 1953 - 5 December 1953	In the range 64 - 65

The **State Pension Age** will then increase to 66 for both men and women from December 2018 to October 2020.

State Pension Age from 65 to 66

Date of Birth	New State Pension Age
6 December 1953 - 5 October 1954	In the range 65 - 66
After 5 October 1954	66

Under current legislation the State Pension Age is due to rise to 67 between 2026 and 2028 and to 68 between 2044 and 2046. However the government has **announced plans** to bring forward the rise to 68 to between 2037 and 2039.

Vesting Period

The **vesting period** in the LGPS is two years. You will meet the two years **vesting period** if:

- you have been a member of the LGPS in England and Wales for two years, or
- you have brought a transfer of pension rights into the LGPS in England or Wales from a different occupational pension scheme or from a European pensions institution and the length of service you had in that scheme or institution was two or more years or, when added to the period of time you have been a member of the LGPS is, in aggregate, two or more years, or
- you have brought a transfer of pension rights into the LGPS in England or Wales from a pension scheme or arrangement where you were not allowed to receive a refund of contributions, or
- you have previously transferred pension rights out of the LGPS in England or Wales to a pension scheme abroad (i.e. to a qualifying recognised overseas pension scheme), or
- you already hold a deferred benefit or are receiving a pension from the LGPS in England or Wales (other than a survivor's pension or pension credit member's pension), or
- you have paid National Insurance contributions whilst a member of the LGPS and cease to contribute to the LGPS in the tax year of attaining pension age,
- you cease to contribute to the LGPS at age 75, or
- you die in service.

Further information and disclaimer

This guide is for employees in England or Wales and reflects the provisions of the LGPS and overriding legislation as at April 2021.

The national web site for members of the LGPS is
www.lgpsmember.org

This Guide cannot cover every personal circumstance. It does not cover all ill health retirement benefits nor rights that applied to those whose rights are subject to a pension sharing order following divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership. Nor does it cover rights that apply to a limited number of employees, for example, those whose total pension benefits exceed the lifetime allowance (£1,073,100 million in 2021/22), those whose pension benefits increase in any tax year by more than the standard annual allowance (£40,000 in 2021/22) or for higher earners, the tapered annual allowance or those whom protected rights apply.

You can find out basic information about lifetime allowance and the annual allowance in the LGPS member videos 'Pensions made simple' available at **www.lgpsmember.org**.

In the event of any dispute over your pension benefits the appropriate legislation will prevail. This short guide does not confer any contractual or statutory rights and is provided for information purposes only.

Data protection information

Norfolk County Council (as administrator of the Norfolk Pension Fund) on behalf of Norfolk Pension Fund is a Data Controller under the General Data Protection Regulations.

This means we store, hold and manage your personal data in line with statutory requirements to enable us to provide you with pension administration services.

To enable us to carry out our statutory duty, we are required to share your information with certain bodies, but will only do so in limited circumstances.

For more information about how we hold your data, who we share it with and what rights you have to request information from the Fund, please visit **www.norfolkpensionfund.org**

Can we help you?



www.norfolkpensionfund.org



pensions@norfolk.gov.uk



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