



State Pension

- What is State Pension?
- Do I qualify?
- How do I claim?

The easy way to claim your State Pension is by phone

So call us on **0800 731 7898**.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact us using a textphone on **0800 731 7339**.

About this information booklet

Please read this information booklet carefully. It tells you what choices you have with your State Pension, when you reach State Pension age.

- We will not pay you State Pension automatically. If you decide you want your State Pension, you need to claim it.
- Make sure you don't miss out on your State Pension.
- The easy way to claim is by phone. When you call we can normally tell you how much State Pension you will get and you will not have to fill in any forms.
- You can also
 - apply for Pension Credit
 - claim Housing Benefit
 - claim Council Tax Benefitat the same time you claim your State Pension.
- If you don't want to claim State Pension straight away, we can tell you about the choices and benefits of putting off your claim to State Pension.

The easy way to claim your State Pension is by phone. So call us on **0800 731 7898**.

If English is not your first language, you can ask for an interpreter.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact us using a textphone on **0800 7341 7339**.

- Our opening hours are 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays. We are closed on public holidays.
- Our phone lines tend to be quieter during the afternoon and towards the end of the week.

This information booklet gives general guidance only and should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law.

This is what our customers say.

"It was easy, it only took one call"

"An excellent service, I have recommended it to my friends"

"I got my form and started to fill it in, and then phoned, it was easier"

Your State Pension

Your State Pension is based on the National Insurance contributions you paid, you were treated as having paid or were credited to you during your working life. It can be made up of different parts, for example, basic State Pension and additional State Pension.

We can tell you how much State Pension you will get. Call us on **0800 731 7898**.

If the amount of your basic State Pension is less than the full rate, you may be able to increase your basic State Pension by paying voluntary National Insurance contributions for past years.

New rules for paying additional voluntary contributions from 6 April 2009

Customers who reach State Pension age between 6 April 2008 and 5 April 2015 and who already have 20 qualifying years (inclusive of full years of Home Responsibilities Protection), may be able to purchase up to an additional six tax years of Voluntary National Insurance Contributions, for tax years from 6 April 1975.

Customers who reach State Pension age between 6 April 2008 and 5 April 2010 must have at least one paid, or treated as paid, year in the 20 years.

Your State Pension continued

Payment for the additional years must be made within six years from the date on which you reach State Pension age. These can be paid over and above those permitted under the current usual time limits, in order to enhance your State Pension.

Additional Voluntary National Insurance Contributions cannot be paid for any tax year, the whole of which is covered by a married woman's or widow's reduced rate election.

If you do not already have the necessary 20 qualifying years, you may be able to become eligible by paying some Voluntary National Insurance Contributions under current rules to achieve the 20 years.

If you want to know if you can increase your State Pension in this way, please contact us. Contact us even if you do not want to claim your State Pension yet.

To find out about the full rates of basic State Pension

- call **0800 731 7898**
- visit **www.direct.gov.uk**
- read our leaflet about social security benefit rates. You can get this leaflet from Jobcentre Plus.

You may be able to improve your State Pension

○ **If you are married or you are a civil partner**

Sometimes you won't get State Pension based on your own National Insurance contributions, or your basic State Pension will be less than the full rate. But you may be able to get State Pension based on your husband, wife or civil partner's National Insurance contributions when you reach State Pension age if

- you are a married woman, and
 - your husband has reached State Pension age, and
 - your husband has claimed his State Pension.
 From 6 April 2010 providing you have both reached State Pension age, you may be able to get State Pension even if your husband puts off claiming his State Pension
- you are a married man, and
 - your wife was born on or after 6 April 1950, and
 - your wife has reached State Pension age.
- you are a civil partner, and
 - your civil partner was born on or after 6 April 1950 and
 - your civil partner has reached State Pension age.
 The earliest a male civil partner will be entitled to a Category B pension is 6 April 2015 because that is the date that a man born on 6 April 1950 reaches pensionable age.

○ **If you are divorced**

You may be able to get an increase of basic State Pension based on your ex-husband or ex-wife's National Insurance contributions.

○ **If your civil partnership has been dissolved**

You may be able to get an increase of basic State Pension based on your ex-civil partner's National Insurance contributions.

○ **If you have been widowed**

You may be able to get an increase of State Pension based on your late husband or wife's National Insurance contributions. You will not get an increase if

- you were under State Pension age when he or she died,
and
- you remarry, or form a civil partnership, before you reach State Pension age.

You may be able to improve your State Pension continued

○ **If you have been widowed** continued

If you were widowed on or after 9 April 2001, and get a bereavement benefit like Bereavement Allowance or Widowed Parent's Allowance, you will stop getting that benefit when you reach State Pension age. You will then normally be entitled to State Pension instead.

If you were widowed before 9 April 2001 and get a widow's benefit like Widow's Pension or Widowed Mother's Allowance you can

- claim State Pension from State Pension age, or
- keep getting your Widow's Pension until you reach age 65, or
- keep getting your Widowed Mother's Allowance for as long as you are entitled to it, or
- give up your Widow's Benefit to earn extra State Pension.

Before you decide, you can ask for a pension forecast. It will tell you if you will get more money by claiming State Pension instead of your Widow's Benefit.

○ **If you are a surviving civil partner**

You may be able to get an increase of State Pension based on your late civil partner's National Insurance contributions. You will not get an increase if

- you were under State Pension age when he or she died, and
- you form another civil partnership or marry before you reach State Pension age.

If you are entitled to Widowed Parent's Allowance or Bereavement Allowance because of the death of your civil partner, you will stop getting those benefits when you reach State Pension age. You will then normally be entitled to State Pension instead.

○ If you would like a forecast of your entitlement

A forecast will tell you how much you are likely to get when you make your claim. It will include any extra State Pension you may get based on the National Insurance contributions of your

- late husband, wife or civil partner, or
- ex-husband, wife or civil partner.

If you want to apply for a forecast, call the Future Pension Centre straight away on **0845 3000 168**. Lines are open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 1pm on Saturday. We are closed on public holidays.

You will be charged at a local rate if you call from a BT landline. Charges for calls from mobile phones and cable networks may be different.

If English is not your first language, you can use your own interpreter or we can provide one.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact us using a textphone on **0845 300 0169**. Or, you can use the BT text-direct service by dialling **18001** followed by the textphone number.

Contact the Future Pension Centre as soon as you can. It may take some time to work out your forecast, as we need to get details of the National Insurance contributions of your

- late husband, wife or civil partner, or
- ex-husband, wife or civil partner.

When you call, it will help if you can tell us

- your late husband, wife or civil partner's National Insurance number, **and**
- the date that your husband, wife or civil partner died, **or**
- your ex-husband, wife or civil partner's National Insurance number, **and**
- the date of divorce or the date your civil partnership was dissolved.

All the information you give us is confidential. To make sure our service to you is of a high standard, we may record calls for quality and training purposes.

● Tracing a lost pension

If you think you are entitled to a pension from an occupational pension scheme but you are no longer in contact with the employer, the Pension Tracing Service may be able to help. By 'occupational pension' we mean a pension you get from an employer.

For example, you may have lost touch with an employer because you changed your job. Or the company you worked for may have changed its name. Whatever the reason, the Pension Tracing Service may have the information you need.

Tracing a lost pension will help you to make sure that you get all the pension benefits that you are entitled to.

To contact the Pension Tracing Service

- call **0845 600 2537**, or

- write to

Pension Tracing Service

The Pension Service

Tyneview Park

Whitley Road

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE98 1BA.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact us using a textphone on **0800 731 7339**. Or you can use the BT text-direct service by dialling **18001** followed by the textphone number.

To find out more about the Pension Tracing Service, or to ask us to trace a lost pension for you visit www.direct.gov.uk/pensions

Working past State Pension age

If you work past State Pension age, you can increase your income when you retire. This is because you will have more time to earn and save for your future.

If you decide to

- work fewer hours
- job share
- do a less demanding role, or
- do seasonal work

check how it will affect any occupational pension schemes you are paying into.

If you work past State Pension age, you can claim State Pension while you keep working. The money you earn and the hours you work will not affect your State Pension, but you may pay tax on your State Pension as well as the money you earn.

You can also put off your claim to State Pension to earn extra State Pension or a lump sum.

You may be able to keep working with the same employer while they are paying you an occupational pension.

Paying National Insurance contributions after State Pension age

○ Class 1 National Insurance contributions

You do not pay Class 1 National Insurance contributions after you reach State Pension age.

If you work for an employer and you are past State Pension age, you need to give your employer a Certificate of Age Exception. This certificate tells them that you do not have to pay National Insurance contributions on the money that you earn.

If you tell us that you are going to keep working when you claim your State Pension, this certificate will be sent to you automatically.

Paying National Insurance contributions after State Pension age continued

○ **Class 1 National Insurance contributions** continued

If you put off claiming State Pension and need a certificate, contact HM Revenue & Customs. You may have to give them evidence of your date of birth. You can write to them at

HM Revenue & Customs NICO

Contributor Caseworkers

Benton Park View

Longbenton

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE99 1ZZ.

If you want to find out more about National Insurance, you should contact HM Revenue & Customs. You can find the number in the phone book under HM Revenue & Customs or Inland Revenue. Or you can visit their website at www.hmrc.gov.uk

Putting off your claim to State Pension

You can put off claiming your State Pension when you reach State Pension age. This means we will not pay you State Pension until you claim it. Depending on how long you put off your claim, you will be able to get extra State Pension or a lump sum when you do claim. Putting off claiming is also known as 'State Pension deferral'.

From 6 April 2010 it will no longer be possible to claim an increase of your State Pension for another adult who depends on you for support. If you put off claiming your State Pension until 6 April 2010 or later, you will not be able to claim an increase for an adult who depends on you financially when you finally claim your State Pension.

If you are already getting State Pension, you can stop claiming your State Pension to earn extra State Pension or a lump sum later on. You can only do this once and you must normally live in Great Britain. You can put off claiming State Pension for as long as you like.

If you choose to defer your State Pension it may still be possible for your husband, wife or civil partner to receive State Pension, based on your National Insurance contributions, when they reach State Pension age. For further details please contact The Pension Service on **0845 6060265**.

○ **Extra State Pension**

You can choose to get extra State Pension if you put off claiming your State Pension for **5 weeks or more**. When you do claim, you will get a higher weekly State Pension for the rest of your life.

The amount of extra State Pension you get is 0.2% of your weekly State Pension for each week you have put off your claim. This works out at 1% for every 5 weeks, and 10.4% for a full year.

When your State Pension increases every April, your extra State Pension will increase as well. The State Pension is not increased in all overseas countries.

○ **The lump sum payment**

If you put off claiming your State Pension for 12 months or more in a row, you have two choices. You can get extra State Pension or you can get a lump sum payment instead. You will have to pay tax on the lump sum. We will only pay you the lump sum once.

The lump sum payment is made up of

- the State Pension you would have got if you had not put off claiming, **plus**
- interest.

We will add interest to the lump sum payment for each week that you put off claiming. We will add the interest at 2% above the Bank of England's base rate.

You can get the lump sum when you start to claim your State Pension or in the following tax year. You will also get your normal State Pension from the day you start claiming.

Putting off your claim to State Pension

continued

○ How putting off your claim is affected by other benefits

If you put off claiming State Pension while getting other benefits, you will not build up any extra State Pension or lump sum for the days that you get the other benefit.

These other benefits are

- Carer's Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Unemployability Supplement
- Widow's Pension
- Widowed Mother's Allowance
- Short-term Incapacity Benefit
- contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance.

○ Taxation

You may have to pay income tax on the income you get from State Pension. And if you decide to take the extra State Pension, you will have to pay tax on the extra State Pension too.

Extra State Pension will also be taken into account for Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, just like other types of income.

If you decide to take the lump sum instead of extra State Pension you may have to pay tax on the lump sum. The lump sum will not affect your claim for Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit.

If you want to find out more about tax, you should contact HM Revenue & Customs. You can find the number in the phone book under HM Revenue & Customs or Inland Revenue. Or you can visit their website at www.hmrc.gov.uk

○ **What do I have to do?**

You do not have to tell us if

- you want to put off claiming your State Pension, or
- you want to keep putting off claiming it.

But if you are thinking about putting off your claim, it's important that you find out more about this option before you decide. This booklet can only give general information. You can get more information in our leaflet *Your guide to State Pension Deferral*. To get the leaflet visit www.direct.gov.uk/tpsleaflets

You may also want to get independent financial advice. You may have to pay for this.

○ **If you are currently putting off claiming your State Pension**

You may also benefit from the choices available. To find out more, please contact us on **0800 731 7898**.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact us using a textphone on **0800 7341 7339**.

Payment direct into an account

○ **We normally pay your money direct into an account.**

You can use a bank, building society or other account provider. Many banks and building societies will let you collect cash at the post office.

How we will pay you

We will tell you when the first payment will be made and how much it is for. Each payment, after the first one, should be for the same amount unless there is a change in your circumstances. We will tell you whenever we know there is going to be a change in the amount we pay into your account.

We will normally pay your State Pension 4 weekly.

Payment direct into an account continued

○ Finding out how much is paid into the account

You can check your State Pension payments on your account statements. The statements may show your National Insurance number next to payments that are from us. If you think your payment is wrong, get in touch with the office that pays you straight away.

○ If we pay you too much money

We have the right to recover any money paid to you, which you are not entitled to. This may be because of the way the Direct Payment system works. For example, you may give us information, which means you are entitled to less money but we may not be able to change the amount we have already sent out. If this happens, we will contact you before we recover any money.

Pension Credit

If you're on a low income you might be entitled to Pension Credit.

There are two parts to Pension Credit – the Guarantee Credit and the Savings Credit.

- 1 Guarantee Credit tops up your weekly income to a guaranteed minimum level (this amount may be more for those who are severely disabled, have caring responsibilities or certain housing costs like mortgage interest payments).
2. Savings credit is for those aged 65 or over who have made some provision towards their retirement such as savings or a second pension.

You may get the Savings Credit on its own or with the Guarantee Credit.

To get Guarantee Credit you must have reached the Pension Credit qualifying age. This is increasing from 60 to 65 for men and women, between April 2010 and April 2020, alongside the increase in women's state pension age.

To find out the age at which you can claim Pension Credit ask for our leaflet about Pension Credit or go to **www.direct.gov.uk/spacalculator**. If you have a partner one of you can be under this age but the person who claims must have reached the minimum qualifying age.

If you are receiving, or claim, Pension Credit while you are putting off claiming your State Pension, we will work out your Pension Credit as if you were getting your State Pension. We cannot pay Pension Credit instead of the State Pension you have chosen to put off.

To apply for Pension Credit you can call us on:

- Freephone **0800 99 1234**, or
- a textphone on **0800 1690133** if you have speech or hearing difficulties.

If you want to know more about Pension Credit, ask when you contact us about your State Pension. Or visit **www.directgov.uk/pensions**

When you call us we will ask you about your circumstances. For example we may ask you about any income, savings and investments you and your partner have.

If you apply for Pension Credit, we can also help you apply for Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit at the same time.

If you are sick or disabled

You may stop getting some sickness and disability benefits when you get to State Pension age.

○ Incapacity Benefit

You will usually stop getting Incapacity Benefit when you reach State Pension age. But sometimes you can keep getting it. To find out more contact us on **0800 731 7898**.

○ Severe Disablement Allowance

You can keep getting Severe Disablement Allowance when you reach State Pension age, instead of claiming State Pension.

○ Reduced Earnings Allowance

If you get Reduced Earnings Allowance and your regular employment ends, Retirement Allowance will replace it when you reach State Pension age.

○ Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance

Claiming State Pension does not affect your Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance.

○ Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance will stop when you reach State Pension age.

The easy way to claim your State Pension is by phone.

So call us on **0800 731 7898**.

If English is not your first language you can call **0800 731 7898** and ask for an interpreter.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact us using a textphone on **0800 731 7339**.

You can also

- apply for Pension Credit
- claim Housing Benefit
- claim Council Tax Benefit

at the same time you claim your State Pension.

What to do now

The earliest we can accept your claim is four months before the date you want to start getting State Pension.

If you want to start getting your State Pension in the next four months follow the instructions on the form *About your State Pension* that came with this booklet.

Claiming your State Pension is easy. You can tell us all we need to know over the phone and you will not have to fill in any forms. Our customer advisers will answer any questions you have.

So call us on **0800 731 7898**.

If English is not your first language, you can call **0800 731 7898** and ask for an interpreter.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact us using a textphone on **0800 731 7339**.

You can also get a copy of our claim form from our website. The address is **www.direct.gov.uk/pensions**

If you do not want to claim State Pension by phone or by getting the form from our website, please call us on **0800 731 7898**. You can also fill in the tear-off portion in this booklet and send it to

The Pension Service
PO Box 16
Gateshead
NE92 1BA.

If you do not want to start getting your State Pension in the next four months keep this booklet and the form *About your State Pension* in a safe place. Contact us within four months of the date you want to start getting your State Pension from.

Help and advice

If you want to find out more about State Pension please get in touch with us. Please call us on **0800 731 7898**.

You can also visit www.direct.gov.uk/pensions

You can also get in touch with Jobcentre Plus. Their address and phone number are in the phonebook under Jobcentre Plus.

If you live abroad, please contact

The Pension Service
International Pension Centre
Tyneview Park
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE98 1BA
England
Phone **+44 191 218 7777**.

How we collect and use information

The information we collect about you and how we use it depends mainly on the reason for your business with us. But we may use it for any of the Department's purposes, which include

- social security benefits and allowances
- child support
- employment and training
- private pensions policy, and
- retirement planning.

We may get information from others to check the information you give to us and to improve our services. We may give information to other organisations as the law allows, for example to protect against crime.

To find out more about how we use information, visit our website www.dwp.gov.uk/privacy.asp or contact any of our offices.