

PCSPS(NI)

Principal Civil Service Pension
Scheme (Northern Ireland)

nuvos retirement benefits

A brief guide to the benefits available



Department of
**Finance and
Personnel**

www.dfpni.gov.uk

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Civil Service Pensions

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Introduction

This booklet provides a guide to your pension benefits and gives practical information about the payment of your pension. You should read this booklet carefully and keep it for future reference.

If you would like to know more about how the benefits are worked out, there is a section at the end of this booklet telling you where you can get more information.

We have tried to use as little jargon as possible but we have defined some technical terms shown in **bold** when they appear in the text. Please refer to the Glossary Section at the end of this booklet for an explanation.

Note: this booklet is a guide to retirement. It does not cover every aspect; the full details are contained only in the rules which are the legal basis of the scheme. You should note that nothing in this booklet can override the rules, and in the event of any unintentional difference, the rules will apply.

Pension age

The scheme has a pension age of 65. Pension age is the earliest that you can usually take your pension without it being reduced for early payment. You can apply to draw your pension at any time from the age of 55 but because your pension will be paid for more years, it will be reduced if you take it before pension age.

Can I carry on working after I draw my pension?

You cannot draw your pension and carry on working for a Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) pensions employer unless you are over age 75, or meet the conditions for partial retirement. To take your pension on partial retirement terms, you must agree with your employer to “reshape” your job such that you reduce your annual rate of **pensionable earnings** by at least 20%, for example by reducing your hours. Your pension will be subject to **abatement**. There is more about **abatement** in the section of this booklet about re-employment.

Do I have to take my pension when I reach pension age?

No, if you wish you may defer taking your pension, but you must bring it into payment before your 75th birthday at the latest, whether or not you are still working. If you draw your pension later than age 65 it will be increased to reflect the late payment. Your annual benefit statement will show an “age addition” each year after your 65th birthday.

Working out your pension

You should have been receiving benefit statements each year, which showed you how your pension was building up. If you think the information in your most recent annual statement is wrong, or if you have any queries about how your pension has been worked out, you should contact us as soon as possible.

Your pension will be the total amount of the pension you have built up, including, where applicable, any **added pension** you have bought and any pension you have transferred in from another pension arrangement, plus all the index-linking increases and any late retirement additions that have been applied to your pension.

If you have any benefits based on your final salary (from linked service or from a **Club** transfer in) then this part of your pension will be worked out by multiplying the relevant service credit by your **final pensionable earnings** and dividing it by 60.

Details of your pension are shown on your Estimate statement.

Initially, the pension paid to you will be the amount held on our system at the date we work out your pension. This will take account of all payroll updates supplied by your employer but, unless your pension is being worked out after you have left service, it will not reflect the correct final position. After your last day of service we will work your pension out again to take into account any further pension built up to your last day, as well as any other adjustments (such as part-year index-linking) that are due.

Can I have a tax-free lump sum?

At the time you draw your pension you can choose to give up part of your pension for a tax-free lump sum. This will be subject to limits set by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Currently the limit is 25% of the total notional value of your pension benefits. The maximum lump sum you can take will be shown on your pension estimate. If you want to take a smaller amount, you can find a calculator on the PCSPS(NI) website:

www.civilservicepensions-ni.gov.uk. For each £12 of lump sum you want to take, we will reduce your pension by £1 a year. This is called “commuting” pension for lump sum. Note that commuting your pension will not affect the way your dependants’ pensions are worked out.

Can I give up part of my pension to someone else?

Before your pension starts to be paid, you may choose to give up part of your pension in exchange for additional pension for someone else after your death. This is called “allocation”.

You can only allocate pension to someone who is financially dependent on you, or with whom you are financially interdependent. There are limits on the amount of pension that you are allowed to give up.

If you are interested in this option you should contact us for further information. You must make your allocation decision before you start drawing your pension. Allocation of your pension will not affect the way any pension for another member of your family is worked out.

Is there any limit to the size of my pension?

There is a limit, but it is unlikely to affect you unless you have very long service. Your pension (excluding any **added pension** that you have bought) cannot be more than 75% of your highest scheme earnings. For this purpose, highest scheme earnings will be the highest of:

- your **pensionable earnings** in your final year, or
- your highest **pensionable earnings** in any of the last 10 scheme years; or
- your highest average of three consecutive years’ **pensionable earnings**.
- In order to make this comparison, your **pensionable earnings** from previous years will be uprated in line with the **Retail Price Index**.

Any pension you already have from the PCSPS(NI) pension arrangements will also count against the 75% limit. If you have any pension worked out on a final salary basis (from linked service or a **Club** transfer) this will also count against your pension limit on the basis of $N/60 \times 100\%$ where N is the years of service used to work out the final salary pension.

How do you work out my pension if I have already taken pension under the partial retirement arrangements?

Your pension will be worked out in the same way, but taking into account any pension that has already been paid under the partial retirement arrangements.

What about my State pension?

Once you reach **State Pension Age** you may claim the basic State pension if you have paid enough National Insurance contributions.

As **nuvos** is contracted-out, you will not receive a full State 2nd Pension (S2P) although you may be entitled to a “top-up” payment from S2P. You can find out more about State pensions on www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

What about my AVCs?

If you have been paying AVCs you need to tick the appropriate boxes on your Personal Details Form. We will then write to you separately to give you information about drawing your AVC benefits.

Paying your pension

Why do I have to fill in the Personal Details Form?

We cannot start to pay your pension until you have returned the Personal Details Form. We must make sure that the information we hold about you is correct. It is also a requirement of HMRC that the value of your **nuvos** pension is tested against the **Lifetime Allowance** before it is paid. That is why we need to ask extra questions if you think your pension income may be above £50,000 a year. There is more information on this in the booklet “Your pension and tax”.

Who pays my pension, and when?

PCSPS(NI) pensions are paid by us. You can find our contact details at the end of this booklet. We will pay your pension to you monthly, at one-twelfth (to the nearest penny) of the yearly rate.

When will I get my first payment?

If you choose to have a lump sum, it will be sent to the bank or building society account you put on your Personal Details Form. We will pay your lump sum as quickly as possible, although no particular date can be promised. It will normally be paid within a few days of your retiring, if we have received the information in good time. You should complete and return your Personal Details Form and any other information promptly.

Pensions are normally paid monthly in arrears (at the end of the period in which they are due). Your pension payments will be made by direct credit to your account. This ensures that your bank account is credited on the day each payment is due.

We will tell you the date in the month on which your pension will be paid before (or with) the first payment. The date will not necessarily fall at the end of a calendar month.

When a payment date falls on a weekend or on a public holiday, the payment date will be the working day before. The amount due for part of a month is worked out according to the number of days in the period concerned and the number of days in the full pension month, between one payment date and the next.

Can I have my pension paid into any bank?

If your account is with a bank or building society in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man, we will pay your pension direct into your bank account. If your bank account is in the Irish Republic or overseas you must make a special application to us. Please note that we cannot pay your pension by direct credit into an account with the National Savings Bank or Post Office.

What happens when my pension is revised?

When all the details of your **pensionable earnings** are received, and/or there is a backdated pay increase that increases your **pensionable earnings**, we will write to you with revised details, and your pension payments will change accordingly.

Will my pension increase each year?

Pensions in payment increase every year in line with the **Retail Price Index**. The increase is applied on the first Monday after 6th April each year. You can find out more about pensions increases in the booklet “Inflation proofing public service pensions” which we send you with your Estimate statement.

Will I get a monthly payslip?

Whenever there is a change in the gross annual rate of your pension, we will send you an advice note containing the new details. The note will also show the monthly gross amount payable and the tax that will be deducted from next month's payment. The net amount may vary slightly due to the effect of the PAYE tax tables. We will then continue to pay the same amounts each month until there is a further change in the annual pension rate or tax code, when we will send you another advice note. You will not receive a payslip or advice note in the months when there is no change to the amount of your pension

Are there any changes at State Pension Age?

If your **nuvos** pension includes any service before 1997, for example service which you have transferred in from another scheme, and this part of your pension includes a **guaranteed minimum pension (GMP)**, you should note that special arrangements apply to the pensions increase on the GMP. When you reach 60 (for women) or 65 (for men), some of the increase on your GMP may be paid with your State pension rather than with your PCSPS(NI). The increase in your **nuvos** pension may therefore appear to be less than a full RPI increase.

Can I pay membership subscriptions, insurance premiums etc from my pension, in the same way as I did from my salary?

Voluntary deductions for certain benevolent and life insurance societies and organisations can be made from your pension. If you want deductions to be made, you must complete the relevant section of your Personal Details Form. You can find details of voluntary deductions currently made from your pay on your most recent pay advice or deductions statement.

Your employer will normally make any current deductions from your final payment of salary or wages up to the end of the calendar month in which you retire. If you apply for deductions to be made from your pension, we will then start deductions the following month.

If you want to make payments to an organisation to which you have not contributed from your pay before, you must first make your own arrangements to join the organisation concerned. We will not enrol pensioners with particular societies. You should direct any enquiry about benefits, increase of your subscriptions, or conditions of membership, to the society or organisation concerned.

If, for any reason a deduction from pension is not made or passed on correctly to a specified organisation, we will not accept responsibility for the lack of cover which the loss of contribution may cause. An alternative to having deductions made from your pension would be to make separate arrangements with the organisation(s) concerned.

I intend to become self employed. Can I have my National Insurance contributions deducted from my pension?

No. We cannot make deductions from pension for National Insurance (NI) contributions for which you may be liable as a self-employed person. You must make your own arrangements for NI contributions with HMRC.

Tax and your pension

How is my pension taxed?

Your retirement lump sum is tax-free but your pension is treated as earned income. Any income tax due under the tax code notified by HMRC will be deducted by us. Deductions may be provisional until they have received the proper code.

Any enquiry about your tax should be sent (quoting your pension reference and National Insurance number) to:

HM Revenue and Customs
Belfast 1
Beaufort House
31 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6BH

If tax has been deducted from your pension, we will send you form P60 after the end of each tax year to show the total pension paid and tax deducted in the year.

How is my pension assessed for the **Lifetime Allowance (LTA)**?

You can find information about the LTA tax assessment of your **nuvos** pension, in the booklet "Your pension and tax".

Why do you have to ask me about my other pensions?

We have to take into account all your pensions in assessing your pension for LTA tax. This is explained more in "Your pension and tax".

Benefits for your family

What benefits are payable when I die?

A lump sum may be payable, and a pension will be payable to your widow, widower, or surviving civil partner. Your partner may be eligible if you have registered a partner declaration form with us and they meet the criteria for payment of a pension. A pension would also be payable to any eligible children.

Your family or **personal representative** must contact us to tell us of your death.

If your pension is overpaid because we have not been informed of your death, these overpayments must be repaid. We will tell your widow, widower, civil partner, or **personal representative** of any amount overpaid but will seek recovery direct from your bank or building society. If you have a joint account, it is important that you tell the other account holder of this recovery arrangement.

What lump sum would be payable?

If you die within five years of starting to draw your pension, the scheme will pay a lump sum representing the balance of five years' pension (including any **added pension** you had bought) to the person or people you have named.

If you are over 75 when you die, we cannot pay this lump sum due to tax rules. So we will pay any outstanding balance annually in arrears to your nominee(s) as a pension until the five-year period has expired.

Note that no lump sum is payable if you die more than 5 years after starting to draw your pension.

Who will the lump sum be paid to?

The lump sum would be paid to the person or people you have named, in the same way as if you had died in service. If you want to change your nominee at any time, you can download a form from our website at www.civilservicepensions-ni.gov.uk, or ask us for a death benefit nomination form.

It is your responsibility to keep your nomination under review and update it whenever necessary.

We cannot pay the lump sum to a person other than your nominee(s), though if there are good grounds for considering it is not appropriate to pay the sum to your nominee it can instead be paid to your **personal representative**.

What happens if I die without having made a nomination?

We will pay any lump sum that is due to your **personal representative**.

What pension would my husband, wife, civil partner or eligible partner get?

Their pension entitlement is worked out as 37.5% (3/8ths) of your pension, including any **added pension** you have bought for yourself and your family, and any pension bought by a transfer in from another scheme.

If you have exchanged (commuted) part of your pension for a lump sum, this will not affect the pension for your husband, wife, civil partner or **eligible partner** as their pension will be based on your pension before you decided to commute.

If your husband, wife, civil partner or **eligible partner** is more than 12 years younger than you, then their pension will be reduced to reflect the fact that it is likely to be in payment for a longer time.

Will my children get a pension?

We will pay a pension to your children (and to any other children who rely on you financially) when you die. We pay children's pensions for children up to the age of 18 (or to 23, if they continue in full-time education or vocational training). A pension may be payable for life to a child who is dependent due to serious disability; ask us or for more information about this.

We work out a child's pension as 30% of your pension entitlement if we pay a pension to your surviving husband, wife, civil partner or **eligible partner**, or 50% if there is no such pension payable. If you leave more than two children who qualify for a pension we will reduce each child's pension so they each get an equal share.

What if I get married or have children after I've retired?

A pension will be payable to your family on your death, on the same terms and conditions as set out in previous questions.

Re-employment

What happens if I am re-employed by a NICS pensions employer? Will I be able to rejoin **nuvos**?

This will depend on what pension arrangements are on offer at that time.

What happens to my pension if I'm re-employed?

If you have any PCSPS(NI) pension in payment, whether from **nuvos** or another section of the scheme, and you are re-employed by a NI Civil Service pensions employer, your pension will be **abated** (reduced or suspended), if your annual rate of **pensionable pay** and your pension together come to more than your **pensionable earnings** in the twelve months immediately before your pension came into payment. If you are considering re-employment after drawing your pension you should ask your prospective employer for further information on the impact on your pension. Abatement does not apply if you are aged 75 or over, or if you take a job with an employer outside the PCSPS(NI) arrangements.

You can find out more from the leaflet "What is **abatement**?" which you can download from www.civilservicepensions-ni.gov.uk or you can get this from us.

What if I have a complaint about my pension?

If you have a problem with any part of your **nuvos** pension benefits, you should try to sort it out with us. Often a phone call or email will be enough. If you cannot sort out the problem to your satisfaction, you should ask us for the leaflet "If you have a complaint about your pension".

Where can I get more information?

You can find out more information about **nuvos** benefits on the our website, www.civilservicepensions-ni.gov.uk.

Further information about how lump sums and pensions are worked out is included in the booklet "**nuvos** pension scheme" which you can download from the website or get from us. Please note that we are not able to give you advice.

Contacting us

Our address is:-

Civil Service Pensions
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
Derry/Londonderry
BT47 6FP

Telephone: (028) 7131 9000

Fax: (028) 7131 9234

E-mail: cspensions.cpg@dfpni.gov.uk

Alternatively you can follow the link from the PCSPS(NI) website – click on "Pensioners".

When you contact us, you should always quote your pension reference number. That number will be notified to you when your pension payments begin, and will then appear on all correspondence you receive from us.

Glossary

Abatement is the reduction or stopping of pension payments on re-employment within the scheme. Scheme rules require that a member's new pensionable pay and pension, when added together, may not normally be more than their pensionable earnings when they retired.

Added pension is an amount of extra pension that the scheme member can buy.

Club transfer is a transfer from a pension scheme which is a member of the Public Sector Transfer Club, such as the NHS Pension Scheme.

Eligible partner is someone with whom the member has jointly completed the partner declaration form, and who continued to meet the eligibility criteria at the date of the member's death. Details of the eligibility criteria are given in the booklet "Pensions for partners: a guide".

Final pensionable earnings are the pensionable earnings used to work out any benefits (such as benefits from linked service) which are worked out on a final salary basis. Your final pensionable earnings will be the best of:

- pensionable earnings in your final 12 months of employment; or
- the highest pensionable earnings in any of the last four scheme years; or
- the highest average pensionable earnings in any three consecutive scheme years ending up to 10 years before the retirement date.

Lifetime Allowance (LTA) is a limit set by HMRC on the total value of all pension benefits (except the State pension) that can be taken without paying additional tax. See "Your pension and tax" for more information.

nuvos is a scheme in which you build up a pension based on your pensionable earnings for each year of service. Contributions are currently 3.5% of your pensionable earnings.

Pensionable earnings are the pensionable pay which you received during the scheme year (1st April to 31st March).

Pensionable pay includes all earnings that could count towards your pension. They can include non-cash items, for example, uniforms or accommodation.

Personal representatives are the people who have the power to dispose of the deceased scheme member's estate. These will be the executors if there is a will. If the member died without leaving a will, personal representatives will be named in Letters of Administration (Confirmation of Executor in Scotland) which your solicitor will apply for.

The Retail Price Index (RPI) is one of the official indices used to measure price inflation. It is used to set increases for pensions in payment, and for revaluing your nuvos pension each year before it comes into payment. The figure used is generally the September RPI.

State Pension Age is 65 for men, and for women born on or after 6th April 1955. Women born before 6th April 1950 will have State Pension Age of 60; women born between those dates will have a State Pension Age on a sliding scale between 60 and 65. See www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk for a calculator. Under the Pensions Act 2007 the State Pension Age will rise from 65 to 68 between 2020 and 2050. This will affect anyone born after 5th April 1959, though only those born after 5th April 1978 will have to wait until 68 for their State pension.

This booklet is published by Civil Service Pensions and is intended for new members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

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