

Old Flames

Merseyside Firefighter pensioners newsletter 2017

your
pension
service

Welcome to the 2017 edition of Old Flames, the pension newsletter from Your Pension Service.

2016 was rather a busy year in the world of Firefighter Pensions. We paid almost £746 million in pensions to pensioners throughout the world.

Yet again this year, more of you signed up to **My Pension Online** allowing you to securely access your pension record and to view your payslips and P60, amend your address and bank details on line.

If you are not yet signed up to this service please see the 'My Pension Online' section of the newsletter which gives step by step guidance on this.

As always, we welcome your feedback on any of the services we provide as well as what you would like to see in any future editions of Old Flames. Please use the details on the back page to leave us your views.

I do hope you enjoy this issue of Old Flames.

Many Thanks



Diane Lister
Head of Your Pension Service



Important information about your P60

What is a P60?

A P60 is a statement which is issued to taxpayers each year. The P60 contains information about how much you have earned and how much tax you have paid (if applicable). You will often know this information already from viewing your monthly pay slips.

When do I need a P60?

You may never need a paper version of your P60 as often just having the figures will suffice. You may need information from your P60 in the following scenarios:

- Filling in a self-assessment tax return
- Applying for a mortgage or tax credits
- Claiming a tax refund
- Queries with HMRC

If you are registered for **My Pension Online** then you can view your P60 at any time, meaning that there is no need for printing and storing things manually. Your online account acts as a virtual filing cabinet for your P60s and pay slips. You will find the P60 under the Member Documents option once you are logged in.

For details on how to register online please see the article **My Pension Online**.

2017 Pension Pay Dates

April 2017	–	Fri 28 Apr	October 2017	–	Tue 31 Oct
May 2017	–	Wed 31 May	November 2017	–	Thu 30 Nov
June 2017	–	Fri 30 Jun	December 2017	–	Fri 22 Dec
July 2017	–	Mon 31 Jul	January 2018	–	Wed 31 Jan
August 2017	–	Thurs 31 Aug	February 2018	–	Wed 28 Feb
September 2017	–	Fri 29 Sep	March 2018	–	Thu 29 Mar

Perks of the Job

BENEFITS

Did you know as an ex-member of the service you have access to a wide range of exclusive benefits? These vary from high street discount to money off theatre breaks.

For more information and to start saving please visit www.rewardsforrescue.co.uk

NEWS, JOBS AND FRIENDS

There is also a website dedicated to news for retired firefighters. Here you will find information on job vacancies and maybe even locate lost friends from the service.

For details, please visit:
www.ex-fire.co.uk

Are your details up to date and correct?

Keep your details up to date from the comfort of your armchair with just a few clicks!

Has anything significant changed since you last updated your details?

If you haven't already done so then please register for an activation key so that you can begin to enjoy the benefits of the **My Pension Online** system. You will find instructions on how to register in the article My Pension Online. This is now the main method of communication between us and you, therefore we do not want you to miss important information.

Once you are a member you can:

- Change your address
- Change your email address
- View and print your P60
- View your pay history
- Change the bank account into which pension payments are made from Your Pension Service (account must be in your name)
- View your nominated beneficiaries (where applicable)
- View factsheets and access forms
- Contact Your Pension Service

If you do not wish to use My Pension Online then you can still notify us of changes in writing, but please be aware that this can take longer.

If you have received this newsletter in the post then we already know that you have opted out of electronic communications and we will continue to write to you. However if things have changed and you wish to register then please follow the steps below.

My Pension Online

As highlighted above we now have a service where you can view all of your Pension details online. If you would like to register for the service please follow the instructions below:

1. Go to the www.yourpensionservice.org.uk website
2. Click "**My Pension Login**" at the top left hand corner of the page
3. Select "**Merseyside Members Login**"
4. Click "**Sign Up**" to request an activation key for your online account
5. Complete the 4 fields on the registration form and then click "**Submit**"

An Activation key will be sent to your home address, once received you should revisit the website and follow instructions 1-4 above, but this time select "**Complete Your Registration**" and complete the relevant fields to finalise your account.

Once you are a fully registered Member then please check that your details are up to date. If you believe that your address is incorrect then we will not be able to get the activation key to you, so please contact the helpdesk (*details on final page*).

You will now have full access to all the features above. If you have any problems with your registration please contact the helpdesk (*details on final page*).

Benefits and Data Matching

Benefits

Please be aware that if you are claiming any type of benefit, for example housing benefit, you need to declare that you are drawing a pension. This is because its value may be taken into account. Failure to do so may be considered a form of fraud and may lead to an overpayment of benefits, so please notify your benefits office of any changes as soon as possible.

Please note that key payroll data and personal identifiers such as contact details may be provided to bodies responsible for auditing and administering public funds for the purposes of preventing and detecting fraud. For more details go to www.yourpensionservice.org.uk.

Death Notification

When a member of the scheme passes away it is vitally important that we are made aware as soon as possible. This avoids overpaying pension benefits.

To prevent this from happening you can inform the person who will be managing your affairs to notify ourselves at the earliest opportunity. This can be done by phone on 0300 123 6717.

Not only will this cease your pension before overpayments are made, but it will enable us to put in place any dependants pensions which may arise, eg spouses pension.

Pensioners Abroad

If you are a pensioner residing abroad, each year we also require you to fill in a form for data matching for the same purposes as above. As you are no longer resident in the UK, if you were to pass away we would not be automatically informed, so the form is a method of confirming you are still alive each year.

Data Protection Act

All data held is for the purpose of administering the pension scheme and paying pension benefits. The administrators have a legal obligation and a legitimate interest under the Data Protection Act 1998 in processing data as a result of your membership of the scheme. This may include passing such data to the actuary, administrators, auditors, insurers, lawyers and such other third parties as may be necessary for the operation of the scheme.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, is the data controller under the Data Protection Act with the Local Pensions Partnership processing data on its behalf.

Pensions increases

The annual inflationary increase to pensions*, payable from 10 April 2017, has been set at 1% based on the consumer price index (CPI) over the 12 months to the previous September.

**Increases are applied providing you are at least age 55 or you retired on ill health. If you retired mid year then you will receive a pro rata increase.*

State Pension and increases

Pension increase when you attain State Pension Age

Both your State Retirement Pension and your Firefighters Pension Scheme are increased in line with inflation each April in accordance with Pensions increase (Review Orders).

When you became a member of the Firefighters Pension Scheme you were contracted out of the State 2nd Pension (S2P). If you had pensionable service between 6 April 1978 and 5 April 1997 your pension will include an amount known as the “Guaranteed Minimum Pension” (GMP). The GMP is the minimum pension amount required to be paid in respect of your contracted out service in the Firefighters Pension Scheme since 6 April 1978. The GMP becomes important when you reach state pension age as the way in which the pensions increases are applied to your pension then changes.

From the April following reaching state pension age the pension increase is paid either with your Firefighters Pension Scheme pension or with your State pension:

- 1) Increases on your GMP built up to 5 April 1988 - paid by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), together with your State Pension;
- 2) Increases up to the first 3% on your GMP built up after 6 April 1988 paid by Firefighters Pension Scheme;
- 3) Increases in excess of 3% on your GMP built up after 6 April 1988 as above (1) paid by DWP.

This means that the amount of pension, including GMP, is fully increased, but you will receive the GMP increases from two places, your Fire Fighter Pension and DWP.

Hopefully the example below will explain this a little more clearly:

J Smith’s GMP is applied at State Pension Age so the pension is broken down into the following sections:

a) Basic Pension	= £500.00 per month
b) GMP up to 5 April 1988	= £200.00 per month
c) GMP from 6 April 1988	= £100.00 per month
Total pension in payment	= £800.00 per month

An example of total pension increase payable from April is 2.7%, so increases are applied to the above pension:

a) Basic Pension plus the full increase of 2.7%	= £513.50 per month
b) GMP up to 5 April 1988 with no increase (as 1 above)	= £200.00 per month
c) GMP from 6 April 1988 plus increase limited to 3% (as 2 above)	= £102.70 per month
Total pension in payment	= £816.20 per month

Full increases on (b) and any additional % on (c) will be paid by DWP in your state pension.

For members who attain their State Pension age between 6 April 2016 and 5 December 2018, the scheme will pay the full increase due on the GMP element with their Firefighters Pension Scheme pension. In November 2016, the government launched a consultation in respect of members who attain their State Pension age on or after 6 December 2018. We are currently waiting for the government to respond to the consultation.

Tax Allowances

Each year everybody is allowed a certain amount of income, tax free. There are various tax allowances, but for most the only one which applies is a personal allowance.

Previously there have been differing personal allowances for people dependant on their date of birth, however the Finance Bill 2015 removed these factors and there is now a single personal allowance regardless of the date they were born.

For the year 2017/18 the allowance will be £11,500 and anything earned over this amount from all income, including pensions benefits will be taxed at a rate of 20%.

Breaking the code

Once the tax man works out your allowance a notification of coding will be issued to make sure the right amount of tax is taken from your income. As mentioned previously this will be 20% for the basic rate, but if your income exceeds £45,000 then you will move onto the higher rate.

Lifetime Allowance

New rules came into effect on 6 April 2006, regarding the maximum amount of pension benefits that can be paid. This maximum limit is known as the Lifetime Allowance. The lifetime allowance was reduced to £1 million from the 6 April 2016.

The amount of Lifetime Allowance that you have used in respect of your scheme membership can be seen on your P60 which can be accessed by signing up to the “My Pension Online” service. More information is also available on our website.

Further Allowances

There are a number of other allowances that may apply, such as blind person’s allowance or married couple allowance. These don’t apply to all so if you feel they may be applicable to yourself please view the tax office website or contact them directly.

Contact details
HM Revenue and Customs
Tel: **0300 200 3300**
Web: **www.hmrc.gov.uk**

Please have your national insurance number to hand.

Why do I pay tax on my pension? The taxman looks at all types of income, pensions, wages, and so on. If you exceed your allowance then you pay tax!

Do I have to do anything with my notice of coding? No, it’s just the taxman notifying you of the change and we will receive a notice too.

I think my code is wrong, what should I do? Please don’t call us, we are not allowed to adjust your tax code. You need to contact HMRC directly as only they can change it.

Messages from Matty

Colleagues

I hope that this finds you well.

Some information, especially for those NOT on the internet.

Monthly Meetings

We still congregate at The Big House (The Vines), LIME STREET, LIVERPOOL on the last Tuesday of each month. Arrive at 19.45 to start at 20.00. Numbers averaging circa 80/90.

Married Tax Allowance

Just a reminder, don't forget to claim your married tax allowance, worth £220 as long as your wife doesn't earn or have pension income over £11,000.

Follow the link

<https://www.gov.uk/marriage-allowance>

Walking Football

The Walking Football commenced @ The Toxteth Firefit hub Windsor Street, Upper Warwick Street on March 21st, but if you're interested, please contact Mally Whipp via email at malwhipp@aol.com for more details. All are welcome and there is a page on Facebook called 'Merseyside Walking Football For Young Codgers' .

Lost Contact

I am still getting people calling me to complain that they are not receiving information, but they fail to tell me they have changed their telephone number or e-mail address. If you change your contact details then please let me know.

Let Me Know (important)

Not the nicest thing to bring to your attention, but in the sad event of your demise, please ensure that your family make me aware, as Your Pension Service are not allowed to divulge any information, as it contravenes confidentiality & the Data Protection Act. In addition if you have lost a loved one and are in the Death Benefit Scheme, please let me know so that the named beneficiary can be amended.

Making a Will

I can't emphasise enough how important it is to sort out a WILL. If you don't, you can leave chaos in your wake. If it is a simple will i.e. leaving all to your Spouse or split equally between Children and/or Grandchildren, then I can send you a template via e-mail. This will be very straight forward and it just requires 2 independent witnesses on completion.

OR

If you are an out of trade FBU member ring 0808 100 6061 and request a will application, they will send one in the post.

Wishing you all a continuing long and healthy retirement.

Regards,

Matty Melia

mjm987905@yahoo.co.uk

Members of the 2006 Scheme, are you single and living with your partner?

If so, the Firefighter Pension Scheme includes survivor pensions for co-habiting partners.

To be able to nominate your partner for a survivor pension in the event of your death, **all of the following conditions must have applied to both you and your nominated co-habiting partner for a continuous period of at least 2 years on the date you both sign the nomination form.**

- Both you and your nominated co-habiting partner are, and have been, free to marry each other or enter into a civil partnership with each other, and
- You and your nominated co-habiting partner have been living together as if you were husband and wife, or civil partners, and
- Neither you or your nominated co-habiting partner have been living with someone else as if you/they were husband and wife or civil partners, and
- Either your nominated co-habiting partner is financially dependent on you or you are financially interdependent on each other.

If you qualify, please complete a nomination form. This can be found at www.yourpensionservice.org.uk

Members of the 2015 Scheme




For deaths occurring from 1 April 2015, the condition that you must have nominated your cohabiting partner for them to be eligible to receive a survivor pension no longer applies. Nonetheless, to speed up any process after your death, you may tell us about your cohabiting partner by completing the nomination form and returning it to the address shown on the form. The form can be found at www.yourpensionservice.org.uk

Lump Sum Death Grant (2006 & 2015 Scheme)

If you die after retirement but before having received at least five years of pension instalments, the balance of the instalments you have not received will be converted to a lump sum. Like a death grant, it would be paid to the person or persons that the Fire and Rescue Authority, at their discretion, believe to be appropriate recipients. By completing the nomination form you would make your wishes known to the Authority in respect of this payment. To check your nomination visit **My Pension Online**. The relevant form is also available to download from our website.

Our Contact Details

Pensions Helpdesk

-  Tel: **0300 123 6717**
-  E-mail: **askpensions@localpensionspartnership.org.uk**
-  Web: **www.yourpensionservice.org.uk**

Useful Contacts



NARF National Association of Retired Firefighters

-  Tel: **0121 380 6059 / 07831 520 049**
- Fax: **01463 811 775**
-  E-mail: **retired.firefighters@wmfs.net**
-  Web: **www.narfire.org.uk**

Feedback

As always, we welcome your feedback on any of the services we deliver as well as what you would like to see in future editions of Old Flames. Why not take part in our survey by completing the [Your Pension Service Survey](#)

Pensions Service - (State Pension Enquiries)

-  Tel: **0345 60 60 625**
-  Web: **www.thepensionservice.gov.uk**