

Old Flames

Merseyside Firefighter pensioners newsletter 2018



Welcome to the 2018 edition of Old Flames, the pension newsletter from Your Pension Service.

2017 was rather a busy year in the world of Firefighter Pensions. We processed over 40 retirements and paid over £26 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Lister', is positioned above the name and title.

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**.

2018 Pension Pay Dates

April 2018	–	Mon 30 April	October 2018	–	Wed 31 Oct
May 2018	–	Thurs 31 May	November 2018	–	Fri 30 Nov
June 2018	–	Fri 29 June	December 2018	–	Fri 21 Dec
July 2018	–	Tues 31 July	January 2019	–	Thurs 31 Jan
August 2018	–	Fri 31 Aug	February 2019	–	Thurs 28 Feb
September 2018	–	Fri 28 Sept	March 2019	–	Fri 29 March

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

Has anything changed recently?

If any of your personal information has changed recently then you may need to let us know. Have you moved to a new house, changed your email address or does your death grant nomination need amending? (See leaflet, what happens to your pension when you die at www.yourpensionservice.org.uk).

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.

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 right 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 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 323 0260.

Not only will this cease your pension before overpayments are made, but it will enable us to put in place any dependant's pensions which may arise, e.g. 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 confirmation.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

A new data protection regulation (GDPR) comes into effect on the 25th of May. This will not impact the way you receive your pension. However, it will change the way we hold and process your data. You will have more control over your personal data to ensure it is used for the express purpose it was collected for, LPP use your personal data to calculate and pay your benefits. The GDPR strengthens the existing Data Protection Act and ensures greater protection of your data. From time to time we will share your personal data with third parties, including our contractors, advisors, government and law enforcement agencies and insurers in order to comply with our obligations under law, and in connection with the provision of services that help us carry out our duties, rights and discretions in relation to the Scheme. These organisations are listed in the full Privacy Notice which will be available from the 25th of May on the www.yourpensionservice.org.uk website.

Pensions increases

The Government have confirmed that the annual inflationary increase to pensions*, payable from April 2018 is 3%, 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.*

GMP and Pension increases

Pension increase when you attain State Pension Age

Your Firefighter Pension Scheme is increased in line with inflation each April.

If you joined before 6 April 2016, up to that date, you were contracted out of the State Additional Pension whilst you were paying into the Firefighter Pension Scheme. This means during that period, you paid lower National Insurance contributions and did not build up Additional State Pension benefits. Instead, under the contracting out rules, the Firefighter Pension Scheme will pay you a pension which is at least the same as you would have received had you not been contracted out (and is usually much greater).

How this protection worked changed from 6 April 1997. For service before then, the Scheme had to pay a minimum amount of pension (known as the Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP)). Please note that we pay the GMP element as part of your Firefighter Pension (and not in addition to it).

You stopped building up GMP from 6 April 1997. From this date, schemes, instead of guaranteeing to pay a minimum amount of pension, had to provide scheme benefits that are broadly equivalent to or are better than a set of criteria set by government. The GMP becomes important when you reach State Pension Age.

From the April following reaching State Pension Age the government will share the cost of inflation proofing the GMP element of your pension. You will receive the government's share in your State pension. We will share the cost as follows:

- 1) Increases on your GMP element built up before 6 April 1988 - paid by the government, together with your State Pension;
- 2) Increases up to the first 3% on your GMP element built up after 5 April 1988 - paid by Firefighter Pension Scheme;
- 3) Increases in excess of 3% on your GMP element built up after 5 April 1988 - paid by the government, together with your State Pension.

This means that the amount of pension, including GMP, is fully increased, but you will receive the increases on the GMP element from two places, your Firefighter Pension and State Pension.

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 3%, so increases are applied to the above pension:

a) Basic Pension plus the full increase of 3%	= £515.00 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)	= £103.00 per month
Total pension in payment	= £818.00 per month

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

For people who attain their State Pension age on or after 6 April 2016, the State Pension has changed to a single-tier pension. As a consequence of this, the government are no longer able to share the cost of inflation proofing the GMP element. The government are currently considering various options as to how to proceed in this area (please see [link](#)). As an interim solution, members who attain their State Pension age in the period from 6 April 2016 and 5 April 2021 (inclusive) will receive the full increases on the GMP element in their Firefighter Pension.

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 2018/19 the allowance will be £11,850 and anything earned over this amount (up to £46,350) from all income, including pension benefits will be taxed at a rate of 20%.

Income between £46,351 and £150,000 will be taxed at 40%. Income above £150,001 will be taxed at 45%. Please note that your personal allowance will reduce by £1 for every £2 you earn over £100,000. So by the time you earn £123,700, you'll pay income tax on everything you earn and get no personal tax-free allowance.

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.

Lifetime Allowance

The maximum limit of pension benefits that can be paid is known as the lifetime allowance. The lifetime allowance is £1.03 million from the 6 April 2018.

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

I hope that this edition of the magazine finds you all well.

Sadly, we have lost a lot of good friends of late.

I would like to reiterate something which I always mention in my welcoming email to new retirees.

In this present age, in comparison to when I joined the job in 1970, you are all very young to find yourself on the shelf.

Some of our male and female retirees tend to find it a little difficult to deal with retirement.

It would be hoped that you're all financially secure, so it's more a matter of filling in time. If you are not looking for another full time career then there are still things that you can do, maybe a part time role or something voluntary like helping out in a Charity Shop. It's all about keeping the grey matter moving, meeting people and getting out of the house for an hour or two.

Please do enjoy your retirement and your pension, you have earned it and paid for it, but do keep involved.

SAVINGS AND INCOME TAX

Since April 2016 you have become liable for the tax on your savings.

HMRC will contact you with a change of Tax Code and there will be an input on the notice under; This is how we worked out your tax code, as Less Untaxed Interest.

The Bank/Building Society your savings are with will inform the HMRC of the interest you have received, and your tax will be amended accordingly.

The important thing is that it is YOUR responsibility to inform HMRC when your savings account is closed, OR they will continue to assess your code assuming you're still in receipt of interest.

Obviously, this does not affect ISA's (CASH or OTHERWISE).

Don't forget the Annual CODGERS GOLF COMP will take place once again in September.

KEEPING UP TO DATE

Keep an eye on the EX MEMBERS NEWS PAGE which the Brigade have given me access to.

Sadly, it contains a majority of Death & Funeral Notices, but also other snippets of news.

TYPE: MFRS EX MEMBERS NEWS into Google and follow the links.

CHANGED YOUR EMAIL/PHONE CONTACT then please get in touch
mjm987905@yahoo.co.uk

Liverpool 2018

Can you believe it's been 10 years since Liverpool celebrated as the European Capital of Culture? Since then we have seen an explosion of cultural events and activities throughout the city, spilling over into the surrounding areas with no end in sight.

To celebrate this huge success Liverpool is once again hosting a thrilling variety of events, bringing the city's cultural creativity to the forefront to make 2018 an unforgettable year.

In February the Chinese New Year kicked off a nine month city wide celebration of contemporary Chinese arts and culture, 'China Dream'. This three part festival will host a variety of events including:

- A photography exhibition in the Open Eye gallery, featuring pictures taken by ordinary people considering how the casual act of photography and social media shape our identity.
- An exhibition of work from leading artists in Shanghai, focussing on the relationship of the two cities ahead of the 20th anniversary of their twinning next year.
- Culminating with music orientated events throughout September and October celebrating some of the best emerging Chinese musicians, which highlights the city's UNESCO City of Music status.

Throughout this period Liverpool's World Museum will host an exhibition of China's Terracotta Warriors, consisting of over 180 artefacts of which a large proportion have never been to the UK.

The end of May bank holiday will see the return of The Three Festivals Tall Ships Regatta. This festival will showcase the great ports of Dublin, Bordeaux and Liverpool and will be brought to life through music, exhibitions and theatre. This will happen within three distinct areas around the city reflecting the three ports, The Pier Head (Bordeaux), the Albert Dock (Ireland) and Liverpool City Centre. As if that wasn't enough, we also have the Bordeaux Fete le Vin (The Bordeaux Wine Festival) making its UK debut on the world famous Pier Head. This is one of the most celebrated wine events in Europe and is sure to be one of the highlights. So get your tickets early if you want to attend.

We also see the return of LIMF which is Liverpool's International Music Event held on Sefton Park. Other events include Africa Oye, the UK's largest celebration of African music and culture which is now in its 26th year and the Liverpool Biennial taking place over 15 weeks across the city in public spaces, galleries, museums and online.

All of these, together with Smash the Keys, a 10 day music festival of the piano, the World Boccia Championships to be held in the Exhibition Centre and Lost Castles, a two day citywide event featuring the work of French artist Olivier Grossette, are sure to make for an exciting year!

Please visit the Culture Liverpool website for more information on all of these events plus many more.

<https://www.cultureliverpool.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 323 0260

 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