

Pension Choices, alpha or partnership: an overview



Civil Service Pensions (CSP) offers a choice of pension arrangements, alpha or partnership. This table summarises the benefits of each.

If you have previously worked for an employer who offered the CSP arrangements, or another public service pension, there may be other options available to you.

You can find the full details on eligibility, and full scheme guides for both alpha and partnership, on the CSP website: www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk

You should not take anything in this section as financial advice. You might want to consider contacting an Independent Financial Adviser (IFA) to discuss your retirement planning. You can find tips on finding an IFA by visiting the Financial Conduct Authority website: www.fca.org.uk

	alpha	partnership
What kind of scheme is it?	Defined benefit scheme. Offers a pension income based on your earnings over your career and your years of membership in the scheme.	Defined contribution scheme. A type of pension where benefits are dependent on contributions and the growth of the pension fund.
How much will I pay?	You will contribute between 4.6% and 8.05% of your pensionable earnings, depending on how much you earn.	You do not have to pay anything. You can pay as much as you like up to 100% of your pensionable earnings. Your employer will match your contributions, up to 3%.
How much will my employer pay?	Your employer will make a contribution as a percentage of your pensionable earnings. Please see: www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/employers/employer-contribution-rates for more information.	
Will I get tax relief on my contributions?	You get tax relief on contributions, subject to HM Revenue & Customs rules.	
How does my pension build up?	You build up alpha pension at a rate of 2.32% of your pensionable pay each year.	Contributions are invested in a fund of your choice by your partnership pension provider.

	What benefits do I get?	
	alpha	partnership
Retirement pension	This will be made up of the 2.32% of your pensionable earnings each year, adjusted in line with prices.	Contributions are invested to build up a pension pot that can be used to fund your retirement.
Lump sum	You can choose to exchange 25% of the total value of your pension benefits for a tax-free lump sum, subject to limits set by HM Revenue & Customs.	You can choose to exchange some, or all of your pension pot for a lump sum, subject to limits set by HM Revenue & Customs.
When can I take my pension?	In alpha, you have a Normal Pension Age (NPA), which is the same as your State Pension age. You can take your pension before your NPA, although your benefits will be reduced to take account of early payment. The minimum pension age in alpha is age 55.	You can take your pension at any time from age 55. You don't have to retire to take your pension.
Ill-health benefits	You can apply for ill-health retirement. If the Scheme Medical Adviser confirms your health will permanently prevent you from being able to do your current job, you can have your alpha pension paid early. Your pension can be increased if you are unlikely to be able to return to any sort of employment.	You can apply for an ill-health payment. If the Scheme Medical Adviser confirms your health will permanently prevent you from being able to do your current job, you could receive a lump sum when you leave. You can draw your pension before age 55 if you retire because of ill-health.
What benefits are there for my family?	If you die with at least one year's service, alpha provides pensions for your spouse, civil partner, or nominated partner and any dependent children. If you die in service, alpha also provides a lump sum that can be paid to people or an organisation that you nominate.	If you die before you take your pension, your provider will pay the value of your pension to the named person on the pension application form. If you die in service a lump sum can be paid to people or organisations that you nominate. On retirement, you can choose whether or not to provide a pension for your dependants as well as for yourself.

How do I register my choice?

Fill in the Pension Choices form, which is enclosed in your New Starter Pack and send it to the return address shown on the form.