

## 2015 Remedy (McCloud) revisited

**EMILY:** Today, we're revisiting the 2015 Remedy or McCloud judgment to look at what retirement looks like post-implementation.

**ROB:** We're here with Kevin Hughes, a policy expert from Cabinet Office, who's going to talk us through what's been happening with the 2015 Remedy. Kevin, it's good to see you and welcome back to the podcast.

**KEVIN:** Well, it's good to be back.

**ROB:** So Kevin, when we spoke to you in season three, we talked about what retiring with the 2015 Remedy looks like. And for any first-time listeners, can you give us a quick recap of what the 2015 Remedy means for members of the scheme?

**KEVIN:** Yep. So for all those members who are in scope of remedy, and that's not all civil servants, but a good number, what it means is that in the future, when they come to retire, they will be given a choice when they claim their benefits of whether they would like, for their period of service between 2015 and 2022, to have that service either in the alpha pension scheme or in their pre-2015 scheme, if they would prefer. And in preparation for that, if they moved over to alpha in 2015, they have now been moved back into their legacy pension scheme for the period 2015 to 2022. So that's the default position, but they will be given the choice at retirement as to which scheme they want that period of service in.

**EMILY:** Great, thanks Kevin. Hopefully, it's a familiar topic to members who were listening who were impacted by the 2015 Remedy by now, but for those who aren't, that should give you a really quick summary. Now, there's a term that we've heard a few times in the context of the 2015 Remedy, which is 'Deferred Choice Underpin' or DCU. So, Kevin, could you give us a brief overview of what that means?

**KEVIN:** So, for those members who are affected by Remedy, they are in either what's called the Deferred Choice Underpin, DCU category, or they're an Immediate Choice category. Now, if you're in the Deferred Choice Underpin, that means that you haven't yet taken any of your benefits from the period 2015 to 2022. Probably for most people, that means you haven't taken your pension at all, although there are some members who have taken partial retirement who might fall into this category.

And that means if you hear the term DCU, Deferred Choice Underpin, that means that when you get to take your pension, or if in the case of our partially retired members, when you take your full pension, usually, you will be given the choice of benefits for 2015 to 2022 period. And that's what we laid out on your retirement quote.

**ROB:** So if the DCU applies for you, it basically means you choose [your benefits for 2015-2022] when you retire.

**KEVIN:** Yep. And you don't need to do anything before then. You will see information about it, obviously, you'll be listening to podcasts like this, for example, but there's no action that people need to take until they actually come to retirement. And that's when they make their choice.

**ROB:** OK, so what about things that happen before retirement? So what about Annual Benefit Statements? What does this mean for them?

**KEVIN:**

So the Annual Benefit Statement is a good example of one of the changes our members may have recently seen in the 2025 Annual Benefit Statement exercise. And just a reminder, you can access your Annual Benefit Statement in the Pension Portal, if you haven't already looked at it. For the first time most members will see two statements, effectively; one showing your service in alpha between 2015 and 2022, and a second statement showing your service in your legacy scheme between 2015 and 2022.

As is always the case for Annual Benefit Statements, this is just for your information, so you know what pension you have, and a bit of an idea about what you'll get in future. Option A and Option B: Option A legacy, Option B having alpha for 2015 to 2022.

I did mention 'most people', we got about 95% of the population who will have received both statements, they'll see that. But then there's further 5% of members who... most of them will just have got one of those statements showing that their pension in the legacy scheme between 2015 to 2022. There's a very small number of people who actually just have very complicated affairs who won't get an Annual Benefit Statement at all. To give you an idea of who these members are, if you've contributed to EPA/Effective Pension Age during 2015 to 2022, you'll probably only get the one statement. And if you've got a pension debit, those members who've maybe got divorced in the past, they're the people who might not get a statement at all. There are other groups, so don't be concerned if you haven't got a statement or if it shows one, you might be in those categories, but those are the main ones.

**EMILY:** I feel like every time we talk about the 2015 Remedy, we scratch the surface and there's a whole other world of complexity that comes out of it.

**ROB:** Yeah, absolutely. Well, last time we spoke to you, Kevin, [was in] 2024. So summer 2024 was the last time we spoke on the podcast. And as we sit here today, it's September 2025. What's happened since then?

**KEVIN:** So, quite a lot has moved on since last year. Probably the most significant thing is the scheme administrator has now started to send out the Immediate Choice statements. Remember, the Immediate Choice group are those members who have already taken their pension for between 2015 to 2022 service. About half of those members have been issued with statements now. That sets out what their benefits would be under option A and option B. So, the legacy scheme for 2015 to 2022 or alpha of 2015 to 2022.

In many cases, one option will be no change and the other option will be hopefully better, but it may be worse, in which case, you probably wouldn't take it. The members are already making those elections, and the scheme administrator is putting their election into payment and that may well be arrears being paid over to them and basically putting them in position they would have been, absent of the discrimination.

**ROB:** For the benefit of anyone who doesn't know, a deferred member is someone who has left the scheme, either left the civil service or is not in the scheme anymore, but has got a preserved benefit. Just for the non-technical members of this, which is going to be most of our listeners.

**EMILY:** Okay, so you mentioned deferred members. What can they expect, kind of, moving forward, in terms of 2015 remedy?

**KEVIN:** So our deferred members, about half of the population, have already got their Remediable Service Statement setting out the benefits on both the 2015 basis, the alpha scheme, and the legacy scheme basis. The other half, who haven't received one yet, will be receiving one at some point over the next two years. After that, they won't receive anything at all until they claim their pension at some future date, when they're ready. Although, if they do want to get an up-to-date value of their benefits at a future date, they can request an Annual Benefit Statement from the scheme administrator at any time, up to one per year. You don't really need to request it, generally, because it's quite straightforward. It just goes up in line with CPI [Consumer Price Index] after you've left service, but if you do ever want to see the latest value, just contact the administrator and request a benefit statement.

**ROB:** What about current members of the scheme, active members? Can they use the retirement modeller to see what their Remedy choices might look like?

**KEVIN:** Yes, the retirement modeller has been updated to show members who log into the Pensions Portal - it's just an option there - both option A, legacy, having pension service between 2015 - 2022 in the pre-2015 scheme, and option B, the Remedy option, being in alpha 2015 - 2022. You can do some modelling in that about your future pension. You can change the lump sum amount, for example, that you might want to take, and vary retirement age, if you want to retire early or maybe a bit later, whatever, and just do some ideas to see what the difference is between option A and option B.

**ROB:** OK, so last time, we talked about how there might not be much of a difference between the benefits in choice A versus ~ choice B. But even if it does seem obvious to a pensions expert what might be the best option for someone, I guess members have got to be given the ability to make that choice. But what if a member's a bit unsure? What if they need help? How do they go about getting that?

**KEVIN:** So hopefully, members won't need help. This all sounds rather complicated, what we're saying here, but when you actually look at the individual member experience, most members won't engage with this until retirement. They'll get a retirement quote and that will just set out in pounds, shillings and pence - actually it won't be shillings, it'll just be pounds and pence, don't worry - about option A and option B. And it will be, here's what your lump sum will be and here's what your annual pension will be. And that really should be a quite straightforward decision. In some cases, it will be absolutely clear cut. It will be one is clearly better than the other in every regard.

In some cases, it might be a bit of a trade-off. It might be maybe under one option, the lump sums higher, but the pension is lower. But you'll be able to see that, and you'll be able to make the decision about whether you think it's worthwhile or not. Of course, if people actually want formal financial advice, there are independent financial advisors. The pension scheme cannot give advice, but there are sufficient tools in that quote. It all sounds very difficult and complicated. It really is a fairly simple decision for most people at the time.

**ROB:** I guess, really breaking it down, you might be retiring after 30 or 40 years working in the civil service. Your Remedy choice is a seven-year portion of that. That's what that relates to, isn't it?

**KEVIN:** Yes, for many people it will be a relatively small part. Obviously, to be affected by Remedy, you have to have joined the Civil Service before 2012. So, if you are now here in 2025 or maybe even 2026, depending on when you listen to this, that's already... Remedy is maybe only half of your service and the proportion is going down all the time. So, as you say, if it's broadly similar for most people, obviously the differences in many cases will be very small.

Now, there are certain circumstances where the differences could be quite large. And that's for example, if you suffer ill health, if you do something unusual, death in service or something like that. That's where the big differences can normally lie. Or perhaps if you had voluntary redundancy, these are all the things where the differences really get magnified. But for people who are just working normally and retiring, be that from active status or if they've left from deferred status, this is actually, probably, in most cases, a very small thing for most people. We're talking perhaps a difference of hundreds of pounds per year at most.

**ROB:** For those people who do have those very complicated circumstances, presumably there's lots of information, support, guidance available for them to help them navigate that complexity.

**KEVIN:** Yes, in the first instance, scheme booklets on the website. Obviously, once you realize you're being affected by these things, then that's when people would really go and look in a bit more detail and probably learn about it. So, people don't need to learn about these things now. But there is information for anyone who does want to. For example, the alpha scheme guide is generally the best starting point for people who want to learn a bit more about the scheme and what might happen, what the possible payouts might be.

**EMILY:** Okay, so the last time we saw you, Kevin, I remember you asked our listeners to get in touch with us if they'd been a member of a public sector pension scheme before 2012, because they could also be affected by the 2015 Remedy. Can you tell us a little bit more about that? Why is that so important?

**KEVIN:** So, this comes about because of the eligibility for 2015 Remedy. People might think all the public service pension schemes, by which I mean the National Health Service pension scheme, the teachers pension scheme and so forth. We're all part of the same thing. And to extent we are, but each scheme is administered completely separately.

So, we don't actually know if you used to work in the NHS or you've got an NHS pension at all. Now, you might have transferred a pension, so we might have some idea. But if you left a pension with the NHS or the LGPS, for example, local government scheme, we wouldn't know that at all. We would just see you, maybe, joining in 2013, 2014. And I said earlier, to be eligible for Remedy, you had to be in service within the public sector on 31st March 2012. So, although we know virtually everything we need to know for people who are in scope of Remedy, we may not know if you're in scope of remedy or not. And if we've got you down as not in scope of remedy, you won't be getting these two different Annual Benefit Statements each year. You'll just be down as someone who joined in 2013, non-Remedy member, and that will carry on, unless you make yourself known to us and you tell us about that past service, so that we can go and check with your previous employer, the NHS, et cetera, and their pension scheme, to establish that, yes, you were there on 31st March 2012, and then you will be brought within scope of Remedy. And that's when you'll get your two statements and that's when you'll be given your Remedy options at retirement.

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So, there is a portal now on the website, Scheme Administrator's website, where you can go and fill in those details and that will all go through to the scheme administrator, your service will be checked and then if relevant you'll be moved into the Remedy affected group.

**ROB:** Wow. What a download of information that has been. So, the key takeaways, then, for our listeners are if you're affected by the 2015 Remedy, you don't make your choice until you come to retire. There is nothing that you need to do now. If you're already retired or partially retired, the scheme will contact you with your options laid out clearly for you to make that choice. And when you've made your choice, that is it. You can't change your mind. So, you've to make sure you've got all the information to make an informed decision and you're able to make the best choice for you.

**KEVIN:** Yeah, that's a fair assessment. One thing I would really emphasize is that, if you haven't got your statement and you're in the Immediate Choice group and you're in receipt of your pension now, a very, very common query we're receiving at the moment is "Why haven't I received my remediable service statement?" And I just say to people, don't worry about it. There's many people who haven't received it. The fact you haven't received it isn't a problem. You don't need to contact us. We'll contact you, but it may not be until some point within the next couple of years.

**EMILY:** Well, Kevin, once again, thank you for coming to the podcast today and being a font of all knowledge when it comes to 2015 Remedy and for talking us through everything.

**KEVIN:** Yeah, it was a pleasure being here, thanks.

**ROB:** Find out more about anything we've talked about today or to tell us what you'd like us to cover in a future episode, head to [civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/podcast](https://civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/podcast). You can also find links to information, transcripts and accessible versions of this podcast in the episode description.

**EMILY:** Make sure to follow so you never miss an episode. We'd love to hear your thoughts and feedback on this series, so please do leave us a review wherever you get your podcasts.

**ROB:** This episode was recorded in September 2025. All information is accurate at the time of recording. Thanks for listening.