



Employer Pensions Notice

EPN 151

Paying pensions on time

Pre-retirement model letter text

Audience This Notice will be of particular interest to:

- HR Managers
- HR staff dealing with age retirement
- Policy teams

Action To consider writing to members of staff who are approaching pension age to find out when they plan to retire. This will help you to take prompt action to ensure that their pension is paid on time.

The attached model letters are intended for you to use to ensure that members' pensions are paid on time.

Timing Immediate

1. As part of our Communication Strategy, the Pensions Communication Network (PCN) looked at how employers inform their Authorised Pension Administration Centre (APAC) of members' retirement dates. The PCN representatives discussed concerns that employers are not always telling their APAC promptly when members want to take their pension. There is a risk that members will not get their pension paid on time. Late notification of retirement dates creates extra work for the APAC and extra costs for you, the employer. The timescale for retirement actions is clearly set out in section 7 of the Employers' Pension Guide.



2. We, in consultation with employer representatives from the PCN groups, have produced model letters that you can use when writing to staff who are approaching pension age, to ask when they are planning to retire. This is becoming more important as retirement age is no longer linked to pension age in many organisations. From 1st October 2006 most staff will have the right to work to 65, but the majority of staff will still have a pension age of 60.

3. We have produced four model letters, two for **classic, classic plus** and **premium** members and two for **partnership** members. We've also included a form which you can use to find out about members' intentions. See Annex B

4. You can send the first of the model letters before age 59 and the second at age 59. It is for you, as the employer, to decide which letter(s) and optional text to use in your organisation. The letters are designed to give the member a clearer understanding of:

- the choices they have (if applicable);
- the things they need to consider;
- the sources of information and help available to them;
- the actions they need to take; and
- the notice period required.

You can include the appropriate paragraphs from the model letters into your own pre retirement letters, ensuring that you follow the notes on the right hand side of the page.

5. The attached model letters and intentions form will be included in the Employers' Pension Guide, which we are currently revising.

6. If you are interested in finding out more about the PCN groups further details can be found in the employer section of our website www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk, listed under communications strategy.

Reference

Contacts Enquiries about content, distribution or to receive in a different format

employerhelpdesk@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

01256 846414

**Employer Helpdesk, Civil Service Pensions, Grosvenor House, Basing View
Basingstoke, RG21 4HG**

You can find copies of all current EPNs and forms on our website
www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk in the Employers section
username **employers** password **mc2fxqfy**

**Scheme letter 1
classic, classic plus and premium scheme members
send this letter at age 59 or earlier**

Suggested paragraphs to include in first pre-retirement letter, together with bulleted items.

	NOTES
<p>1. As you are approaching your [57th/58th as appropriate] birthday we thought we should remind you of our retirement policy, so that you can think about your retirement plans and the choices open to you.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT insert appropriate contact age.</p>
<p><u>2. Retirement Policy and Flexibilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible work choices • Authorisation if required • Any other conditions 	<p>YOUR TEXT state your policy, what is available to the member and any procedures for them applying</p>

	NOTES
<p><u>3. Pension arrangements</u></p> <p>IMPORTANT NOTE – this is a brief overview of the pension provision, which may be subject to change in the future. You should check the current position with your pensions administrator before making any financial decisions.</p> <p>You can choose to:</p> <p><u>Continue working beyond age 60</u></p> <p>You can continue working beyond age 60 without taking your pension and build up more pension depending on how much service you have and which scheme you are in.</p> <p>Under classic (as applicable) If you have completed 40 years’ reckonable service by age 60, then your pension will be based on 40 years’ reckonable service. Any additional service, served after reaching 60 will count in addition to the 40 years allowing you maximum reckonable service of 45 years.</p> <p>Under classic plus and premium (as applicable) You cannot have pension based on more than 40 years’ service in total. If you build up 40 years before you reach age 60 you will stop paying employee contributions and will receive a pension based on your 40 years whenever you decide to retire.</p> <p>If you will not complete 40 years before age 60 you can continue to build up service beyond 60 up to a maximum of 40 years.</p> <p><u>Resign and take your pension benefits</u></p> <p>You can resign and take your pension benefits at age 60. Please see your Annual Benefit Statement for your projected pension benefits. If you are entitled to a State Pension you will receive this at state pension age: 65 for men and 60 for women (gradually rising to 65 for women by 2020 starting in 2010). You can find details of how to get a state pension forecast (BR19) on the Pension Service website at www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p> <p>FIXED TEXT</p> <p>Delete scheme information as applicable – you need to check which scheme they are in!</p>
<p>Your pension will be calculated on your pensionable earnings when you retire.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>

	NOTES
<p><u>4a. Re-employment and abatement</u></p> <p>If you decide to work again after you retire and you are re-employed by a government department or body covered by the Civil Service Pension arrangements your pension may be reduced. Under the scheme rules, you may not earn more, in re-employed salary and pension, than you were earning when you left the service. Where your re-employed salary and pension exceed your previous salary, the excess is deducted from your pension. This is known as abatement.</p> <p>If you work for an organisation outside the Civil Service Pension arrangements it will not affect your pension.</p> <p>If you are considering re-employment, the prospective employing department will obtain an estimate showing the impact on your pension.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>
<p>4b. If you are re-employed then you may be able to rejoin the Civil Service Pension arrangements and build up further benefits. If you are not eligible to rejoin then you may open a partnership pension account.</p>	<p>optional FIXED TEXT you may include this if you wish</p>
<p><u>5. Pre-retirement course</u></p> <p>We offer a pre-retirement course which we recommend that you attend. The course gives you the opportunity to discuss the issues relating to retirement which are important to you. For further information about the course and the next available dates please contact [HR/other]</p> <p>In considering when you plan to retire, you may wish to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Savings and Investments - Budgeting - Housing - Contingency Planning - Legal Provisions such as: making a will, granting Power of Attorney <p>You can find helpful information on the DWP Pension Service website at: www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/approachingretirement/home/asp</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT Insert your contact details</p>
<p><u>6. Nomination forms</u></p> <p>This may be an appropriate time to review your death benefit nomination to check that it is up to date.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>
<p>If you are in classic plus or premium and want to provide a pension for your partner (other than a spouse or civil partner), you must ensure that you and your partner have signed a partner declaration form so that they will receive a pension if you die before them. The form is available from our website at: www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk or from your pensions administrator.</p>	<p>Insert as appropriate to member's pension scheme</p>
<p><u>7. Further Information</u> – see Annex A for contact details.</p>	

	NOTES
<p><u>8. Action</u></p> <p>If you can tell us what you intend to do, this will help us to plan ahead. We've enclosed a form for you to let us know what you plan to do. It does not mean you have to retire at that time. You can change the date at any time, please give [HR] 3 months' notice so that we can make sure you get your pension benefits on time.</p> <p>Please complete the retirement intentions form and return it to..... [HR/other] by..... [date]</p>	<p>Optional FIXED TEXT – insert contact details</p>
<p><u>9. What happens next</u></p> <p>[HR] will write to you again at age 59/59½ to ask for your intentions.</p> <p>[Add any other information if applicable]</p> <p>If you have any queries about your pension please contact our pensions administrator. See Annex A for contact details.</p>	<p>YOUR TEXT Tell them when you will contact them again</p>

**Scheme letter 2
classic, classic plus and premium scheme members
send this letter at age 59/59½**

Suggested paragraphs to include in second pre-retirement letter, together with bulleted items.

	NOTES
1. As you are approaching your 60th birthday we thought we should remind you of our retirement policy, so that you can think about your retirement plans and the choices open to you.	FIXED TEXT
<p><u>2. Retirement Policy and Flexibilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible work choices • Authorisation if required • Any other conditions 	YOUR TEXT state your policy, what is available to the member and any procedures for them applying

<p><u>3. Pension Arrangements</u></p> <p>IMPORTANT NOTE – this is a brief overview of the pension provision, which may be subject to change in the future. You should check the current position with your pensions administrator before making any financial decisions.</p> <p>You can choose to:</p> <p><u>Continue working beyond age 60</u></p> <p>You can continue working beyond age 60 without taking your pension and build up more pension depending on how much service you have and which scheme you are in.</p> <p>Under classic (as applicable) If you have completed 40 years’ reckonable service by age 60, then your pension will be based on 40 years’ reckonable service. Any additional service, served after reaching 60 will count in addition to the 40 years allowing you maximum reckonable service of 45 years.</p> <p>Under classic plus and premium (as applicable) You cannot have pension based on more than 40 years’ service in total. If you build up 40 years before you reach age 60 you will stop paying employee contributions and will receive a pension based on your 40 years whenever you decide to retire.</p> <p>If you will not complete 40 years before age 60 you can continue to build up service beyond 60 up to a maximum of 40 years.</p> <p><u>Retire and take your pension benefits</u></p> <p>You can retire and take your pension benefits at age 60. Please see your Annual Benefit Statement for your projected pension benefits. If you are entitled to a State Pension you will receive this at state pension age: 65 for men and 60 for women (gradually rising to 65 for women by 2020 starting in 2010). You can find details of how to get a state pension forecast (BR19) on the DWP Pension Service website at www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p> <p>FIXED TEXT</p> <p>Delete scheme information as applicable – you need to check which scheme they are in!</p>
<p>Your pension will be calculated on your pensionable earnings when you retire.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>

<p><u>4a. Re-employment and abatement</u></p> <p>If you decide to work again after you retire and you are re-employed by a government department or organisation covered by the Civil Service Pension arrangements your pension may be reduced. You may not earn more, in re-employed salary and pension, than you were earning when you left the service. Where your re-employed salary and pension exceed your previous salary, the excess is deducted from your pension. This is known as abatement.</p> <p>If you work for an organisation outside the Civil Service Pension arrangements it will not affect your pension.</p> <p>If you are considering re-employment, the prospective employing department will obtain an estimate showing the impact on your pension.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>
<p>4b. If you are re-employed then you may be able to rejoin the Civil Service Pension arrangements and build up further service. If you are not eligible to rejoin then you may open a partnership pension account.</p>	<p>Optional FIXED TEXT include this if you wish</p>
<p><u>5. Pre-retirement course</u></p> <p>[If you have not already done so, invite to a course using the wording in paragraph 5 of Scheme letter 1]</p>	
<p><u>6. Payment of your pension</u></p> <p>We want to make sure that you get your pension on time. To enable us to do this, we need 3 months to collect and process all the necessary information. To start the process, we need to know when you plan to retire.</p> <p>Please would you complete the attached form indicating when you wish to retire.</p> <p>[If you choose to work beyond age 60 please give us an idea of when you intend to retire so that we can plan for the future].</p> <p>If you change your mind at any time, and wish to retire earlier than indicated, please ensure that you give at least 3 months' notice so that your pension benefits can be paid on time.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p> <p>[OPTIONAL TEXT include if you wish]</p>
<p><u>7. Nomination forms</u></p> <p>This may be an appropriate time to review your death benefit nomination to check that it is up to date.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>

<p>If you are in classic plus or premium and want to provide a pension for your partner (other than a spouse or civil partner), you must ensure that you and your partner have signed a partner declaration form so that they will receive a pension if you die before them. The form is available from our website at: www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk or from your pensions administrator.</p>	<p>Insert as appropriate to member's pension scheme</p>
<p><u>8. Further Information</u> See Annex A for contact details</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>
<p><u>9. What happens next</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you plan to work beyond age 60 [HR] will write [1year] before your planned retirement date to ask for your intentions. 2. If you change your mind please contact [HR/other] and give 3 months notice so that we can make sure you get your pension on time. <p>If you have any queries about your pension please contact our pensions administrator. See Annex A for contact details.</p>	<p>YOUR TEXT Tell them when you will be contacting them again</p> <p>OPTIONAL TEXT Check with your APAC whether they send out a letter at 59.5</p>

partnership scheme letter 1
partnership scheme members
Send this letter at age [57/58] or earlier

Suggested paragraphs to include in first pre-retirement letter to members of partnership, together with bulleted items.

	NOTES
As you are approaching your [57th/58th as appropriate] birthday we thought we should remind you of our retirement policy, so that you can think about your retirement plans and the choices open to you.	FIXED TEXT insert age as appropriate
<p><u>1. Retirement Policy and Flexibilities</u></p> <p>Set out –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible work choices • Authorisation • Any other conditions 	YOUR TEXT State your policy - what is available to the member and any procedures for them applying
[We will not take any retirement actions unless you give us at least 1 month's notice of your intentions.]	OPTIONAL TEXT include as appropriate

<p><u>2. Your pension</u></p> <p>IMPORTANT NOTE – this is a brief overview of the pension provision, which may be subject to change in the future. You should check the current position with your pensions provider before making any financial decisions.</p> <p>As a partnership member you can take your pension benefits from your partnership pension account at any time from age 50 to 75.</p> <p>You do not have to stop work or retire to do this, and your pay would not be affected. You can take up to 25% of your pension pot as a lump sum, but this will reduce the pension that you can buy.</p> <p>If you continue to work or are re-employed within an organisation covered by the Civil Service pension arrangements you can open a new partnership pension account to build up a new pension pot and still benefit from employer contributions.</p> <p>You should receive an annual statement from your pension provider telling you what your partnership pension may be. If you are considering taking your pension, you should ask them for an estimate of pension benefits.</p> <p>If you are entitled to a State Pension you will receive this at state pension age: 65 for men and 60 for women (gradually rising to 65 for women by 2020 starting in 2010). You can find details of how to get a state pension forecast (BR19) on the Pension Service website at www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p> <p>Note: From 6 April 2010, the minimum age at which partnership members can normally start taking their pension will increase from 50 to 55.</p>
<p><u>3. Pre-retirement course</u></p> <p>We offer a pre-retirement course which we recommend that you attend. The course gives you the opportunity to discuss the issues relating to retirement which are important to you. For further information about the course and the next available dates please contact [HR/other]</p> <p>In considering when you plan to retire, you may wish to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Savings and Investments - Budgeting - Housing - Contingency Planning - Legal Provisions such as: making a will, granting Power of Attorney <p>You can find helpful information on the Pension Service website at www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/approachingretirement/home/asp.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p> <p>Insert contact details</p>
<p><u>4. Nomination form</u></p> <p>This may be an appropriate time to review your death benefit nomination to check that it is up to date</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>

<p><u>5. Further Information</u> See Annex A for contact details</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>
<p><u>6. What happens next</u></p> <p>[HR] will write to you again at age 64 or one year before your recorded planned retirement age to confirm your intentions.</p> <p>When you decide to take your pension you should contact your pension provider for an estimate of your benefits – the choice of timing is up to you.</p> <p>[Add any other information if applicable]</p> <p>If you have any queries about your pension please contact your pensions provider.</p>	<p>YOUR TEXT Tell them when you will be contacting them again</p> <p>Amend / Insert details as appropriate</p>
<p><u>7. Action</u></p> <p>If you can tell us what you intend to do, this will help us to plan ahead. We've enclosed a form for you to let us know what you plan to do.</p> <p>Please complete the retirement intentions form and return it to..... [HR/other] by..... [date]</p>	<p>YOUR TEXT – insert contact details</p>

**partnership scheme letter 2
partnership scheme members**

Letter sent at age 59/59½ or one year before the age they indicated that they planned to retire / age 65

Suggested paragraphs to include in second partnership pre-retirement letter, together with bulleted items.

	NOTES
As you are approaching your [60 th] birthday we thought we should remind you of our retirement policy, so that you can think about your retirement plans and the choices open to you.	FIXED TEXT insert age as appropriate
<p><u>1. Retirement Policy and Flexibilities</u></p> <p>Set out –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible work choices • Authorisation • Any other conditions 	YOUR TEXT State your policy - what is available to the member and any procedures for them applying
[We will not take any action to start payment of your pension unless you give us at least 1 month's notice of your intentions.]	OPTIONAL TEXT include as appropriate

<p><u>2. Your pension</u></p> <p>IMPORTANT NOTE – this is a brief overview of the pension provision, which may be subject to change in the future. You should check the current position with your pensions provider before making any financial decisions.</p> <p>As a partnership member you can take your pension benefits from your partnership pension account at any time from age 50 to 75.</p> <p>You do not have to stop work or retire to do this, and your pay would not be affected. You can take up to 25% of your pension pot as a lump sum, but this will reduce the pension that you can buy.</p> <p>If, after taking your benefits, you continue to work or are re-employed within an organisation covered by the Civil Service pension arrangements you can also open a new account to build up a new pension pot and still benefit from employer contributions.</p> <p>You should receive an annual statement from your pension provider telling you what your partnership pension may be. If you are considering taking your pension, you should ask them for an estimate of pension benefits.</p> <p>If you are entitled to a State Pension you will receive this at state pension age: 65 for men and 60 for women (gradually rising to 65 for women by 2020 starting in 2010). You can find details of how to get a state pension forecast (BR19) on the Pension Service website at www.thepensionservice.gov.uk</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p> <p>Note: From 6 April 2010, the minimum age at which partnership members can normally start taking their pension will increase from 50 to 55.</p>
<p><u>3. Payment of your pension</u></p> <p>You need to contact your partnership pension provider to tell them when you want to take your pension. You should ask for an estimate of the pension benefits that your pension pot will buy. Remember that you do not have to buy your pension ('annuity') from your partnership provider – you can 'shop around' to other providers to get the best deal.</p> <p>You may want to consult an Independent Financial Adviser (IFA). If you are a union member they may be able to offer cost effective access to an IFA.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>
<p><u>4. Your retirement date</u></p> <p>Please complete the attached form to tell us what date you are currently thinking of retiring on so that we can plan for the future.</p> <p>You may change your mind at any time but please contact [HR] with at least 1 month's notice</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>

<p>5. <u>Pre-retirement course</u></p> <p>[If you have not already done so, invite to a course using the wording in paragraph 3 of partnership scheme letter 1]</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p> <p>Insert contact details</p>
<p>6. <u>Nomination form</u></p> <p>This may be an appropriate time to review your death benefit nomination to check that it is up to date.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>
<p>7. <u>Further Information</u> See Annex A for contact details</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT</p>
<p>8. <u>What happens next</u></p> <p>HR will write to you again [1year] before your planned retirement date to confirm your intentions.</p> <p>If you change your mind please contact [HR/other] and give 1 months notice.</p> <p>If you have any queries about your pension please contact your pensions provider.</p> <p>9. <u>Action</u></p> <p>Please complete and return the enclosed retirement intentions form to..... [HR/other] by..... [date]</p>	<p>YOUR TEXT</p> <p>Tell them when you will be contacting them again</p>

<p><u>Further Information - contact details</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee assistance/welfare [HR to insert if applicable] • Contact points [HR to insert] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HR..... ○ Pensions Administrator • Booklets or Leaflets - a full list of leaflets is available on the Civil Service Pensions website 'under Publications, rules and forms' www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk • Department for Work & Pensions website www.dwp.gov.uk • The Pensions Service website www.thepensionservice.gov.uk • Civil Service Retirement Fellowship website www.csrf.org.uk <p>All booklets and leaflets are available from our pensions administrator.</p>	<p>FIXED TEXT Include any appropriate departmental contacts</p>
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RETIREMENT INTENTIONS

(To be completed by you)

NAME (in capitals)

DATE OF BIRTH*(optional)

DEPARTMENT

STAFF NO.*(optional)

I wish to:

(please tick appropriate box)

Continue working beyond my 60th birthday

Retire, and take my pension benefits on my 60th birthday.

I plan to retire at **[age x / date.....]** (see Note)

Please return the form to: [HR/other]

.....

NOTE

This is a helpful indicator to us of your present intention. It does not mean you have to retire at that time. You can change the date at any time; please give **[HR]** 3 months notice so that they can pay your pension benefits on time.

If you have any queries regarding your pension please contact your pensions administrator on.....

***Note to employers Include only if you need this information from the member.**