

Welcome to the Teachers' Pension Scheme

One of the greatest benefits of your profession is your pension and the security it offers you during your career and in later life.

Find out the basics you should know about your pension and how to make the most of it. If you then want to know more in-depth information about the Scheme you can check out our [active member guide](#).

Go on, read it. Your pension's worth it.

How do you join the Scheme?

To become a member of the Teachers' Pension Scheme you don't need to take any action. Your employer will do it all for you. This is known as contractual enrolment.

Key things to understand about your pension

Here are the top things to remember when it comes to understanding the benefits of your teacher's pension.

It provides you with an income for your retirement and you can even take part of your pension as a tax-free lump sum when you retire.

You and your employer both pay contributions towards the cost of your pension. It's a great way to save for your future and pay a little less tax every month, as your pension contributions aren't taxed.

Your pension benefits are for you and your loved ones. They don't belong to your employer or the government.

As long as you're in eligible employment you can continue building up your pension, wherever you go throughout your teaching career.

You can check on the benefits you're building up with your online Benefit Statement.

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is a Defined Benefit Scheme which is based on your annual pensionable earnings, re-valued each year. The Scheme isn't reliant on how investments perform which means you won't have to worry about where your pension is being held.

You'll join the career average scheme and accrue benefits each year based on 1/57th of your annual pensionable earnings. This is added to your 'pot', and we then revalue the total 'pot' each year to keep it up to date with increases in prices. As long as you're active in the Scheme we'll add on an extra 1.6% too.

Important dates to be aware of

You have three important dates to keep in mind when you join the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

1. You have six months to take '[Buy Out](#)' once you join.

Your pension is flexible – meaning you have the chance to save more throughout your career. These are called flexibilities and one of these, 'Buy Out', needs to be taken within six months of joining the Scheme. There's more information on what 'Buy Out' means along with the other flexibilities on our main site.

Another flexibility is called Faster Accrual. This allows you to pay a higher contribution to increase your pension for a particular scheme year (1 April to 31 March). You need to make your election within one month of starting pensionable employment. In future years you'll need to make your election before the end of March each year.

Before making any decisions regarding the flexibilities offered by the Teachers' Pension Scheme, you should obtain independent financial advice about your individual circumstances.

2. Got an existing pension? You have 12 months to transfer it into the Scheme.

If you already have a pension, then you might be able to transfer it into your teacher's pension. You can easily start the transfer process using the form on [My Pension Online](#). It only takes a couple of minutes to register.

What do you pay?

Paying into the Scheme is simple. Contributions are taken from your wage automatically and are based on your salary. They usually change each April and you can view the current Member Contribution Rates on the [updates page](#) of our website. Since 1 April 2024 the applicable bands are in the below table. The rate your employer pays into the Scheme is 28.68% of your salary.

Annual Salary Rate for the Eligible Employment from 1 April 2024	Member Contribution Rate
Up to £34,289.99	7.4%
£34,290.00 to £46,158.99	8.6%
£46,159.00 to £54,729.99	9.6%
£54,730.00 to £72,534.99	10.2%
£72,535.00 to £98,908.99	11.3%
£98,909.00 and above	11.7%

It's important to check your payslips to ensure you're paying the correct amount and if you think a mistake has been made, please speak to your employer as soon as possible. It's important to not leave these things until a later date.

Qualify for benefits?

Qualifying for benefits means that you'll receive a pension from the Scheme after you retire. To qualify for your benefits, you'll need to complete a minimum of two years qualifying service.

People sometimes get confused between qualifying service and the actual service that counts towards their benefits. What's the difference? Well, if you're working part-time, the whole period counts towards your qualifying service including the days you don't work. However, your benefits are based on the pensionable earnings you receive.

Your Normal Pension Age (NPA)

The Normal Pension Age of a member in the career average arrangement is either their State Pension age or age 65, whichever is the later date.

You can find out your State Pension age at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension>

My Pension Online (MPO)

As a member of the Teachers' Pension Scheme you can use your MPO account to stay up to date with your pension. MPO allows you to:

- View your Benefit Statement
- Change your personal details
- Increase your pension payments to receive additional benefits
- View your employment history
- Nominate a beneficiary for your death grant
- Access a secure contact us facility
- Track any forms you've submitted to see their status
- Access pension benefits calculators where you can see how choices at retirement and when you retire will affect your pension.

Your Benefit Statement

Your Benefit Statement shows the benefits that you're building up in the Scheme and is a good way to watch your pension grow. As long as you're active in the Scheme, your Statement gets updated on a monthly basis to keep it as up to date as possible.

As you need two years qualifying service to qualify for pension benefits, you won't be able to view a Benefit Statement until that two years has passed.

Accessing your benefits

Unless you're taking your benefits through Ill-health Retirement, you can only take your pension from the age of 55. To find out more about the various different types of retirement available to you, check the retirement planning section of our [website](#) or read our [active member guide](#).

Opting out of the Scheme

You can choose to opt out of the Scheme but remember that this means: you'll no longer be building up a Defined Benefit pension; you'll not benefit from employer contributions to the cost of your pension; and you'll not be covered by the death in service benefits provided to your loved ones. It might be worth discussing your options with an Independent financial adviser or your teachers' association before making a decision.

You can opt out and automatically receive a refund of contributions that your employer has deducted from your pay. The application to do so must be received by Teachers' Pensions within three months of taking up employment. The easiest way to submit your opt out election is by logging in to My Pension Online and navigating to Member Portal > My Requests > Opt Out. Alternatively, to submit a paper version, please complete Part A of the application and forward it to the employer responsible for the contract of employment from which you want to opt out from making pension contributions. Your employer will submit these details from the employer portal and will also complete Part B. If they are unable to submit these details on your behalf, you can return the application to us by post at Teachers' Pensions, Unit 5, The Beehive, Lingfield Point, Darlington, DL1 1RW.

If you opt out after the 3 month period and have less than two years qualifying service you can claim a repayment of your contributions. You won't receive the same amount of the contributions as a repayment, as deductions for tax and National Insurance will be made. The application form for repayment of contributions is available on the Teachers' Pensions website.

If you choose to opt out of the Scheme you're welcome to opt back in at any time. As long as you haven't taken a repayment*, your benefits will start to accrue from where you left off when you opted out.

*If you take a repayment when you opt out this will wipe the slate clean so you'll need to start your two years qualifying service again before being eligible for benefits.

To find out more about opting in and out of the Scheme check out our website or our [active member guide](#).

Re-enrolment

If you opt out you will normally be automatically re-enrolled into an automatic enrolment pension scheme by the employer, in accordance with section 5 of the Pensions Act 2008. Broadly this means every three years. You can then choose to stay in the pension scheme or opt out again.

Next steps and getting in touch

If you have any queries or would like any further information about the Scheme, please take a look at our [website](#).

If you'd like to contact us, the easiest way is through your My Pension Online account where you can send us a secure direct message.

You can also contact us by:

- Secure web messaging: Open 24 hours a day, responses will be sent Monday to Friday, 09:00 - 16:20 (excluding bank holidays)
- Call us on 0345 6066166 (calling from outside the UK +44 1227 213243), Monday to Friday between 08:30 and 18:00
- Write to us at:
Teachers' Pensions,
Unit 5, The Beehive,
Lingfield Point,
Darlington, DL1 1RW

If you would like to join our teaching community online, please follow us on our social accounts.

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- YouTube

The information contained in this guide is correct at the time of publishing but may be subject to change. If there is any difference between the legislation governing the Teachers' Pension Scheme and the information contained in this guide, the legislation will apply.

If you have a complaint

If you wish to make a complaint about the service provided by Teachers' Pensions or to dispute a decision reached in the administration of your benefits, then the best method of getting in touch is via your My Pension Online account.

Alternatively, you can contact us in writing. Please remember to use your Teachers' Pensions Reference number and National Insurance number in all correspondence.

For details of the Scheme's internal dispute resolution procedure (IDRP) please see the 'Member complaints and appeals' section of our website. The Scheme operates a one- step IDRP, where a dispute with the administrator can be raised with the Department for Education in their capacity as the Scheme Manager. You can do this by using their **Contact Us** form available at https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education.

If you remain dissatisfied you can then escalate your complaint to The Pensions Ombudsman, who is an independent and impartial adjudicator.

Please note if you wish to obtain advice on applying or making a formal application then you should contact enquiries@pensions-ombudsman.org.uk. Alternatively, if you wish to raise concerns or discuss a potential complaint via the Early Resolution team, then the e-mail address to contact is helpline@pensions-ombudsman.org.uk.

The Ombudsman's details are:

Pensions Ombudsman
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London E14 4PU
0800 917 4487

At any stage during the complaint process you may wish to approach Money helper. They offer a free service.

Money helper can be contacted on: 0800 011 3797 or take a look at their website for more contact information <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/contact-us/pensionsguidance>

Please note that The Teachers' Pension Scheme is a statutory scheme. The latest set of regulations, SI 2014 No. 512, established the Teachers' Pensions Scheme 2017 and are available on the legislation.gov.uk website.

The pension scheme registry number is 10276733.