

# Topping up my LGPS Pension



## Introduction

As a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in the Environment Agency Pension Fund (EAPF), you have the following choices to consider when deciding how you'd like to increase your pension benefits:

- Paying Additional Pension Contributions (APCs) through your payroll, or by one-off contributions outside your payroll, to buy extra LGPS pension, or any LGPS pension 'lost' following some unpaid absences.
- Paying Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) through your payroll to buy extra lump sum or pension on retirement (whether through the LGPS or another provider).
- Paying contributions to a concurrent stakeholder or personal pension scheme through a private company.
- If you elected to buy extra years of scheme membership (added years) before 1 April 2008, you can continue to pay for them and receive extra benefits on the same basis that you originally agreed to buy them, but you can't take out a new added years contract.
- If you elected to pay Additional Regular Contributions (ARCs) between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2014, you can continue to pay for them and receive extra benefits on the same basis that you originally agreed to buy them, but you can't take out a new ARC contract.

## Are there any limits on how much I can contribute?

There is no overall limit on the amount of contributions you can pay and you can receive tax relief on contributions up to 100% of your taxable earnings.

However, there may be a tax charge if, in any year, the value of your pension savings exceed your annual allowance (AA) (between £4,000 and £40,000 for 2021/22) or the money purchase annual allowance of £4,000.



There'll also be a tax charge if, when you draw your benefits, the value of all your pension savings exceed the lifetime allowance (LTA) (set at £1,073,100 until 5 April 2026), unless you've applied for (and received) some form of HMRC protection. **More details on the AA and LTA can be found in our 'Tax controls on pension savings' factsheet at [www.eapf.org.uk/publications](http://www.eapf.org.uk/publications).**

## Paying Additional Pension Contributions (APCs)

Paying APCs allows you to buy extra annual pension and/or to buy back any pension 'lost' as a result of being on strike action or authorised unpaid leave. This year, the amount of extra or lost pension that can be bought is £7316 (2021/22), though the maximum amount that you can buy is revalued in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) every year. You can choose to make a one off contribution or make monthly contributions deducted from your salary based on your age, repayment period and the amount you wish to buy.

Lump sum payments are fixed amounts whereas monthly contributions are subject to periodic review and may increase in the future. If this applies to you during the period in which you plan to buy extra or lost pension, we'll get in contact to let you know the revised contributions payable.

Additionally, APCs deducted from your salary will receive tax relief automatically. One off contributions are also eligible for tax relief, though any contributions not deducted from your salary (for example, where you decide to pay by cheque) will only receive tax relief if claimed directly from HMRC through your self assessment.

If you choose to buy back any pension lost as a result of being on authorised unpaid leave, then, providing you choose to do so within 30 days of returning to work, your employer will pay 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the cost to buy back that pension.

If you're in the 50:50 Section, you can only pay APCs to buy back any pension 'lost' as a result of being on strike action or authorised unpaid leave; you can only buy extra pension if you're contributing to the Main Section of the pension scheme.

When you retire, any extra or lost pension you've bought will be paid on top of the benefits you've built up. In addition, the extra or lost pension will increase in line with the cost of living (currently CPI), both before and after your benefits are put into payment.

**If you'd like to buy extra or lost pension, please visit [www.lgpsmember.org/more/apc/index.php](http://www.lgpsmember.org/more/apc/index.php)**

Here, you'll find a handy calculator to help you find out the cost of buying lost or extra pension or, alternatively, how much extra pension you can buy based on what you'd like to pay. Once you've decided on the amount of extra pension you'd like to buy, or you've decided to buy back any pension lost due to an absence, the calculator allows you to create a PDF form, which you can print off, sign, and pass onto your payroll team, who'll deal with your request. You'll need to include a medical report from your doctor confirming that you are in good health along with your application for extra pension. This is not needed for lost pension applications.

## Paying Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs)

To ensure you've a range of options for supplementing your pension, the EAPF has two AVC providers, Prudential and Standard Life (though some existing members paying AVCs may have their AVC arrangements with Clerical Medical and/or Utmost Life (formerly Equitable Life). Both Prudential and Standard Life have extensive experience as AVC providers for the LGPS.

The range of funds that you can choose to invest in are shown in the 'Investing my AVC' section below. You can pay up to 100% of your pensionable pay into your AVC (less your standard contributions or any other additional contributions).

AVCs are deducted directly from your pay and tax relief is automatically given through the payroll. This means that tax is calculated on your pay after your pension and AVC contributions have been deducted. These contributions will build up in your AVC fund and be invested in the funds that you've chosen.

## Investing my AVC

When deciding which fund to invest your AVCs in, you may wish to consider a number of things including:

- Your attitude to risk
- When you plan to retire, and how far away you are from that point

The following is a brief generic explanation of each fund type. More detailed information about the above funds is available from Prudential and Standard Life:

Fund types	Standard Life	Prudential
<b>Cash funds</b>	Standard Life Deposit & Treasury Pension (Active)	Prudential Cash Fund (Active)
<b>Balanced funds</b>	Standard Life Pension Managed (Active)	Prudential With-profits (Active)
<b>Ethical funds</b>	Standard Life Pension Ethical (Active)	Prudential Positive Impact Fund (Active)
<b>UK equity funds</b>	Standard Life UK Equity Select (Active)	Prudential UK Equity (Passive)
<b>Global equity funds</b>	Standard Life Global Equity Tracker 50:50 (Passive) Standard Life Global Equity Select (Active)	Prudential Long Term Growth 50:50 (Passive)

(Passive = passively managed fund; Active = actively managed fund)

<b>Cash funds</b>	Cash funds aim to provide returns broadly equivalent to short term deposit rates. In order to achieve this objective, the funds in this sector can adopt differing investment approaches, some investing in a range of bank deposits alone whilst others invest in a wide range of short term money market instruments as well as deposits. The value of any investment in some types of cash fund can fall, whereas others will guarantee that this won't be the case.
<b>Balanced funds</b>	Balanced funds invest in a range of asset classes, e.g. equities (UK and overseas), property, bonds and cash. They often invest a high proportion of the fund in equities.
<b>Ethical funds</b>	Ethical funds invest (primarily) in UK equities. The funds may also invest in other assets. The choice of investments held in the funds is governed by an ethical policy.
<b>UK Equity funds</b>	UK Equity funds invest in a range of UK quoted companies.
<b>Global equity funds</b>	Global Equity funds invest in a range of equities from around the world. They also typically have a bias to UK equities (often around 50%).
<b>Passive/active funds</b>	<p>Passively managed funds aim to provide a return very close to the benchmark market index. Depending on the type of fund, they invest in most stocks in the market index (e.g. FTSE All Share) in proportion to the stock's weighting in the index. Performance of passively managed funds tends to be very close to the market index they track.</p> <p>Actively managed funds are managed in a way to try and outperform the market index. They tend to have higher annual management charges than passively managed funds. There is a risk that they will underperform the market index. For some types of fund (e.g. cash, property) passively managed funds are not available.</p>

Please note that the value of the assets held in most of these funds can go down as well as up. This means that the fund price, and any investment you make into these funds, can fall and rise in line with the value of the underlying assets.

The with-profits fund includes a guarantee that the value of your investment won't fall, but, in certain circumstances, you may be charged a fee, called a Market Value Reduction (MVR) if you switch or transfer your money out of the with-profits fund. You'll be told if an MVR applies to any transaction you wish to make.

It's important to note that past performance isn't necessarily a guide to future performance. More information is available from Prudential and Standard Life to help you decide which fund(s) to invest in. Their contact details are provided on page 6 of this factsheet.

## What are the investment charges for these AVCs?

There may be annual charges or expenses deducted from your AVC fund. The current annual charges are summarised in this table. They're reviewed from time to time so the charges shown may change in the future.

### Standard Life funds and charges:

	Fund Name	Fund code	Annual charge as % of your AVC fund
Standard Life	Standard Life Deposit & Treasury Pension (Active)	G4	0.625%
	Standard Life Pension Managed (Active)	FA	0.625%
	Standard Life Pension Ethical (Active)	G7	0.625%
	Standard Life UK Equity Select (Active)	HR	0.625%
	Standard Life Global Equity Tracker 50:50 (Passive)	AAPJ	0.975%
	Standard Life Global Equity Select (Active)	FX	1.025%

### Prudential Funds and charges:

	Fund	Annual charge as % of your AVC fund
Prudential	Prudential Cash Fund	0.55%
	Prudential With-profits	The Bonus Rates applicable to this Fund are declared after charges have been deducted so the full bonus rate declared will be applied to your investment.
	Prudential Positive Impact Fund	0.65%
	Prudential Long Term Growth 50:50	0.55%
	Prudential UK Equity	0.55%

**All of the funds now available from Prudential, plus details of the charges, are included in the fund guide, which can be accessed via [www.pru.co.uk/pdf/AVCK10363.pdf](http://www.pru.co.uk/pdf/AVCK10363.pdf)**

The annual management charge is allowed for in the value of your investments on a daily basis. The level of annual management charge isn't guaranteed and may change in the future; typically, the charge won't change frequently. In addition, within the funds, there are often further expenses in relation to the safe custody and accounting for the assets; these charges are relatively small (circa 0- 0.1% per annum) and are deducted directly from the fund's assets.

The charges for these AVC arrangements are likely to be different, generally lower, than if you invested directly with Prudential or Standard Life using these or similar funds. This is because special arrangements have been agreed between the EAPF and Prudential/Standard Life.

We can't, however, guarantee that charges will always be lower.

## How do I start, amend or stop paying AVC payments?

If you want to:

- **Start, amend or stop paying AVCs to Prudential** - please contact them on 0345 600 0343, or **or visit their website at [www.pru.co.uk/rz/localgov/avcs/](http://www.pru.co.uk/rz/localgov/avcs/)**

In addition, you can view details of your AVC account online (login details can be obtained by calling 0345 600 0343).

- **Start or amend AVC with Standard Life** – to start an AVC, please contact them on 0345 279 8831. **New starters can also email Standard Life at [newentrant\\_quotes@standardlife.com](mailto:newentrant_quotes@standardlife.com)**. If you're an Environment Agency employee, to amend your AVC you'll need to raise a Service Request (SR) in SOP. **If you haven't raised one before, please visit 'EA MyHub'** which explains how to raise an SR. If you're an NRW or SSCL employee, please contact your payroll department to make an amendment. In addition, you can view details of your AVC account online, and **you can register for this by going to [www.employeezone.co.uk](http://www.employeezone.co.uk)** quoting the Scheme number (H93026) and your membership number (shown on your joining certificate or your latest annual statement).
- **Transfer an existing LGPS AVCs to Prudential or Standard Life** - please contact Capita on 0800 121 6593 and ask for the Environment Agency Pension Fund team. If you've a non-LGPS AVCs that you'd like to transfer to the EAPF, Capita will also be able to tell you about your options.
- **Amend an existing AVC with Clerical Medical and/or Utmost Life (formerly Equitable Life)** - please contact Capita on 0800 121 6593 and ask for the Environment Agency Pension Fund team. Please note that, if you don't already pay AVCs to Clerical Medical and/or Utmost Life, you can't start a new AVC with them.
- **Stop paying AVCs to Standard Life, Clerical Medical and/or Utmost Life** - please contact your appropriate payroll department below:
  - Email Environment Agency Payroll at [ea\\_pension\\_mailbox@gov.sscl.com](mailto:ea_pension_mailbox@gov.sscl.com)  
Shared Services Connected Ltd, TA211 Tyneview Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE98 1BA
  - Email Natural Resources Wales Payroll at [payrollteambangor@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:payrollteambangor@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk)  
Natural Resources Wales, Payroll Team, Maes y Ffynnon, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2DW

## Using your AVCs at retirement

At retirement the fund that you've built up can be used to:

- **Purchase an annuity from your AVC provider, or from another insurance company, building society or bank:**

An annuity is an amount of additional pension that you can choose in exchange for the AVC fund that you've built up; the amount of additional pension (and the method in which it is revalued whilst in payment) will depend on the type of annuity you've chosen, which is generally linked to current interest rates.

- **Purchase a top-up pension from LGPS:**

If you draw an immediate pension benefit from the LGPS you'll be able to use the accumulated AVC to buy a top up pension and this will provide an inflation proofed pension for you and your dependants.

- **Provide a tax free cash sum:**

At retirement, you can take all or part of the AVC fund that you've built up, as a tax free lump sum (providing it falls within HMRC limits).

HMRC will allow Individuals to take tax free cash provided that, when added to the LGPS lump sum, it doesn't exceed the lower of:

- 25% of the overall value of your LGPS benefits being brought into payment (including your AVC fund); or
- 25% of your remaining lifetime allowance <sub>6</sub>

If you've stopped paying into your AVC fund, you'll also have the option to transfer it, before taking your EAPF retirement benefits, to a flexible benefit arrangement in order to receive a:

- **Uncrystallised Funds Pension Lump Sum (UFPLS):**

This can be paid as a lump sum, where 25% of the payment is tax free and the balance is taxed at your marginal rate of tax.

- **Flexi-access drawdown (FAD):**

You can choose to take up to 25% of the payment as a tax free lump sum. You then move the rest into one or more funds that allow you to take a taxable income at times to suit you.



Please note that, if you choose to take a UFPLS, or access your benefits through FAD, any future contributions you make to an AVC or money purchase arrangement may be subject to the money purchase annual allowance (£4,000).

## Paying contributions through a private company

You can make your own arrangements to pay contributions into a Stakeholder (SHP) or Personal Pension Plan (PPP) at the same time as being a member of the LGPS. Just like your LGPS pension, you'll receive tax relief of up to 100% of your earnings, less the contributions you pay into the LGPS, on any contributions that you pay into a SHP or a PPP.

However, there may be a tax charge if, in any year, the value of your pension savings has increased in excess of your annual allowance (between £4,000 and £40,000 for 2021/22) or the money purchase annual allowance (£4,000).

## Financial advice

The EAPF, Capita and your employers are unable to give you financial advice. If you're unsure of the best way to top up your pension, you should contact an independent financial adviser. **Further details can be found at [www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk](http://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk)**

## How can I find out more?

If you'd like some general information about topping up your pension, then please contact Capita using the details below.

### Contact details


If you have any questions regarding your pension entitlement you can contact our pension administrator, Capita, by:

 Using the **Contact the EAPF** button on the website at [www.eapf.org.uk](http://www.eapf.org.uk)

 Emailing [info@eapf.org.uk](mailto:info@eapf.org.uk)

 Following on twitter [@EAPensionFund](https://twitter.com/EAPensionFund)

 Calling **0800 121 6593**

 Sending your query to  
**Capita**  
**11b Lingfield Point**  
**Darlington, DL1 1AX**