

# Environment Agency Pension Fund

## Your Pension

August 2018



News from the Environment Agency Pension Fund

## 1. Welcome

Welcome to your summer 2018 E Bulletin – a fully digital version of Your Pension newsletter. This edition provides us with the opportunity to report on any recent pension changes, topical issues, and information on forthcoming webinars, as well as providing a continuation of our pension basics section to help you understand how various aspects of your pension works.

If you'd like to download our newsletter, you'll find a PDF version in our [Newsletters](#) section of our website.

As accredited members of Customer Service Excellence (CSE), we really value your feedback, so please get in touch at [info@eapf.org.uk](mailto:info@eapf.org.uk) if you've any ideas on ways for us to improve.

[Read the introduction from our Chair](#)

## 2. Pension News

### General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

New data protection regulations came into force on 25 May 2018. This changes how organisations process and handle data with the key aim of giving greater protection and rights to individuals.



[Find out more](#)

### Annual Pension Statement

Your statement gives you the current value of your EAPF pension and also helps you understand the value of your pension when you reach your normal pension age (NPA) within the Scheme.

### AVC's – Important update for existing members

If you're a member who took out Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC's) before 1 April 2014, you'll have been restricted to paying a maximum 50% of your gross salary into an

This year's statements will be sent by 31 August.



[Find out more](#)

AVC arrangement. You can now potentially pay 100% of your gross salary including any overtime, which brings your AVC arrangement in line with arrangements taken out after this date.



[Find out more](#)

## New Contribution Bands from 1 April 2018

On April 1 2018, the contribution pay bands increased by 3% for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The amount you contribute depends on your pensionable earnings. These are split into contribution bands and are reviewed on 1 April every year in line with Pension Increase orders.

[View contribution bands](#)

## State pension reminder

The State Pension age is regularly reviewed to make sure that it's affordable and fair. People are living longer, and spending a larger proportion of their adult life in retirement. We highlighted the most recent changes in our December 2017 newsletter; click below if you missed it.



[See most recent changes](#)

## High Court judgement on co-habiting partners

Read the High Court ruling in the case of Elmes V Essex County Council regarding non-payment of a pension to a co-habiting partner. The case was heard before the High Court in January 2018.



[Find out more](#)

## Pension Scams

The frequency of pension scams is increasing and whilst the government has proposed measures to protect individuals by introducing a ban on cold calling and changes to how you can transfer, there are a number of things you can do to protect yourself if you're considering transferring your Local Government Pension Scheme benefits to another pension provider.



[Find out more](#)

## Lifetime allowance

The lifetime allowance (LTA) for the 2018/19 tax year is £1,030,000. The LTA is a limit on the

amount of pension benefit that can be paid from pension schemes without triggering a tax charge.

Your Annual Pension Statement will be sent by the end of August and this shows the percentage of LTA you've used on your EAPF pension.



### 3. Pension Basics

#### Part timers

If you're a part time worker, we use your actual part time pay to decide which contribution band you fall into, and then you pay that percentage of your actual part time pay.

The pension you receive will normally be based on 1/49th of your pay, so this simply means we divide your pay by 49 and then this amount is added into your pension account.



[Find out more](#)

#### Leave of absence – Sickness absence

If you're on paid sickness absence, you'll pay contributions on whatever pay you receive, so you carry on building up your normal pension benefits even though your pay has been reduced. This is because we use [assumed pay](#) to work out your benefits.

[Find out more](#)

#### Child related leave (maternity, adoption and shared parental leave)

You pay contributions on the pay that you actually receive for any period of child related leave, but you'll carry on building your normal pension benefits. This is because we use your assumed pay to work out your benefits.

[Find out more](#)

#### Unpaid leave

For any periods of unpaid leave, you'll stop paying pension contributions, so you don't build up any pension. You can choose to buy back the amount of lost pension if you've taken authorised unpaid leave.

[Find out more](#)

## Reserve forces leave

If you take reserve forces leave, you'll normally stop being paid by your employer, and will be paid by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) instead. You can choose to stay in the Scheme, the MoD will automatically collect your normal pension contributions, so there will be no effect on your benefits. We use your [assumed pay](#) to work out your benefits.

## Pension flexibility (Freedom & Choice)

In 2015, the Government introduced 'Freedom & Choice' for private pensions. These changes didn't affect the LGPS directly, but there have been some changes that allows you to transfer your EAPF benefits to one of these private pension arrangements. Doing this may offer more freedom over when and how you can draw your benefits, but there are some risks in doing so.

[Find out more](#)

## 4. How We Invest

### Investment Pooling

We've kept you updated in previous newsletters about the introduction of asset pooling within the LGPS, which is required by Government legislation to help improve efficiency.

The Brunel Pension Partnership (consisting of 10 LGPS Funds largely based in the South West) was formally created on 18 July 2017, and the EAPF is one of its founding members. This approval was made on condition that members' pensions are not put at risk, there are long term financial benefits to the Fund, and that the EAPF's approach to Responsible Investment continues.



[See how we invest](#)

### How our Investments work

The EAPF is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme and currently has assets of £3.7 Billion under management. The Fund manages this money through a number of investment and fund managers.

### Our Sustainable Investments

We set ourselves the target to maintain at least 25% of our investments in clean technology and other sustainable opportunities, which is more than any other pension fund worldwide (AODP, 2017).



[Find out more](#)



[Find out more](#)

## 5. Communications

### Our new web portal

We're making some exciting changes to our web portal (EAPF Online) later this year to help improve your online experience and the way you manage your pension. As well as having secure access to your personal pension details online, you'll be able to make nominations, update your personal details, check your service history and much more.



[Find out more](#)

### Award winning communications

The EAPF has won the 'Pension Scheme Communications' category at this year's Pension Age Awards. There was stiff competition, with judges recognising the innovation shown by our winning entry.



[Find out more](#)

### Customer Service Excellence (CSE)

Customer Service Excellence is a Charter Mark and provides a national standard for excellence within the public sector. CSE focuses on driving customer-focused change, and the Fund has held this accreditation since 2015/16. You can tell us what you think by clicking the link below.

**CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE<sup>®</sup>**



[Tell us what you think](#)

### Saving for your future - webinars

We're running a number of webinars in October and November which will explain the benefits of being a member of the Scheme. Whether

### High earners AA resource hub

The annual allowance (AA) is the amount your pension savings can increase in any one year before you may have to pay a tax charge. If you

you're a new starter or have been in the Scheme for a while, our webinars will cover the choices you can make now, helping you plan and save for your retirement.

[Register your attendance](#)

exceed the AA, our resource hub provides the materials you'll need to understand your responsibilities. Click the link below and then scroll down to 'User Guides'.

[Use our AA Resource Hub](#)

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[Back to top](#)



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