

PensionsFocus

Spring 2010



Pensions Increase – no increase but no reduction

Will there be an increase this year?

The Pensions Increase (Review) Order, which is issued each year by central government, tells public sector pension schemes of the increase that should be applied to pension benefits. The increase is based on the rise in the cost of living in the year up to last September so if the September 2009 rate had been positive your pension would have gone up in line with this.

In 2009, the September rate was negative at -1.4 per cent. However, even though inflation was negative the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) rules do not allow a reduction to pension benefits, so your pension will not go down.

There will therefore be no increase this year to your LGPS pension and you will receive a payslip in April to confirm this.

What about my State Pension?

If you have reached State Retirement Age your Basic State Pension will be increased using different rules and you will be advised separately by the Department for Work and Pensions on the increase which will apply.



How secure are your benefits?

The answer, you'll be pleased to know, is very secure!

The contributions you paid into the Local Government Pension Scheme entitle you to benefits which are guaranteed by Government. These benefits are worked out using your final salary and length of service in the scheme (years and days) and once you start to receive payment of your pension it is paid for life.

Any fluctuations in the stock market will have no impact on your benefits.

Triennial valuation

To ensure the North Yorkshire Pension Fund has enough money to pay pensions the scheme is assessed every three years by the scheme Actuary. The level of contributions the employer pays into the scheme will change based on these findings. The next assessment is due on 1 April 2010 and changes to the contributions made by employers will be effective from 1 April 2011.



Who is looking after your money?

As in other years we will be participating in an exercise that promotes the proper spending of public money.

We are required by law to protect the public funds we administer and are allowed to share information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds in order to prevent and detect fraud.

The Audit Commission requires us to take part in its anti-fraud initiative.

We will be providing details of all our pensioners to the Audit Commission so that they can compare the information with that provided by other public bodies, such as housing benefit. This will ensure that no pensions are being paid to persons who are deceased or no longer entitled.

Sometimes wrong payments are made because of a genuine error. Previous exercises have uncovered instances of pensioners receiving too little pension, resulting in the payments to pensioners being increased overall. These exercises help promote the best use of public funds.

Further information is available on the Audit Commission website at <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nfi/fptext.asp>. However, if you do have any questions, you should contact Ian Smithson in the Internal Audit Service on (01609) 532739.



Bus passes and coach travel for over 60s

With the weather improving, many of us will be getting out and about more. Did you know that if you are over 60 there are many local and national concessions on bus and coach travel?

Local bus travel in England

Everyone aged 60 or over who is resident in England is entitled to free off-peak local bus travel anywhere in England using a National Bus Pass. Off-peak travel is when you travel any time between 9.30am and 11.00 pm, Monday to Friday, and at any time on weekends and public holidays.

Exceptions

You can use your pass on all local bus services in England but, as a general rule, not on the following types of non-standard service:

- services where most seats can be reserved (e.g. coaches). Some do however offer concessionary fares (see below).
- temporary services running for less than six weeks (e.g. shuttle buses to special events)

- tourist services or services on vehicles of historical interest (e.g. open-top bus tours)
- rail replacement services
- services where 'extras' (e.g. refreshments or car parking) are included in the fare

Over 60s discounts on coach travel

The National Express coach network in England and Wales, and Citylink in Scotland, can take you to most places in Britain. Please contact individual companies for more details or visit their websites:

National Express

www.nationalexpress.com/coach/offers/routesixty.cfm

Tel: 08717 81 81 78 (calls will cost a maximum of 10p per minute on BT phones)

CityLink

www.citylink.co.uk/index.php

Tel 08705 50 50 50



Understanding your P60 and Payslip

North Yorkshire County Council
Private & Confidential

Message

PAY ADVICE

Name	Inits	NI Number	Pay Reference	Tax Period	Payslip Date
Annual Salary	NI Cat.	Tax Code	Pay Frequency	Pay Method	Cost Centre

PAYMENTS	Hrs / Sessions	Rate	Establishment	Amount
				Total Gross

ACCUMULATIONS		DEDUCTIONS		Amount	Balance
Gross Pay	Taxable Pay				
Pensionable Pay	Pension Contri.				
Tax to Date	NI to Date				
P45 Gross	P45 Tax				Total Deductions

Due For Payment

Net Payment

PLEASE QUOTE YOUR PAY REFERENCE ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE

This is your pay reference. Please quote this in any correspondence you have with us.

This is your tax code. This is notified to us by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). If you have a query about your personal tax and need to contact HMRC, the following information may be useful. You should quote your national insurance number.

Address:
HM Revenue & Customs
Tees Valley Area
George Stephenson House
St. Mark's Court
Thornaby
Stockton on Tees
TS17 6EJ
Telephone No. 0845 366 7865
Tax Office Ref: 406 / N8001

This is the amount of income tax you have paid so far in this financial year

This is the amount of pension you have received that is subject to income tax.

This is the date this payment will be paid.

This is the amount you will be paid this month

In April you will be receiving your P60 for the tax year ending 5 April 2010. If you are completing a tax return you will need to use the figures in the boxes indicated on the right. →

P60 End of Year Certificate
Tax year to 5 April 2010

To the employee:
Please keep this certificate in a safe place as **you will need it if you have to fill in a Tax Return. You also need it to make a claim for tax credits or to renew your claim.**

It also helps you check that your employer is using the correct National Insurance number and deducting the right rate of National Insurance contributions.

By law you are required to tell HM Revenue & Customs about any income that is not fully taxed, even if you are not sent a Tax Return.

HM REVENUE & CUSTOMS

Employee's details

Surname: _____
Forenames or initials: _____
National Insurance number: _____ Works/payroll number: _____

Pay and Income Tax details

	Pay	Tax deducted
	£ p	£ p
In previous employment(s)	_____	_____
In this employment	★ _____	_____
Total for year	_____	_____

Employee's Widows & Orphans/Life Assurance contributions in this employment: ★ _____

Final tax code: _____

The figures marked ★ should be used for your Tax Return, if you get one

Do you fancy being a pensioner representative on the North Yorkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel?

As part of our governance arrangements we have decided to invite one of our pensioners to sit on the Fund's Advisory Panel.

The North Yorkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel is an informal group established to support the role of the main Pension Fund Committee (PFC).

The terms of reference are:

- to represent all stakeholders of the North Yorkshire Pension Fund, in particular the contributing Employing Bodies to the Fund;
- to express the views of stakeholders to the Pension Fund Committee on matters of policy
- to scrutinise the performance of the Pension Fund Committee
- to liaise with the North Yorkshire Pension Fund Officers Group (NYPFOG)
- to ensure compliance with all relevant Legislation and Guidance.

The current panel is made up of representatives from a number of employers including district councils, North Yorkshire Police, colleges, universities and Unison.

You will need to:

- attend 4 meetings a year in Northallerton, North Yorkshire
- have an understanding of pension issues, specifically the Local Government Pension Scheme,
- communicate clearly and effectively,
- be confident and be able to demonstrate sound judgement
- attend training sessions in addition to the 4 formal meetings.

If you are interested in being considered for the place on the panel please forward a copy of your CV to Karen Scott at:

- Karen.1.scott@northyorks.gov.uk or
- Karen Scott, Operations Manager, Pensions, North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL7 8AL

Applications for the role must be received by the closing date of 31 May 2010, and the applicant will be selected following an interview.



Competition - What's cooking?

You may have seen the recent series of the 'Hairy Bikers' on BBC 2 called 'Mum Knows Best' which celebrates the history of family recipes. We'd like you to share your best kept family recipes with us - some of which will be printed in the next edition of your newsletter. We will also pick our favourite recipe and if you are the lucky owner of it you will win a £20 Marks & Spencer Gift Voucher.

Your recipe can be for a savoury or sweet dish but remember it must be easy to make and the ingredients must be easy to source.

You can submit up to two recipes and the deadline for entries is 30 June 2010. Please remember to include your name, address and a telephone number.

You can either email your recipe to jo.wade@northyorks.gov.uk or send it in writing to Jo Wade, Team Leader at:

North Yorkshire Pension Fund
County Hall
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 8AL



Winter Fuel Payment

If you are aged 60 or over you may get a Winter Fuel Payment to help pay for keeping warm in winter. This can be between £125 and £400 depending on your situation.

Eligibility

You may get a Winter Fuel Payment if both the following apply:

- you were aged 60 or over, on or before the qualifying week in September (this varies each year).
- you lived in Great Britain or Northern Ireland on any day between the qualifying week in September (or, in some circumstances, in another EEA country or Switzerland)

The Winter Fuel Payments Helpline

The Winter Fuel Payments helpdesk provides information about Winter Fuel Payment, guidance on reporting changes to your circumstances, and claim forms.

Phone number **0845 915 1515**

Text phone 0845 601 5613

Opening Hours Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 4.30 pm

Remember, if you are in receipt of a State Pension or

another social security benefit other than Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit you should first contact the office that normally deals with you.

Alternatively more information can be found online on the Directgov website:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/Benefits/BenefitsInRetirement/DG_10018657



A Taxing Article

Benjamin Franklin once said;

“ in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes. ”

Truer words have never been spoken. I'm sure many of you will already be aware that even in retirement you cannot escape taxation!

Most pension payments are considered taxable income by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). There are however various reliefs and allowances that could reduce the tax you pay.

Personal allowance

This applies to most people in the country and represents the amount of taxable income that can be earned tax-free. For the 2010-2011 tax year the basic Personal Allowance is £6,475. This allowance rises at age 65, and again at age 75.

The increases in allowances at age 65 and 75 are decreased if you earn more than £22,900 a year at the rate of £1 for every £2 you earn over the income limit.

So if you were 65 years old and earned £1,000 over the income limit, the allowance of £9,490 would be reduced by £500.

If you have any queries on your tax please contact HMRC:

Telephone number: 0845 366 7865

Please quote your National Insurance Number and reference 406/N8001

Website: www.hmrc.gov.uk

Personal Allowances 2010/11

Personal allowance	2010/11 tax year	Income Limit
Basic Level	£6,475	None
At age 65 – 74	£9,490	£22,900
Age 75 and over	£9,640	£22,900

Procedure for reporting a death

1. Person receiving a pension dies

2. Call us on (01609) 532567 / 535880 / 532698

3. We will ask you to send us:

- The original death certificate and copies of the widow(ers) birth and marriage certificate if there is a spouse.
- A photocopy of the death certificate if there is no spouse.

4. We will then tell you the amount of benefits due (if any)

Contact Details

All the administration dealing with your regular pension payment is provided by the North Yorkshire County Council Payroll Service on behalf of the North Yorkshire Pension Fund. If you have any queries you should contact the Payroll Section as follows:

First initial of your Surname	Payroll Officer	Tel: (01609)
A-B	Karen Stokes	532960
C-F	Rita Laverick	533138
G-I	Rachel O'Connell	798856
J-M	Stuart Jackson	532966
N-R	John Richardson	532959
S-T	Laila Hird	532957
U-Z	Michelle Purvis	532955

Changing Bank Details?

Please let us know!

Please write to the payroll address given below.

Include your sort code, account number and the date your account will be changing.

If you need to speak to someone in the Pensions Team, please contact one of the following Senior Pensions Officers

Marion McKone: 01609 535880

Caroline Park: 01609 532698

Suzanne Berry: 01609 532567

North Yorkshire Pension Fund

North Yorkshire County Council

County Hall

Northallerton

North Yorkshire

DL7 8AL

Or via email at: pensions@northyorks.gov.uk

Payroll Section

North Yorkshire County Council

County Hall

Northallerton

North Yorkshire

DL7 8AL

Or via email at: payroll@northyorks.gov.uk

Visit the North Yorkshire Pension Fund website...

www.nypf.org.uk

If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please contact Jo Wade, Communications, Training and Support Team Leader: Tel: 01609 532932 or by e-mail at jo.wade@northyorks.gov.uk



County Print 48923J 03/10