

Avon Fire and Rescue

Firefighters' Pension Scheme

Administered by Bath & North East Somerset Council



Pensions Taxation - Annual Allowance 'Scheme Pays'

If your pension savings exceed the Annual Allowance (AA) limit in a relevant tax year and you do not have sufficient unused allowance from the previous three tax years (known as 'carry forward') to offset against the excess, you will have an AA charge. If this is the case, you will need to report and pay the charge to HM Revenues & Customs (HMRC). To report the charge to HMRC, you will need to complete a Self-Assessment tax return.

Self-Assessment tax return

You must tell HMRC about your pension savings and liability to the AA charge by completing the 'Pension savings tax charges' section of the return. If you are not completing the return online, you will need to complete form SA101. The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) tax reference number is 00680175RH.

If you have not completed a tax return before, you will need to complete a registration form to inform the HMRC of the change and to obtain a tax return. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/log-in-file-self-assessment-tax-return>

Calculating the AA charge

Further details can be found in HMRC's 'Pensions Tax Manual' at:
www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/pensions-tax-manual/ptm056110

Lifetime Allowance (LTA)

If your benefits from the Fund have been reduced because of Scheme Pays, it is the reduced value that will then be tested against the LTA.

Paying the charge

There are two payment options available to you.

- If the charge is less than £2,000, you must pay the charge yourself on your return as a Self-Assessment taxpayer.
- If more than £2,000, you also have the option, provided certain conditions are met, to elect for the Scheme to pay the charge on your behalf by using the Scheme Pays option.

If you choose to pay the charge yourself, you would normally have to do this by the Self-Assessment payment deadline, which is usually 31 January following the end of the previous tax year. However, if you are paying the charge direct to HMRC online, the deadline is 30 December. Regardless of whether you pay the charge yourself or you elect for the Fund to pay the charge on your behalf under Scheme Pays, you will need to inform the HMRC of your AA charge on your Self-Assessment tax return; and if electing for scheme pays, confirm that this is your intention.

'Scheme Pays'

An AA charge can be quite substantial, therefore if the charge is greater than £2,000 and it derives from your pension savings with the Fund, you can elect to meet all or some of the charge on your behalf, in return for a permanent reduction to your annual pension.

If you were to elect for the Fund to only pay a proportion of the charge, you would then pay the remainder direct to the HMRC. Note therefore that your Scheme Pays election does not have to be for the full amount.

If you think you will be affected and want to consider the Scheme Pays option, please contact the Fund as soon as possible, as strict deadlines apply.

Before it can be applied, conditions must be met and you will need to complete an AA Scheme Pays election notice. Once you have made a valid election to apply Scheme Pays, it cannot be revoked at a later date.

Survivor Benefits

Any Scheme Pays debit will not impact on any Survivor's pension, payable in the event of your death to your spouse, registered civil partner or eligible cohabiting partner (and any eligible children).

Rejection of Scheme Pays Election

The Fund would not pay the AA charge on your behalf if:

- you do not meet the Scheme Pays conditions; or
- the whole of the AA charge does not relate to your Fund benefits; or
- the Scheme Pays election notice has not been received within the statutory specified deadlines; or
- your pension benefits are already in payment from the Fund; or
- you are over age 75 and the election was not received before your 75th birthday; or
- you have transferred your benefits from the Fund or have taken a refund of your pension contributions; or
- you do not have enough pension left to pay the AA charge when the permanent reduction is applied to your benefits.

Scheme Pays Application Deadline

You cannot make a Scheme Pays election before the end of the tax year in which the AA charge arises (unless you are approaching retirement or plan to transfer out). You must give your notification no later than 31 July following the January in which the AA charge must be declared on your tax return.

Tax year	AA charge reported	Deadline
2015/16	31 Jan 2017	31 July 2017
2016/17	31 Jan 2018	31 July 2018
2017/18	31 Jan 2019	31 July 2019

If you retire and become entitled to all of your benefits from the Fund, you must inform the Fund well before your retirement date, so that your election is on file before we process your benefits. If you are transferring your benefits from the Fund, your election must be received well before the payment is made. You must also inform the Fund of your election before you reach age 75 (especially if you reach age 75 in the tax year to which your liability relates).

This factsheet has been based on our current understanding of the Scheme Pays rules (as at December 2016). This leaflet is for information only and does not cover every personal circumstance. The issues involved are complex and the Fund will not provide any personal guidance or advice.

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