

Guidance Notes - 2020

These notes have been designed to accompany your Local Government Pension Scheme (NI) ('the Scheme') **Annual Pension Statement 2020**. They help to explain the various sections of the statement. However, these notes cannot cover every personal circumstance and in the event of any dispute over your statement, the appropriate legislation will prevail. They do **NOT** confer any contractual or statutory rights and are provided for information purposes only. The benefits included are based on regulations currently in force and cannot be guaranteed. **If you are a nursery/classroom assistant or councillor member, please see section 3 on page 4.**

From 1 April 2015 the Scheme changed from a final salary Scheme to a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Scheme. This means that:

- For each year in the Scheme, you will build up a pension based on your pensionable pay in that year.
- For each Scheme year that you are a member, an amount of annual pension equal to 1/49th of your pensionable pay will be added to your pension account. If you elected to pay into the 50/50 section then, while you are in that section, an amount of annual pension equal to 1/98th of your pensionable pay will instead be added to your pension account.
- Benefits are adjusted in line with inflation to ensure that your pension account keeps up with the cost of living.

Your annual benefit statement shows, as at 31 March 2020, the pension you have built up for membership before 1 April 2015 under the **final salary** Scheme and also the pension built up since the change to a **CARE** Scheme on 1 April 2015. The projected benefits do not reflect any future cost of living increases as we cannot predict what these may be.

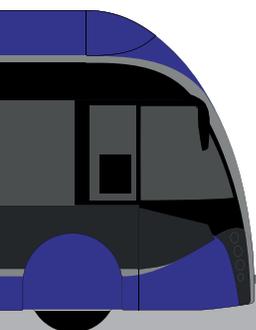
Please also note that the projection does not include any actuarial reductions that may apply if you take your benefits earlier than your Normal Pension Age (NPA). See also 'Other points to note' section on pages 6 and 7. Actuarial increases to your final salary benefits are included if you are over age 65 at 31 March 2020. If you are over your NPA then actuarial increases will also be applied to your CARE benefits.

Your NPA shown on your statement is linked to your State Pension Age (SPA) but this may change if the Government changes the SPA in the future.

If we do not know your marital status, we have assumed you are married for the purposes of this statement so that we can project any potential survivor benefits. Please note that survivor benefits are only payable upon your death to your eligible children and your surviving spouse, civil partner or eligible cohabiting partner.

If you are paying or have previously paid Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs), these are treated separately and are not included in the pension amounts quoted on your statement. You should receive an AVC statement each year from your AVC provider detailing the value of your AVC fund.

For further information about the Scheme please see our website www.nilgosc.org.uk.



Section 1 – About you

This section shows the personal and employer details that we hold on your record. If any of this information has changed or is shown incorrectly, please write to us or use an [LGS24 – Change in Circumstances Form](#) to tell us. The form can be downloaded from the members' section of our website www.nilgosc.org.uk/keep-us-updated.

Marital status

Your marital status has been taken from our records. If these details are incorrect, or if your marital status has changed, please contact us. It is important that we are kept informed of any changes to your status as it may affect your partner's entitlement (if any) to a survivor's pension in the event of your death.

Employer

The employer details shown on this statement relate to the job to which this statement applies. If you have more than one job, you will receive an annual benefit statement for each separate post for which you are a member of the Scheme.

Section of the Scheme at 31 March 2020

This will be either "Main" if you were in the main section of the Scheme, or "50/50" if you were in the 50/50 section of the Scheme as at 31 March 2020.



CARE Pensionable Pay in year to 31 March 2020

This is the amount of pensionable pay you received between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. If you have had a period of reduced pay or no pay due to sickness or injury, or a period of child related leave (i.e. ordinary maternity leave, ordinary adoption leave, paternity leave, paid additional maternity leave, paid additional paternity leave, or paid additional adoption leave) or a period on reserve forces service leave, your CARE pensionable pay will not be reduced as your employer will have provided us with a pay figure based on the average pay you received in the last three complete months before your pay was reduced. This means that the CARE pension you build up while on such leave is protected and your benefits continue to build up as normal. This pay includes non-contractual overtime and additional hours payments and has been provided to us by your employer. **Please contact your employer immediately if you think it is incorrect.**

Final Salary Pensionable Pay

Your final salary benefits are those benefits built up in the Scheme before 1 April 2015 when the Scheme was a final salary scheme. If you joined the Scheme on or after 1 April 2015 this field will remain blank as all of your benefits will have been built up under the new CARE Scheme. This pay has been provided to us by your employer. It excludes non-contractual overtime and additional hours payments. **Please contact your employer immediately if you think it is incorrect e.g. if your contractual weeks have altered and you have become term-time and the full-time pay is stated and not the term-time or vice versa.**

Section 2 – Summary of your pension benefits built up to 31 March 2020

Total Current Pension



This highlights the total combined value of your annual pension. Your annual pension is the amount you would receive each year from retirement for the rest of your life. If you became a member of the Scheme on or before 31 March

2015, the total value of your pension as at 31 March 2020 will be made up of your **CARE pension** (for membership from 1 April 2015) and your **final salary pension** (for membership to 31 March 2015). These are added together and must be taken together.

Survivor's Pension

The survivor's pension is paid on your death to your spouse, civil partner or eligible cohabiting partner (for post 31 March 2009 membership), and does not affect your own benefits, regardless of whether it is paid or not. Please notify us of changes to your circumstances, to ensure that your survivor is paid benefits, in the event of your death, where applicable. No value is shown if you are single, widowed or divorced.

Tax-free Lump Sum

This shows any automatic tax-free lump sum entitlement you may have for your membership to 31 March 2009 (if applicable).

Section 3 – Breakdown of your benefits at 31 March 2020

Career Average Pension Benefits

For each year in the Scheme, you build up a pension based on 1/49th of your pensionable pay in that year. If you opted to join the 50/50 section of the Scheme then you build up, while in that section, a pension based on 1/98th of your pay. Benefits are adjusted in line with inflation to ensure that your pension account keeps up with the cost of living.

If you had a period of membership in the main section (1/49th accrual) and a period in the 50/50 section (1/98th accrual), the benefits are shown separately.

The statement shows the total pension built up from 1 April 2015 (start of current Scheme) to 31 March 2020 including any Additional Pension Contributions (APCs) or pension transferred in from another provider. The opening balance is last year's closing balance plus an adjustment for the cost of living at 1 April 2019 (2.4%). The cost of living adjustment can go down as well as up.

Important: The benefits calculated in this section of the statement are based on the pay figures provided by your employer. It is important that you check the pay shown in section 1 and the pension built up within this section and contact your employer immediately if you think they are wrong. The pay figures for CARE benefits include non-contractual overtime and additional hours payments.

Final Salary Benefits

This section will only apply if you have membership in the Scheme prior to 1 April 2015. Your final salary benefits are calculated as follows:

Annual pension:

1/80th x membership to 31 March 2009
x final salary pay;

plus

1/60th x membership from 1 April 2009 to
31 March 2015 x final salary pay.

Automatic tax-free lump sum:

3/80th x membership to 31 March 2009
x final salary pay.

No automatic tax-free lump sum is payable on membership from 1 April 2009.

If you joined the Scheme on or after 1 April 2015, and did not have a transfer in of service, then final salary benefits do not apply.

The **final salary pensionable pay** used in the benefit statement is based on pay figures provided by your employer. In most cases this will be your annual full-time equivalent rate of salary as at 31 March 2020.

The actual final salary pensionable pay when you come to retire will be based on the 2009 Scheme definition of pensionable pay, which will also include any extra pensionable payments you receive that fall under that definition. Benefits will normally be based on the final salary pensionable pay you earn in your final year of membership. However, final salary pensionable pay earned in either of the two preceding years will be used instead, if higher.

If you are a part-time employee we use the final salary pensionable pay that a full-time employee would earn in the same post.

Example: If a part-time employee, who works 18.50/37 hours per week earned pensionable pay of £8,000 during the final year, the pay used to calculate the member's pension benefits would be £16,000, i.e. the full-time pay for that post (£8,000 x 37/18.50 hours = £16,000).

The **total membership** that is included in the calculation of your final salary benefits is membership from the date you joined the Scheme to 31 March 2015. If you work part-time and/or term-time only, we reduce your total membership to reflect the reduced number of hours or weeks that you worked during that period.

Total membership also includes any membership transferred from a previous pension provider as long as this bought final salary membership. If the transfer bought additional CARE pension, this will be shown in your CARE pension account.

If you have bought or are buying added years and/or additional pension to increase your final salary benefits, the total pension amount includes the additional amount purchased as at 31 March 2020. These amounts are not shown separately.

Important: The final salary pensionable pay used is for guidance only and could go up or down before you actually leave the Scheme. These values represent the current value of pension benefits based on accrued membership at 31 March 2015 and your current pay. They do not reflect any actuarial reductions that may apply if your benefits are released earlier than your NPA. Actuarial increases to your final salary benefits are included if you are over age 65 at 31 March 2020. If you are over your NPA then actuarial increases will also be applied to your CARE benefits.

Section 3 continued – Breakdown of your benefits at 31 March 2020

Classroom assistants

If you are a classroom assistant who signed up to the JNC Collective Agreement, you have protected pension rights from 1 January 1995 to 30 November 2007. If your employer is a Voluntary Grammar or Grant Maintained Integrated school, you have protected pension rights from 1 January 1995 to 6 February 2009. The statement shows the relevant calculations. A 32.5 hour working week will be used to calculate your membership from 1 January 1995 to the date of the relevant Collective Agreement. All other membership will be calculated using the 36 hour working week.

Section 1 (Your Final Salary Pensionable Pay) shows the full-time equivalent pensionable pay based on 36 hours and 32.5 hours. These pay figures have been provided by your employer and reflect your pay at 31 March 2020. **As NILGOSC cannot answer queries about your pensionable pay, any such queries should be made to your employer.** When you leave the Scheme your final salary benefits are normally calculated using the pensionable pay you actually receive in your final 12 months of employment. If you are part-time, the pay used is the whole-time equivalent pensionable pay for your post.

Nursery assistants

If you are a nursery assistant who signed up to the JNC Collective Agreement, you have protected pension rights from 1 January 1995 to 27 March 2015. The statement shows the relevant calculations. A 32.5 hour working week will be used to calculate your membership from 1 January 1995 to date of the relevant Collective Agreement. All other membership will be calculated using the 36 hour working week.

Section 1 (Your Final Salary Pensionable Pay) shows full-time equivalent pensionable pay based on 36 hours and 32.5 hours. These pay figures have been provided by your employer and reflect your pay at 31 March 2020.

As NILGOSC cannot answer queries about your pensionable pay, any such queries should be made to your employer. When you leave the Scheme your final salary benefits are normally calculated using the pensionable pay you actually receive in your final 12 months of employment. If you are part-time, the pay used is the whole-time equivalent pensionable pay for your post.

Councillors

If you are a councillor member, benefits accrued before 1 April 2015 were calculated as follows:

Annual pension =
total membership x career average pay ÷ 60.

The career average pay is the average of your pensionable pay from the date you joined the Scheme to 31 March 2015. Each year's pay is revalued in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) and the total pay is then divided by the total membership to determine your career average pay. Your pensionable pay has been provided by the Council and only included the elements of your pay that are pensionable, which are Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance. **As NILGOSC cannot answer queries about your pensionable pay, any such queries should be made to the Council.** On 1 April 2015, any pension benefits you had built up prior to that date were transferred to your CARE account and became the new opening balance.

From 1 April 2015 CARE benefits are built up in the same manner as set out on the previous page.

Section 4 – The projected value of your benefits

Your Normal Pension Age (NPA) is linked to your State Pension Age (SPA) and may therefore change in the future.

The total projected pension includes your final salary benefits (based on current estimated full-time equivalent final pay), the CARE pension built up to 31 March 2020 and the estimated CARE pension to NPA based on earnings from April 2019 to March 2020. If you have not been a member of the Scheme for a full year since 1 April 2019 then the CARE pay earned has been grossed up to a full year equivalent for the purpose of projecting forward.

The automatic lump sum in respect of pre April 2009 benefits is also shown here and is based on current estimated full-time equivalent final pay.

The projected CARE pension assumes that you remain in the same section of the Scheme (main section or 50/50 section) that you were in on 31 March 2020 until NPA.

If you have already reached your NPA at 31 March 2020, then a projection of your benefits is not applicable and no value is shown.

To calculate the projected CARE pension from 1 April 2020 to your NPA, the following formulae applies:

Main Section

$\frac{1}{49\text{th}} \times \text{CARE pay at 31 March 2020}$
x years and days from 1 April 2019 to NPA;

plus

pension built up between 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2020.

50/50 Section

$\frac{1}{98\text{th}} \times \text{CARE pay at 31 March 2020}$
x years and days from 1 April 2020 to NPA;

plus

pension built up between 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2020.

The projected benefits do not reflect any future cost of living increases as we cannot predict what these may be.

For some members, the value of your projected benefits is the same as your total current pension. This happens when your employer has not provided NILGOSC with pay information for the 2019/20 year. There may be a number of reasons for this: you may be a casual worker who has not worked in the 2019/20 year; or you may currently be on a career break.

If you are paying additional contributions to purchase extra CARE benefits, the projection only includes the benefits purchased up to 31 March 2020.



Section 5 – Your death benefits built up to 31 March 2020

If we do not know your marital status the figures shown in this section assume that you are married. If you are single, widowed or divorced no survivor pension is shown.

Survivors' pensions (assuming you are married, in a civil partnership or have an eligible cohabiting partner) are generally calculated as follows:

Final salary survivor's pension (if pre 1 April 2015 membership)

Final pay x pre April 2015 membership x $\frac{1}{160}$;

plus

CARE survivor's pension:

CARE pay x years and days from 1 April 2015 to NPA x $\frac{1}{160}$.

On your death, a pension may be payable to your surviving spouse, civil partner or, provided your relationship met certain conditions, to an eligible cohabiting partner. We will require evidence from your cohabiting partner upon your death to check that the conditions for a cohabiting partner's pension are met, so if your circumstances change in the future please remember to update us.

Additionally, a pension may also be payable upon your death to your children provided they meet certain conditions. The calculation will depend on the number of eligible children and whether a pension is also payable under the Scheme in respect of you to your surviving spouse, civil partner or eligible cohabiting partner.

In the event of your death, a tax-free lump sum death grant of three times your Assumed Pensionable Pay (APP) (an average of the pensionable pay received during the three complete months or 12 week period if weekly paid, before your date of death) may become payable. Although NILGOSC has discretion as to whom the death grant is paid, we will take into account any expression of wish that you have made.

You may note that the value of your death grant has been recorded as zero. This happens when your employer has not provided NILGOSC with pay information for the 2019/20 year. There may be a number of reasons for this: you may be a casual worker who has not worked in the 2019/20 year; or you may currently be on a career break.

If you also have an earlier period of Scheme membership, such as a deferred pension or a pension in payment, the lump sum death grant payable is the greater of either:

- The active death grant as shown; or
- The sum of the lump sum death grants from your earlier benefits.

The easiest way to let us know who you would like to receive this lump sum is by logging onto [My NILGOSC Pension Online](https://www.nilgosc.org.uk) to complete your nomination. The form is also available from our website www.nilgosc.org.uk.





Other points to note

Normal Pension Age (NPA) – reductions and increases

NPA is linked to your SPA for benefits built up from April 2015 (but with a minimum of age 65) and is the age at which you can take the pension you have built up in full. If you choose to take your pension before your NPA it will normally be reduced, as it is being paid earlier. If you take it later than your NPA, it is increased because it is being paid later.

If you were paying into the Scheme before 1 April 2015 your final salary benefits retain their protected NPA – which for most members is age 65.

However, apart from flexible retirement, all pension benefits drawn on normal retirement must be taken at the same date i.e. you cannot separately draw your final salary benefits (built up before April 2015) at age 65 and your benefits in your CARE pension account (built up from April 2015) at your NPA (which for your benefits built up from April 2015 is linked to your SPA but with a minimum of age 65).

The NPA shown on your statement is the NPA for your benefits built up from April 2015 – i.e. your SPA or your 65th birthday if later. If you are over your NPA then a date of 31 March 2020 has been used for this illustration.

The table below shows the effect your retirement age has on your pension benefits:

Retirement age	Effect on benefits
Before age 65	Final salary and CARE benefits reduced
At age 65	No reduction to final salary benefits, CARE benefits reduced (if your NPA is greater than age 65)
Between age 65 and NPA	Final salary benefits increased, CARE benefits reduced (if you retire before your NPA)
At NPA	Final salary benefits increased, no reduction to CARE benefits
After your NPA	Both final salary and CARE benefits increased

If you joined before 1 October 2006, you may have some 85 year rule protection which means that some or all of the actuarial reduction would not apply upon early retirement.

You can find out your current State Pension Age at <https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age>. Please note that this may change before you retire.

The benefit statement does not include any potential reductions should you decide to take your benefits earlier than your NPA. For more details on the reductions please see the [Early Retirement](#) section of our website.

Lump sum and maximum conversion

If you joined before 1 April 2009, you will be entitled upon retirement to an automatic lump sum and an annual pension. If you joined after 31 March 2009, you will only be entitled to an annual pension. Either way, you may want to receive a lump sum by converting part of your annual pension. The current rate of conversion is £12 lump sum for each £1 of annual pension. This option is subject to certain restrictions in respect of the maximum amount of lump sum that may be received and full details will be provided to you shortly before retirement.

Please note: If you decide to convert part of your pension to receive a lump sum it is not possible to change your decision at a later date.

Post-Leaving Marriages and Civil Partnerships

Please note that survivor benefits are calculated differently if you marry or enter into a civil partnership after leaving active membership of the Scheme, that is when you are a deferred member or pensioner. The calculation of pensions for survivors of post-leaving marriages and civil partnerships excludes any membership before 6 April 1978.

McCloud Ruling

When the Scheme changed from a final salary to a career average pension scheme in 2015, protections for older scheme members were introduced. Similar protections were provided in other public sector pension schemes. The Court of Appeal for England and Wales ruled that younger members of the Judges' and Firefighters' Pension schemes have been discriminated against because the protections do not apply to them. The Westminster Government has confirmed that there will be changes to all main public sector schemes, including the LGPS, to remove this age discrimination. This ruling is often called the 'McCloud judgment'. The reformed public service schemes in Northern Ireland incorporated similar age-based protections and changes are required to remove age discrimination in those schemes also. The Department for Communities is still considering exactly what changes need to be made to remove the discrimination from the LGPS (NI). This means it has not been possible to reflect the impact of the judgment in your annual benefit statement this year. If you qualify for protection it will apply automatically - you do not need to make a claim. For more information, see the McCloud frequently asked questions section of NILGOSC's website and the Department of Finance statement on <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/statement-mccloud-judgement>

Eligible Cohabiting Partner Survivor Benefits (only for active membership after 31 March 2009)

The benefits for an eligible cohabiting partner will not include any pre 6 April 1988 membership, unless you had elected prior to 1 April 2015 to pay for some or all of that membership to count.

Pension debits

If your benefits have been subject to a Pension Sharing Order (following a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership), the figures on the statement take account of the reduction to benefits imposed by the Pension Sharing Order.

Annual Allowance

The annual allowance is the maximum amount by which your pension benefits can increase during the Pension Input Period (PIP) without you having to pay a tax charge. The PIP for all pension schemes has been aligned to the tax year, 6 April to the following 5 April. For the 2019/20 year, the annual allowance is £40,000. There will be a £1 reduction in annual allowance for every £2 of adjusted income (annual income before tax plus your own and any employer pension contributions) earned above £150,000. This only applies to members whose pensionable pay is more than £110,000. The annual allowance cannot be reduced below £10,000.

Most people will not be affected by the annual allowance tax charge because the value of their pension saving will not increase in a tax year by more than £40,000. However, if it does, any unused allowance from the previous three years can be used to offset this increase. You should also take into account any other pension benefit that you may have when assessing your Pension Input Amount, including any AVCs.

Please note that any in-house AVC that you have paid during the PIP will be included when calculating the annual allowance you have used on your Scheme benefits. Benefits arising from added years, transfers received in a previous PIP and pension debits ordered in a previous PIP are also included. If you believe that you are going to be affected by the Annual Allowance limit, please contact NILGOSC.

For more details on how the annual allowance is calculated please see the [Tax limits on your pension](#) section of our website.

Lifetime Allowance

The lifetime allowance is the maximum value of **ALL** pension benefits you can have without having to pay a tax charge (not including any state retirement pension, state pension credit or survivor's pension you may be entitled to). If the value of your pension benefits when you draw them (not including any state retirement pension, state pension credit or any spouse's, civil partner's, eligible cohabiting partner's or dependant's pension you may be entitled to) is more than the lifetime allowance, or more than any protections you may have, you will have to pay tax on the excess benefits.

The lifetime allowance covers all pension benefits you may have in all tax-registered pension arrangements – not just the NILGOSC Scheme. The lifetime allowance in 2019/20 is £1.055 million. If your Scheme benefits are more than your lifetime allowance at retirement you will have to pay tax on the excess. If excess benefits are paid as a pension, the charge will be 25% with income tax deducted on the ongoing pension payments; if the excess benefits are taken as a lump sum they will be taxed once only at 55%.

There are protections called primary lifetime allowance protection, enhanced protection, fixed protection, fixed protection 2014, individual protection 2014, fixed protection 2016 and individual protection 2016 which may apply to some members. If you have applied for any of these protections and have a protection certificate please forward it to NILGOSC.

You can get more information about tax allowances for both the annual and lifetime allowance, and protections that are in place, as well as special provisions for very high earners from the HMRC website www.gov.uk/tax-on-your-private-pension.



Frequently Asked Questions

I don't want to work until my Normal Pension Age, what happens if I take my benefits early?

If you retire after age 55 but before your NPA your benefits may be reduced as they will be paid for longer. The benefits shown on your statement do not include any early retirement reductions, therefore if you would like to see how your benefits will be affected please log onto [My NILGOSC Pension Online](#) and use the benefit projector.

I have reached my Normal Pension Age but I am still working, does my statement include a late retirement increase?

If you were over your NPA on 31 March 2020, the benefits shown on your statement includes any late retirement increase you are entitled to. This increase is based on guidance from the Government Actuary's Department, which may change in the future.

I transferred another pension into the Scheme, why is it not shown on my annual benefit statement?

Your pension transfer may not have been fully completed at the time the statement was produced. It should be included on the statement we provide next year.

Why did I receive more than one benefit statement?

You will receive a separate statement for each membership you have in the Scheme.

What if I also have a deferred benefit in the Scheme?

You will receive a separate statement for any deferred benefit you may have from an earlier period of Scheme membership.

Can I pay more to increase my benefits?

There are two in-house options available to you. You can either make Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) or you can buy additional pension by making Additional Pension Contributions (APCs). For further information, please visit the [Boosting your pension](#) section of our website or contact the Pensions Administration team.

I pay AVCs – is this shown on my statement?

No, you will get a separate statement from the AVC provider.

What happens if I am unable to work because of an illness?

If you have been absent from work because of an illness and you have received reduced or nil pay as a result, you will continue to build up benefits in the Scheme as if you had been in work. If your employment is then terminated because of permanent ill-health and you meet the Scheme's criteria, your retirement benefits will become payable immediately at an enhanced rate. For further information on the ill-health process, please visit the [ill-health retirement](#) section on our website or contact the Pensions Administration team.

If I combined benefits during the last year how will this be shown on my statement?

If you combined benefits in the last year you may see additional final salary service and/or additional CARE pension included in your total pension value.

The statement provided is an estimate only and not a guarantee of the actual benefits you could receive. If you have any queries relating to your pay or working hours please contact your employer. For any other questions regarding your Pension Benefit Statement please contact NILGOSC using the details shown on the back of your statement.

