

# Pension Choices, alpha or partnership: an overview

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This leaflet provides an overview of the schemes you are eligible to join under the Civil Service Pensions arrangements, so that you can choose the one best suited to you.

You are eligible to join either alpha or partnership. More information about partnership can also be found on the provider's website: [www.legalandgeneral.com/csp](http://www.legalandgeneral.com/csp)

This leaflet does not provide financial advice. You might want to consider contacting an Independent Financial Adviser (IFA) to discuss your retirement planning. You can find tips on finding an IFA by visiting the Money Helper website: [www.moneyhelper.org.uk](http://www.moneyhelper.org.uk)

## How do I register my choice?

Fill in the Pension Choices form enclosed in your New Starter Pack and send it to the return address shown on the form.

	alpha	partnership
What kind of scheme is it?	Defined benefit scheme. Offers a pension income based on your earnings over your career and your years of membership in the scheme.	Defined contribution scheme. A type of pension where benefits are dependent on contributions and the growth of the pension fund.
How much will I pay?	You will contribute a percentage of your pensionable earnings. The percentage you contribute will depend on how much you earn. Please see: <a href="http://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/memberhub/joining-the-pension-scheme/contribution-rates/">www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/memberhub/joining-the-pension-scheme/contribution-rates/</a> for the current rates.	You do not have to pay anything. You can pay as much as you like up to 100% of your pensionable earnings. Your employer will match your contributions, up to 3%.
How much will my employer pay?	Your employer will contribute a percentage of your pensionable earnings. Please see: <a href="http://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/employerhub/employer-responsibilities/employer-contribution-rates/">www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/employerhub/employer-responsibilities/employer-contribution-rates/</a> for more information.	
Will I get tax relief on my contributions?	You get tax relief on contributions, subject to HM Revenue & Customs rules.	
How does my pension build up?	You build up alpha pension at a rate of 2.32% of your pensionable pay each year.	Contributions are invested in a fund of your choice by your partnership pension provider.

	What benefits do I get?	
	alpha	partnership
Retirement pension	This will be made up of the 2.32% of your pensionable earnings each year, adjusted in line with prices.	Contributions are invested to build up a pension pot.
Lump sum	You can choose to exchange 25% of the total value of your pension benefits for a tax-free lump sum, subject to limits set by HM Revenue & Customs.	You can choose to exchange some, or all of your pension pot for a lump sum, subject to limits set by HM Revenue & Customs.
When can I take my pension?	In alpha, you have a Normal Pension Age (NPA), which is the same as your State Pension age or age 65 if later. You can take your pension before your NPA, although your benefits will be reduced to take account of early payment. The minimum pension age in alpha is age 55.	You can take your pension from age 55.  You don't have to retire to take your pension.
Ill-health benefits	You can apply for ill-health retirement. If the Scheme Medical Adviser confirms your health will permanently prevent you from being able to do your current job, you can have your alpha pension paid early. Your pension can be increased if you are unlikely to be able to return to any sort of employment.	You can apply for an ill-health payment. If the Scheme Medical Adviser confirms your health will permanently prevent you from being able to do your current job, you could receive a lump sum when you leave. This is separate from the partnership pension account.  You may also be able to access your pension pot before age 55 if you become seriously ill or incapacitated and are unable to carry out your normal occupation.
What benefits are there for my family?	If you die with at least one year of service, alpha will provide a pension for either: your spouse, civil partner, or partner, plus any dependent children you may have.  If you die in service, alpha also provides a lump sum that can be paid to people or an organisation that you nominate.	If you die before taking your benefits, your beneficiaries will receive the benefits you have built up in partnership. You will be asked to nominate who you wish to receive this. The provider will choose how these benefits are paid depending on the circumstances of your dependants. The provider will take your nomination into consideration when doing this.  If you die in service a lump sum can be paid to people or organisations that you nominate. This is separate from the partnership pension account.  On retirement, you can choose whether or not to provide a pension for your dependants as well as for yourself.

