

FACTSHEET FOR RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS CURRENTLY PAYING INTO THE MODIFIED PENSION SCHEME (2006)

What will the scheme provide?

How the Retained Firefighters' Modified Pension Scheme 2006 (RFMPS 2006) can benefit you.

Being a member of the RFMPS 2006 offers you:

- a low-cost and tax-efficient way to save for your retirement
- contributions from your employer
- the option to pay additional contributions towards your pension
- a secure inflation-proofed pension when you retire, with the potential for a tax-free lump sum
- life cover that pays a lump sum should you die while an active member and income protection for your dependants
- the option to retire earlier than your normal pension if:
 - you have to retire on the grounds of permanent disablement
 - you choose to take early retirement.

How much do I pay in?

Contribution rates

Your RFMPS 2006 contributions are assessed on the pensionable pay you receive, including all permanent emoluments determined by the firefighter's role or, in the case of a Chief Fire Officer and/or their assistants, the salary appropriate to the overall responsibilities of the post. It also includes any retaining allowance paid to you.

The contribution rate you pay are determined at the start of each scheme year (1 April). In determining the band you fall into, it is the pay that a whole-time firefighter would receive for the role you hold that is used rather than your actual pensionable pay.

Although your contribution rate is determined by reference to the whole-time equivalent pay, if you are a retained firefighter, the contribution rate will be applied to the actual pensionable pay you receive.

Contributions during periods of absence

The contribution you pay would depend on the reason for your absence under the RFMPS 2006.

Illness or injury leave

Contributions will be taken from the pensionable pay you actually receive. Where you do not receive any pensionable pay you will not build any pensionable service unless you elect to pay the pension contributions for this period of leave. The contributions due will buy back the pensionable service lost and will be based on the average pensionable pay for the 12 months that immediately preceded your leave by the number of days you are on leave. You may also be required to pay the employer contribution due.

Child-related leave

Contributions will be taken from the pensionable pay you actually receive. Where you do not receive any pensionable pay after the first 26 weeks of your leave, you will not build any pensionable service unless you elect to pay the pension contributions for this period of leave.

The contributions due will buy back the pensionable service lost and will be based on the pensionable pay you received immediately before your pensionable pay stopped. You will not be required to pay the employer contribution due.

Unpaid leave

You will not pay contributions and you will not build any pensionable service unless you elect to pay the pension contributions for this period of leave. The contributions due will buy back the pensionable service lost and will be based on the average pensionable pay for the 12 months that immediately preceded your leave by the number of days you are on leave. You may also be required to pay the employer contribution due.

Trade dispute

You will not pay contributions and you will not build any pensionable service unless you elect to pay the pension contributions for this period of leave. The contributions due will buy back the pensionable service lost and will be based on the pensionable pay you would have received from your retaining allowance. You may also be required to pay the employer contribution due.

Reserve Forces leave

You will pay contributions at your normal rate. If you are a regular firefighter contributions are based on the pensionable pay you would have received from the authority had you not been on leave. If you are a retained or volunteer firefighter contributions are based on the average pensionable pay for the 12 months that immediately preceded your leave by the number of days you are on leave.

How much do I pay in?

How is my membership worked out

If you are a retained firefighter, your membership is worked out using your pay. The pensionable pay that you have received for a scheme year is compared with the full-time equivalent rate of pay for your role.

For example:

A retained firefighter has worked for three years, from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2010.

The full-time equivalent level of pay for their role over the same three-year period is:

- 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 > £24,000
- 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 > £26,000
- 1 April 2009 to 30 March 2010 > £28,000

The actual pay received by the firefighter was:

- 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 > £6,500
- 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 > £4,000
- 1 April 2009 to 30 March 2010 > £8,500

The pensionable service is worked out as:

- 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 > £6,500 / £24,000 = 27.08% of a year
- 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 > £4,000 / £26,000 = 15.38% of a year
- 1 April 2009 to 30 March 2010 > £8,500 / £28,000 = 30.36% of a year

Total pensionable service = 0.7282 of a year

How your pensionable service is calculated

Pensionable service is the period of your scheme membership that we use to calculate your scheme benefits and on which you have paid or are treated as having paid pension contributions. You can build up a maximum of 30 years' pensionable service in the RFMPS 2006.

We calculate your pensionable service by comparing the pensionable pay you receive from your retained duties with the pensionable pay that would have been received by a whole-time firefighter in the same role over the same period (reference pay). This comparison will normally be made over each scheme year (1 April to 31 March) and will indicate the proportion of pensionable service which will count in each scheme year as shown in previous section.

- **Actual pensionable pay/reference pay = pensionable service**

How your pensionable pay is calculated

Contributions, pensions and certain other benefits are based on 'pensionable pay' and 'final pensionable pay'.

The items treated as pensionable are:

- pay received for the performance of the duties of your role, except for any allowances or emoluments paid on a temporary basis
- your permanent emoluments (including, in the case of a retained firefighter, any retaining allowance)
- the amount forgone if you have agreed to surrender the right to receive part of your pensionable pay in exchange for East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority providing a non-cash benefit (this is sometimes referred to as salary sacrifice)
- the amount paid for continued professional development.

Any payments you receive for continued professional development will be used to calculate an additional pension benefit that is calculated in line with guidance issued by the scheme actuary. The remaining payments are used to calculate your pensionable pay.

Final pensionable pay is the greater of:

- pensionable pay, at whole-time rate, averaged over the last 365 days of scheme membership
- that year's pensionable pay if either of the two preceding years would produce a greater amount.

How your pension is calculated

The RFMPS 2006 is a final salary scheme. This means that the pension you accrue is based on the amount of pensionable service you have built up and your earnings when you leave the scheme. We work out your pension using the following formula:

- **Final pensionable pay x pensionable service (to maximum of 30 years) x 1/45**

Final pensionable pay, in most cases, will be your pensionable pay, at whole-time rate, averaged over the last 365 days of pensionable service. However, if either of the two preceding years would produce a greater amount, that year's pensionable pay would be used instead.

Pensionable service is the period of your scheme membership that we use to calculate your scheme benefits and on which you have paid, or are treated as having paid, pension contributions.

Your pensionable service is calculated by comparing the pensionable pay you receive from your retained duties with the pensionable pay that would have been received by a whole-time firefighter in the same role over the same period (reference pay). This comparison will normally be made over each scheme year (1 April to 31 March) and will indicate the proportion of pensionable service which will count in each scheme year.

- **Actual pensionable pay/reference pay = pensionable service**

In addition to your basic entitlement of 1/60th you may also be entitled to a long service increment.

Long service increment

If you have pensionable service that includes 30 June 2007 and you were entitled to a long service increment or an interim or transitional payment connected with long service and on or after 1 October 2007 you:

- retire from your employment as a firefighter; or
- become entitled to a deferred pension

You will be credited with an additional pension benefit of:

- **$[A + (B \times 2) \times \text{£}990]/60$**

This is where:

- A is the number in years by which your continuous pensionable service in an English fire and rescue authority up to and including 30 June 2007 exceeds 15 but not 20
- B is the number in years by which your continuous pensionable service in an English fire and rescue authority up to and including 30 June 2007 exceeds 20 but not 30. (Years are counted as part years where appropriate).

Additional pension benefit

If you have received a payment for continual professional development you will build up an additional pension benefit (APB). The value of the APB to which you will be entitled will be determined annually on each 1 July in accordance with guidance and tables provided by the scheme actuary.

If you have a reduction in pensionable pay or you take up a different role within East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority we will split your basic pension into two parts to protect your final salary benefits. When you leave and your benefits become payable we will pay both parts.

- **Part 1** of your pension is in respect of your pensionable service from the date you joined to the date of your pensionable pay reduction. This period is treated as if it became a deferred pension at the date the pensionable pay reduction took effect and so is linked to your final pensionable pay (allowing for cost of living increases) that applied before the reduction to your pay.
- **Part 2** represents the remainder of your pensionable service and is linked to your final pensionable pay at date of leaving.

However, if the final pensionable pay that is applied to the second part of your pension now exceeds the final pensionable pay (allowing for cost of living increases) applied to the first part of your pension you can elect to have the two parts of your pension aggregated and for your retirement benefits to be calculated on your final pensionable pay at date of leaving.

Please contact the Pension Administrators to see how much your pension will be at your retirement. We hope you find it helpful in planning for your future. Although we cannot predict what will happen between now and when you retire, the information will help in your financial planning.

Can I pay in more?

Making extra contributions

You can increase the amount you receive when you retire by paying extra into the RFMPS 2006 over your standard contributions, providing you start any extra payments at least two years before your normal pension age of 60.

Paying more into the Firefighters' Pension Scheme means you benefit from tax relief on any extra contributions you choose to pay.

If you are interested in these options, contact the Pension Administrators.

If you are already making extra payments to the scheme (which started before 1 April 2015), to increase your membership you may also pay additional contributions into the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015 to purchase additional pension when you transition into that scheme.

Buying additional service

If you are unable to build 30 years' pensionable service before you reach the age of 55, you can purchase additional service by paying additional monthly contributions.

You would need to elect to do this at least two years before you reach the age of 55. The additional contributions would start to be deducted from your first birthday following your election and, like your basic pension contributions, will be assessed on your pensionable pay.

If you leave or stop paying your additional contributions before the amount due to purchase your additional service is paid, you will be credited with the appropriate portion of service purchased.

There are limits on the amounts you can save over a year and over your lifetime. If you exceed the limits, you may be liable for an additional tax charge.

If you would like an estimate of the cost buying additional service, please contact the Pension Administrators.

Paying contributions to a stakeholder or personal pension scheme

You also have the option to pay contributions into a pension scheme of your own choosing as well as being a member of the RFMPS 2006.

You can, if you wish, pay up to 100% of your taxable earnings in each tax year (or £3,600 if greater) into any number of concurrent pension arrangements of your choice and be eligible for tax relief on those contributions.

Limits on the pension savings you can make

Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) limits the amount you pay into a pension scheme each year (the Annual Allowance) and the amount you can build up over your lifetime (the Lifetime Allowance) and receive tax relief. If you exceed either of these limits you will have to pay an additional tax charge.

Further information about the Lifetime and Annual Allowances can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Can I transfer another pension to the RFMPS 2006?

What happens if you want to transfer another pension to the RFMPS 2006?

You are able to transfer other pensions in, providing we are able to accept the transfer and your request to transfer is made in writing within the first 12 months of joining the scheme.

We cannot accept:

- a transfer of pension credit rights that relate to the dissolution of a marriage or civil partnership
- a transfer that does not meet certain 'contracting out' requirements
- a transfer where the service credit provided by the transfer plus your prospective service to age 55 would exceed 30 years.

The value of the transfer will be used to buy a service credit in the pension scheme to increase the amount of pension you will receive when you retire. You will be provided with an estimate of the benefits that could be purchased in the scheme before being asked if you would like to proceed with the transfer of benefits.

If you are interested in transferring any pension rights from another pension into the pension scheme, please contact the Pension Administrator.

How do I know if I have full or tapered protection?

Find out how to tell if your RFMPS 2006 pension is full or tapered.

You are **fully protected** if you were a member of the RFMPS 2006 and, as at 1 April 2012, were aged 50 or more. If you meet this condition you will remain in the RFMPS 2006 until your retirement. Unlike members of the RFMPS 2006 who transfer to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 (FPS 2015), you will continue to have a cap of 30 years' service on the amount of pension that you can earn, even if you pay pension contributions for over 30 years.

You will have **tapered protection** if you were a member of the RFMPS 2006 and, as at 1 April 2012, were between the ages of 46 and 50. Your tapered protection date is personal to you and at your taper date you will move from the RFMPS 2006 to the FPS 2015. Your existing RFMPS 2006 pension will not transfer with you and will remain fully protected in the RFMPS 2006. If your tapered protection date falls after you choose to retire, you will not move across to the FPS 2015. Please see the Taper Protection Table under the 'Protections' section of the pensions portal.

You are **unprotected** if you were a member of the RFMPS 2006 scheme and, as at 1 April 2012, were under the age of 46. Unprotected members transitioned into the FPS 2015 on 1 April 2015.

If you retire after transferring across to the FPS 2015, you will have pension rights in both the RFMPS 2006 and FPS 2015. This means you will have a 'two part' pension.

- **Part 1** - The first part of your pension remains fully protected in the RFMPS 2006 and, if you remain an active scheme member it can be taken, on retirement, from age 55 without a reduction being applied. Your RFMPS 2006 pension will be calculated on your final pensionable pay at your date of retirement.
- **Part 2** – The second part of your pension is in the FPS 2015. If you remain an active member, this can be taken: from age 55 with a reduction, at age 60 without any reduction, or after age 60 with a pension enhancement. If you have left service before being entitled to take your 2015 scheme pension, it will come into payment in full at your state pension age.

What if I am absent without pay?

There are different types of absences and they affect your RFMPS 2006 contributions. Please see below for more details.

Sickness or injury leave

While you receive pay you will continue to build up pensionable service. You will also pay contributions at your normal rate based on the pensionable pay you receive.

If you enter unpaid illness or injury leave, you will not pay contributions and you will no longer build up pensionable service unless you elect within six months of your return from leave to pay the pension contributions for this period of leave.

The contributions due will buy back the pensionable service lost and will be based on the pensionable pay you would have received had you not been on leave. If you are a retained or volunteer firefighter, contributions are based on the average pensionable pay for the 12 months that immediately preceded your leave by the number of days you are on leave.

You will also be required to pay the employer contribution due.

If you pay additional contributions to purchase additional service and you enter a period of:

- reduced pay - the payment of your additional contributions will continue and would be taken, ignoring the reduction to your pensionable pay (full rate)
- nil pay - the payment of these additional contributions would stop unless you required East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority to take payment of the additional payments during your unpaid leave. If your additional contributions stopped, you would not build up additional service for this period of leave unless, within one month of your return from leave, you instruct the authority to deduct from your pay the additional contributions you missed.

Child-related leave

If you are absent due to maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, the treatment of your pension depends on whether you are in a period of Ordinary child-related leave or Additional child-related leave.

If you are on Ordinary child-related leave (the first 26 weeks of your leave) or paid Additional child-related leave (the next 13 weeks of your leave) you will continue to build up pensionable service and pay contributions at your normal rate based on the pensionable pay you receive.

If you enter a period of no pay during Ordinary child-related leave you will not pay contributions. You will be treated as having paid contributions so your scheme membership will count towards your pensionable service. Pensionable service is the period of your scheme membership that we use to calculate your scheme benefits and on which you have paid or are treated as having paid pension contributions.

If you are on unpaid Additional child-related leave, your contributions will stop and you will not build up any pensionable service for this absence. When you return to work you will have 30 days to elect to pay the pension contributions to convert this period of leave into pensionable service. If you do not return to work you will have 30 days from the day your employment ends to make your election. However, if your child-related leave ends after you have transitioned into the FPS 2015 you will only be able to elect to pay the missed contributions that were due to your transition date. You will need to make a separate election for the missed contributions in the FPS 2015.

The contributions you will need to pay to convert your period of unpaid Additional child-related leave into pensionable service will be based on the pensionable pay you received immediately before your pensionable pay stopped. You will not be required to pay the employer contribution due.

If you pay additional contributions to purchase additional service and your pay:

- reduces the payment of your additional contributions will continue and would be taken ignoring the reduction to your pensionable pay (that is, at full rate)
- stops the payment of these additional contributions unless you required East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority to take payment of the additional payments during your unpaid leave. If your additional contributions stopped, you would not build up additional service for this period of leave unless, within one month of your return, you instruct the authority to deduct from your pay the additional contributions you missed.

Reserve Forces leave

If you are absent due to Reserve Forces leave, your employer will liaise with the Ministry of Defence to deduct and pay over the relevant contributions while you are being paid by them, ensuring you do not lose out.

You will pay contributions at your normal rate. If you are a retained or volunteer firefighter, contributions are based on the average pensionable pay for the 12 months that immediately preceded your leave by the number of days you are on leave.

Contact your employer if you are expecting to be called up for Reserve Forces duty.

Authorised absences (including jury service)

If you are on authorised absence, your contributions will stop and you will not build up any pensionable service during the absence unless you elect within six months of your return from leave to pay the pension contributions for this period of leave. The contributions due will buy back the pensionable service lost and will be based on the average pensionable pay for the 12 months that immediately preceded your leave by the number of days you are on leave. You will also be required to pay the employer contribution due.

If you pay additional contributions to purchase additional service whether or not the payment of your additional contributions are affected will depend on the length of your leave. Where your leave is of short duration your additional contribution will be unaffected by the absence as the deduction required will be taken in full.

If, however, your leave will span one or more months, your additional contributions would stop unless you required East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority to take payment of the additional payments during your unpaid leave. If your additional contributions stopped, you would not build up additional service for this period of leave unless, within one month of your return, you instruct the authority to deduct from your pay the additional contributions you missed.

Strike absences

If you are on strike, your contributions will stop and you will not build up any pensionable service during the absence unless you elect within six months of your return from leave to pay the pension contributions for this period of leave. The contributions due will buy back the pensionable service lost and will be based on the average pensionable pay for the 12 months that immediately preceded your absence by the number of days you are on strike. You will also be required to pay the employer contribution due.

If you pay additional contributions to purchase additional pension your contribution will be unaffected by the absence as the required deduction required will be taken in full.

What if I leave or opt out before normal pension age?

Opting out

You can choose to opt out of the RFMPS 2006 at any time by completing an opt-out form in the 'Opting-out' section of the pensions portal.

If you opt out within one month of re-joining the RFMPS 2006 following a transfer of employment from another English fire and rescue authority and have not transferred other pension benefits into the scheme you will be treated as never having re-joined the scheme. If any pension contributions have been deducted from your pay, they will be refunded through payroll.

Leaving employment

If you leave your employment as a firefighter or opt out more than one month after re-joining the scheme, you will become entitled to keep your pension benefits in the RFMPS 2006 or to transfer them to another pension arrangement.

You can exercise the option to transfer your benefits to another pension scheme at any time up to one year before your deferred pension age. There are restrictions on the types of pension arrangement that you can transfer your RFMPS 2006 benefits to so, please contact the Pensions Administrator if you wish to transfer your benefits to another pension scheme.

If you keep your benefits deferred in the RFMPS 2006 your deferred pension will be increased each year by the cost of living as measured by the [Pensions Increase \(Review\) Orders](#) and the Administrators will send you an annual statement so you know the value of your benefits.

Drawing your benefits

If you are no longer employed by a fire and rescue authority in England you can draw your benefits without reductions applying from deferred pension age which is age 65. Your Pensions Administrator will contact you before your deferred pension age to confirm the benefits due to you but you can also request payment before this date by contacting the Pensions Administrator.

If you choose to draw your retirement benefits before you reach your deferred pension age, they will be reduced to reflect the early payment of these benefits.

What happens if I die in service?

What happens to your pension if you die while paying into the RFMPS 2006?

If you die in service and you are an active member of the scheme, a tax-free lump sum death grant would be the greater of:

- 2 x rate of pensionable pay based on hours at date of death
- 2 x whole-time pensionable pay x pensionable service/period of scheme membership of two times your final pay.

This tax-free lump sum will be payable at the discretion of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority to your nominee(s), personal representative or any other person appearing to have been your relative or dependant.

My circumstances have changed

If you're paying into the RFMPS 2006 and your circumstances change, please let us know.

If your circumstances have changed you should inform us with any relevant amendments to your personal details, including changes to your:

- name
- postal address
- email address
- marital/partner status.

Fraud prevention

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority has a responsibility to ensure that it protects the fund that it administers. Due to this obligation it may use the information provided by its members for the purpose of prevention and detection of fraud. This information may also be shared with other bodies administering public schemes solely for these purposes.

The Firefighters' Pension Schemes currently participate in an anti-fraud initiative organised by the Cabinet Office, which is carried out under Part 6 of the [Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014](#). Under this act, the details of deferred and pensioner members are provided to the Cabinet Office. This is so that information can be compared against that provided by other public bodies to ensure that no pensions are being paid to persons who are deceased or no longer entitled to them.

While the object of this exercise is the detection of fraud, previous similar exercises have helped to uncover underpayments to pensioners, which could then be rectified. These exercises, therefore, help ensure the best use of fund

FPS divorce forms and charges

How to let us know if you are divorcing or dissolving your civil partnership.]

If you are about to divorce or are currently going through a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership, please complete a [PS02 consent form](#). This will allow us to provide pension information to your solicitor in connection with your divorce.

Read our guide ([Pension sharing divorce charges](#)) to find out about charges incurred during divorce proceedings:

For further information, please contact the Pensions Administrators.

Compliments and complaints (RFMPS 2006)

If our staff or services have been helpful, please let us know. If you are unhappy with a decision made about your pension or wish to complain about the service you have received, please contact us first to try and resolve any issues.

If you are still unhappy, please follow the process outlined [here](#).

Internal disputes

From the day you start work to the day when benefits are paid, decisions are made about your pension membership and benefits.

Some decisions are the responsibility of your employer, for example, the contribution rate you pay and your entitlement to benefits. East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Authority, as scheme manager, processes this information and calculates and pays your benefits under the Retained Firefighters' Modified Pension Scheme 2006 (RFMPS 2006).

If you are not satisfied with a decision that affects your membership of the scheme, you have the right to ask for it to be looked at again. This is done by a formal complaints procedure known as the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP). Please follow the process outlined [here](#).