

Children flown the nest?

Take the opportunity to plan your retirement income. Get started now by following our simple steps

Are you over 50? Have the kids left home to find their own way in life – leaving you with a bit of extra cash in your pocket?

If this is you, then the chances are you're thinking about how to make the most of the next stage of your life. Increasing numbers of over 50s are choosing to live life to the full by continuing to work as well as taking the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people and spend more time with their friends and family – and as a result they've never been happier.

But if you want to continue to do the things you love in retirement you'll need to think about re-prioritising your finances and plan ahead. These days most of us can expect to live well into our eighties – that's around 20 years beyond the current State Pension age – so it's really important for people think about their retirement and how they'll fund it.

Your State Pension is a great foundation. You need to know what you'll get from it and whether you'll need to take action to top it up if you find you haven't got enough. You can choose to work longer to increase your retirement income or add to your State Pension with a private pension of your own.

Here are some simple steps you can take now to get you started:

STEP ONE: Find out how much State Pension you have built up so far

To get the full basic State Pension you need to build up a certain number of years of National Insurance contributions, called 'qualifying years'. How many qualifying years you need depends on your age:

- men and women reaching State Pension age on or after 6 April 2010 need 30 qualifying years to get a full basic State Pension.

If you reached your State Pension age before 6 April 2010, please visit the 'Build a better future' website to check how many qualifying years you need.

» [Build a better future](#) (Directgov website)

The State Pension profiler is a simple tool that shows you how much basic State Pension you may have built up to date and when you can claim it. You can check this out by visiting the Directgov website.

» [State Pension profiler](#) (Directgov website)

STEP TWO: If you don't have a full basic State Pension of your own, find out if you can top it up through your partner

If you have a husband, wife or civil partner with a good National Insurance record, you may qualify for some basic State Pension through them. This could give you a total basic State Pension of up to about 60 per cent of the full rate including any basic State Pension of your own.

At the moment the full basic State Pension is about £97 a week, so you could get about £58 a week in total. For more information visit the Directgov website.

» [State Pension](#) (Directgov website)

What is right for you will depend on your personal circumstances, so make sure you have all the information you need to make the right decision.



Contact us about being a partner:
pensions.planning@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

DWP

Department for
Work and Pensions

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STEP THREE: Find out if voluntary National Insurance contributions could also give you a bigger State Pension

You might be able to buy voluntary National Insurance Contributions. These are payments you can make if you have gaps in your record.

These could help you get a bigger basic State Pension when you claim it. There are time limits for paying these so do check how any restrictions might apply to you before you decide if this is a good option. What is right for you will depend on your personal circumstances, so make sure you have all the information you need to make the right decision. Find out more at the Directgov website.

» [Do you need to top up your National Insurance contributions?](#) (Directgov website)

STEP FOUR: Think about working longer and delaying your State Pension

There is no State retirement age. You can carry on working past your State Pension age and staying in work has lots of advantages. For instance, once you have reached State Pension age you won't pay any National Insurance on your earnings. It may also make financial sense to delay claiming your State Pension if you have other income such as a wage, because you could get a higher weekly amount later or, if you defer your State Pension for at least a year, a lump sum with interest.

Delaying claiming your State Pension is a decision you'll need to make based on your own individual circumstances. Find out more by visiting the Directgov website.

» [State Pension deferral](#) (Directgov website)

These days there are lots of options for older workers. You could talk to your employer about staying on, changing jobs, or working flexibly. Find out more at the 'Build a better future' website.

» [Build a better future - When can I retire](#) (Directgov website)

STEP FIVE: Track down any lost private, personal or workplace pension plans

You may well have paid into pension plans for a short time and forgotten about them and small amounts can add up and make a difference in retirement. Around £3 billion lies unclaimed in pension accounts. Find out more at the Directgov website.

» [Pension tracing service](#) (Directgov website)

There's lots more information online at the 'Build a better future' website.

» [Build a better future](#) (Directgov website)



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