

Martin and Sarah's story

With the last of their three children about to set up home on their own, Martin and Sarah realised that for the first time in 25 years they'd be on their own again – and a bit better off financially too.

“Our youngest had just finished college and was about to start her first full time job. There are so many things my wife Sarah and I want to do in our retirement that we thought it was the right time to start thinking about how we'd fund it.

“I wasn't sure I wanted to give up work completely as I really enjoy my job and get a lot out of it, but I did want more time to enjoy my hobbies, especially fishing. My wife Sarah was keen to do a gardening course she'd been putting off for ages, and we both wanted to visit Sarah's sister in Australia and help with our first grandchild.

“It didn't take long to find out that if we took some simple steps now it could make a big difference later on. The information on the 'Build a better future' website laid everything out clearly and was really easy to understand. Here are the top tips we found”.

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 our website at 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.

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

STEP TWO: If you won'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. 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.

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

Voluntary National Insurance contributions are payments you may be able to make if you have gaps in your record. These could help you get a bigger basic State Pension. There are time limits for paying these, so 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)



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

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Work and Pensions

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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.

» [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.

» [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.

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

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

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



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