



# Government Actuary's Department

## **Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland)**

### **Lifetime Allowance and Additional Cash Commutation**

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Department of the Environment (“DOE”) is required under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 (‘the 2014 Regulations’) (SRNI 2014/188), to issue actuarial guidance in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme on calculating the capital value of a member’s accrued rights, for the purposes of determining the maximum lump sum the member may take at retirement.
- 1.2 The remainder of this introduction contains:
- > details of the implementation and future review of this guidance,
  - > the relevant legislative references, and
  - > statements about third party reliance and liability
- 1.3 In the remainder of this note:
- > The second section provides background information and describes the calculation for the capital value of the member’s accrued rights and provides links to relevant HMRC guidance
  - > The third section contains examples
  - > Appendices A and B set out the relevant statutory references
  - > Appendix C sets out some important limitations
- 1.4 The Government Actuary’s Department (GAD) seeks to achieve a high standard in all our work. Please go to our [website](#)<sup>1</sup> for details of the standards we apply.

### Implementation and Review

- 1.5 DOE is required to consult GAD before issuing actuarial guidance under the 2014 Regulations [Regulation 2(3) of the 2014 Regulations].
- 1.6 As part of this consultation DOE has asked GAD to recommend actuarial guidance in respect of the regulations detailed below. This document forms GAD’s recommendation for the actuarial guidance required by these regulations.
- 1.7 This note has effect only when this guidance is issued by DOE to the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers’ Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) in accordance with Regulation 2(3) of the 2014 Regulations, and is subject to the implementation instructions provided at that time.
- 1.8 This guidance relates to commutation of a member’s pension benefits at retirement for a pension commencement lump sum, regardless of whether the member has been an active member of the 2015 Scheme, or whether the pension benefits were earned before or after 1 April 2015. It also applies in relation to councillors. It replaces the previous guidance dated 1 March 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-actuaries-department/about/terms-of-reference>



- 1.9 This guidance has been written for pension administrators and assumes some knowledge of general pensions terminology, and some familiarity with retirement calculations for the Local Government Pension Scheme. Any questions concerning the application of the guidance should, in the first instance, be referred to DOE.

#### **Use of this note**

- 1.10 This note has been prepared for DOE and can be relied upon by them. We are content for this note to be released to third parties, provided that:
- > it is released in full;
  - > the advice is not quoted selectively or partially; and
  - > GAD is identified as the source of the note.
- 1.11 Third parties may wish to seek their own actuarial advice where appropriate. GAD has no liability to any person or third party for any act or omission taken, either in whole or in part, on the basis of this note.

#### **Third party reliance**

- 1.12 When issued by DOE in accordance with paragraph 1.7 above, this note should be used as the actuarial guidance required under the regulations cited. Other than for this purpose, no person or third party is entitled to place any reliance on the contents of this note, except to any extent explicitly stated herein.



## 2 Background and Guidance

- 2.1 For the purposes of Regulation 34(4) of the 2014 Regulations the capital value of the member's accrued rights should be calculated in accordance with guidance issued by DOE. However, such guidance must itself recognise the requirements of the Finance Act 2004, associated regulations, and guidance from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).
- 2.2 This guidance also applies where benefits for Councillor members are valued under Regulation 34(4) of the 2014 Regulations.
- 2.3 This guidance has been simplified to refer to HMRC guidance where applicable
- 2.4 Regulation 34(2) of the 2014 Regulations, taken together with Regulation 12(1) of The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 (SRNI 2014 / 189) ('the 2015 Scheme Transitional Regulations'), states that the member's total lump sum, including any retirement grant, shall not exceed 25% of the capital value of a member's accrued rights.
- 2.5 The following paragraphs provide brief comments on the calculation of the capital value. Nothing in these paragraphs or elsewhere in this guidance can override any prevailing HMRC restrictions.
- 2.6 For members who have taken flexible retirement or early retirement under regulation 31 of the 2014 Regulations, commutation takes place after any reduction to the member's pension pursuant to regulation 31 of the 2014 Regulations.
- 2.7 Under Regulation 19(7) of the 2014 Regulations, a member may use the accumulated value of his or her AVCs to provide additional benefits under the Scheme (see the guidance document "Use of accumulated AVCs to provide additional pension under the Scheme"). These can be in the form of a lump sum or a pension, or a combination of the two.
- 2.8 If additional benefits are provided through the Scheme, any lump sum taken from the AVC fund, together with the capital value of the pension deriving from the residual AVC fund, should be included in the capital value of the member's accrued rights.
- 2.9 Alternatively, the member can take their AVC benefits outside the Scheme. In this case AVCs are not included in the assessment, and AVCLS and AVCP are zero in the calculation shown in paragraph 2.10 below.
- 2.10 A factor of 20 is used to value a member's pension (including pension secured in the Scheme from the member's AVCs, where relevant) in determining whether the total lump sum, including any retirement grant, does not exceed 25% of the capital value of a member's accrued rights. The capital value (CV) of the member's accrued rights is therefore as follows:

$$CV = LS + AVCLS + (20 \times (P + AVCP))$$



Where:

LS = Retirement Grant + Additional lump sum by commutation of pension  
(excluding cash taken from AVCs)

P = Pension after commutation (excluding pension from AVCs)

AVCLS = Cash sum taken from the member's AVC fund

AVCP = Pension provided through the scheme from the AVC fund

See:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/rpsmmanual/rpsm11104220.htm>

- 2.11 HMRC provides further guidance setting out how the capital value of a member's benefits should be calculated – see  
<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/rpsmmanual/rpsm09104400.htm>.
- 2.12 HMRC also provides guidance on the maximum amount of lump sum that can be taken where the member has no automatic retirement grant and so is only entitled to a lump sum by commutation – see:  
<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/rpsmmanual/rpsm09104430.htm>.
- 2.13 If a member also has AVCs that are not taken outside the Scheme but are applied to provide additional pension through the Scheme, then HMRC also provides a flowchart that should be followed – see:  
<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/rpsmmanual/rpsm09104490.htm>.  
However, the flowchart should not be used in a case where a member has entitlement to a lump sum that is not derived from the commutation of pension.
- 2.14 DOE has instructed that the capital value of the member's accrued rights for the purpose of regulation 34(4) should not exceed the standard lifetime allowance, consistent with the permitted maximum level of pension commencement lump sum payable under Finance Act 2004, see:  
<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/rpsmmanual/RPSM09104220.htm>
- 2.15 Section 3 includes three examples to show how this is calculated, and to illustrate the calculation of the maximum allowable lump sum.

### Maximum cash

- 2.16 HMRC provides calculation guidance to derive the maximum cash sum in scenarios where there is no separate lump sum entitlement. The following paragraphs set out the calculation of maximum cash which are likely to apply in the majority of situations, subject to the overall limit of 25% of the lifetime allowance.

#### **A member has a lump sum entitlement but no AVCs**

- 2.17 In this situation the maximum cash will be obtained by commuting pension (at the rate of 12:1). In this situation the maximum total cash (MC), including the retirement grant, will be found as:

$$MC = \frac{(5 \times RG) + (60 \times GPEN)}{14}$$



Where:

RG = Retirement grant

GPEN = gross pension prior to commutation

The amount of maximum cash is partly met from the retirement grant, and the balance is obtained by commutation.

**A member has a lump sum entitlement and an AVC fund**

2.18 A test should first be made as to whether the entire AVC fund can be taken as cash in addition to the retirement grant. The test involves assessing whether  $AVC + RG$  exceeds or does not exceed 25% of  $(20 \times GPEN + AVC + RG)$ , where these terms are as defined below: in the former case, paragraph 2.18.2 should be followed: otherwise paragraph 2.18.1 should be followed.

2.18.1 If the AVC fund can be taken entirely as cash then there will generally be scope for some commutation of pension entitlement to obtain further cash. In this situation the maximum total cash (MC), including the retirement grant and the AVC fund, will be found as:

$$MC = \frac{(5 \times RG) + (5 \times AVC) + (60 \times GPEN)}{14}$$

Where:

RG = Retirement grant

AVC = total AVC fund (before any is taken as cash)

GPEN = gross pension prior to commutation

The amount of maximum cash is partly met from the retirement grant and from the AVC fund, and the balance is obtained by commutation.

2.18.2 If the AVC fund is too large to be taken as cash in addition to the retirement grant then the AVC fund needs to be split so that part is taken as cash (AVCLS) and the balance used to secure a pension (AVCP) within the Scheme. In this situation the maximum total cash (MC), including the retirement grant, will be found as:

$$MC = RG + \frac{(4 \times Y \times [(5 \times GPEN) - (0.75 \times RG)] + (20 \times AVC))}{[(20 + (3 \times Y))]}$$

Where:

RG = Retirement grant

AVC = total AVC fund (before any is taken as cash)

GPEN = gross pension prior to commutation



Y = amount of AVCs (in £s) required to secure an additional pension under the Scheme of £1 per annum. This can be derived using the guidance "Use of accumulated AVCs to provide additional pension under the Scheme". The above formula should not be used if Y is less than 12.

The amount of maximum cash is partly met from the retirement grant with the balance coming from the AVC fund. The unused part of the AVC fund is then used to secure additional pension under the Scheme.

- 2.19 The situations set out at paragraphs 2.17 and 2.18 may not cover every eventuality. For example they assume that a member seeking cash will not use an AVC fund to secure additional pension under the Scheme at the same time as commuting Scheme pension: where an AVC fund exists and the member wishes to take maximum cash, it is assumed that the member will take as much cash as possible from the AVC fund, to supplement any retirement grant, before electing to commute pension entitlement. It is also assumed that no retirement grant is converted to scheme pension.
- 2.20 When using the formulae in this section it is important that the resulting cash and remaining pension entitlements are then valued according to HMRC's requirements to ensure that the cash falls within the permitted limits.

### **Pension credit members**

- 2.21 In some circumstances Regulation 34(5) of the 2014 Regulations prevents a pension credit member from commuting pension for a cash sum when the pension credit comes into payment. The Finance Act 2004 may also restrict a pension credit member's ability to commute pension for a cash sum.





### 3 Examples of commutation calculations

#### 3.1 Example 1

Pension (before commutation) = £5,000 pa

Retirement Grant = £15,000

In addition the member has an AVC fund which he uses by taking a lump sum of £5,000 and a pension through the Scheme of £1,000 pa

Commutation factor = 12

Lifetime Allowance = £1.25 million (assumed)

The member chooses to commute £500 pa of pension, to obtain an additional lump sum of £6,000 (= 500 x 12)

Pension after commutation = 5,000 + 1,000 – 500 (including AVC pension)  
= £5,500

Lump sum after commutation = 15,000 + 5,000 + 6,000 (including AVC cash)  
= £26,000

Capital value of benefits = (20 x Pension) + total lump sum including AVC lump sum  
= (20 x 5,500) + 26,000  
= £136,000

Proportion of benefits taken as lump sum = Total lump sum after commutation / Capital value of benefits  
= 26,000 / 136,000  
= 19.1%

This is less than the limit of 25% (and the lump sum is less than 25% of the lifetime allowance) so the member is able to take this level of lump sum.

#### 3.2 Example 2

Pension = £5,000 pa

No automatic retirement grant

The member has no AVCs

The member wishes to commute part of their pension in order to receive the maximum allowable lump sum

Commutation factor = 12

Lifetime Allowance = £1.25 million (assumed)



### Calculations:

The formula is set out in paragraph 2.16 above, which shows the maximum lump sum (MC) as:

$$MC = \frac{(5 \times RG) + (60 \times GPEN)}{14}$$

In this case  $RG = 0$ , so  $MC = (60 \times 5,000) / 14 = \text{£}21,428.57$

(this is less than 25% of the lifetime allowance)

Pension after commutation =  $5,000 - 21,428.57 / 12 = \text{£}3,214.29$

Check: the lump sum does not exceed the permitted maximum of:  $0.25 \times [(3,214.29 \times 20) + 21,428.57] = 21,428.59$ . Hence the lump sum of  $\text{£}21,428.57$  is permitted.

### 3.3 Example 3

Pension =  $\text{£}55,000$  pa

Retirement Grant =  $\text{£}198,500$

The member has no AVCs

Commutation factor = 12

LTA =  $\text{£}1.25$  million (assumed)

#### Preliminary calculation:

If no pension is commuted:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Capital value of member's benefits} &= (20 \times P) + RG \\ &= (20 \times 55,000) + 198,500 \\ &= \text{£}1,298,500 \end{aligned}$$

This is in excess of the LTA.

However, the member wishes to commute further pension in order to receive the maximum allowable lump sum.

#### Calculations:

The formula is set out in paragraph 2.16 above, which shows the maximum lump sum (MC) as:

$$MC = \frac{(5 \times RG) + (60 \times GPEN)}{14}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{So } MC &= [(5 \times 198,500) + (60 \times 55,000)] / 14 \\ &= (992,500 + 3,300,000) / 14 \\ &= 306,607.14 \end{aligned}$$

This is within 25% of the LTA so the amount can be paid without restriction.



The maximum cash of £306,607.14 is partly met by the retirement grant of £198,500, leaving £108,107.14 to be obtained by commutation.

Pension after commutation =  $55,000 - 108,107.14 / 12 = £45,991.07$

Capital value of member's benefits after commutation

= (20 x pension after commutation) + total lump sum

= (20 x 45,991.07) + 306,607.14

= £1,226,428.54

(and the total lump sum of £306,607.14 is 25% of this capital value).

In this example, by commuting part of the pension to receive the maximum lump sum, the capital value of the member's benefits is reduced to below the LTA.

If the resulting lump sum is in excess of one quarter of the LTA and/or the capital value of the member's benefits after commutation is above the LTA, the guidance "Limit on Total Amount of Benefits – Lifetime Allowance" should be referred to.



## Appendix A: Cited Regulations

### A.1 Excerpts from the 2014 Regulations<sup>2</sup>

#### Introduction and interpretation

2. —

...

(2) The Scheme manager responsible for the administration of pensions and other benefits payable under these Regulations, is the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee, and in these Regulations is referred to as "the Committee".

(3) The Department may, after consultation with the Government Actuary's Department, issue actuarial guidance to the Committee.

#### Additional voluntary contributions

19. —

...

(7) If a member draws benefits under regulation 31(2), (2), (4), (5), (7), (10), (11), (12) (retirement benefits) or regulation 36 (early payment of retirement pension on ill-health grounds: active members) or, if a member who draws benefits under regulation 31(6) (retirement benefits, flexible retirement pensions) makes an election to draw the realisable value in the AVC arrangement at the same time, that member shall notify the Committee in writing that the realisable value, under arrangements made under this regulation,—

(a) is to be taken in full or in part by the member as a lump sum, and where only part is taken as a lump sum, the member shall specify the amount to be so taken; or

(b) to the extent that the realisable value has not been taken as a lump sum, it is to be used—

(i) to purchase additional pension under the Scheme, the amount of which is to be determined by the Committee in accordance with actuarial guidance issued by the Department; or

(ii) to purchase an annuity from one or more insurance companies (within the meaning of section 275 of the 2004 Finance Act).

(8) Where a member chooses to take some or all of the benefits referred to in paragraph (7) in the form of a lump sum, that sum does not form part of the total amount referred to in regulation 34(2) (election for lump sum instead of pension).

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<sup>2</sup> The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 (SRNI 2014/188)



### **Election for lump sum instead of pension**

#### **34. —**

(1) Subject to paragraph (5), a member entitled to a retirement pension under the Scheme may by written notice given to the Committee before any benefits in relation to the benefit crystallisation event become payable, commute the retirement pension payable, or part thereof, at a rate of £12 for every £1 of annual pension commuted.

(2) But the total amount of the member's commuted sum shall not exceed 25% of the capital value of the member's accrued rights under all local government pension provision in relation to that benefit crystallisation event, excluding any sum received as benefits provided in the form of a lump sum from any AVC arrangement entered into before 1st April 2015 referred to in regulation 19(7)(a) (additional voluntary contributions).

(3) For the purpose of paragraph (2), an AVC arrangement is to be regarded as entered into on whichever is the earlier of the date the AVC election form is received by the Committee or the date the AVC election form is received by the member's employing authority.

(4) The capital value of a member's accrued rights shall be calculated in accordance with actuarial guidance issued by the Department.

(5) Paragraph (1) does not apply to—

- (a) a pension credit member where the member of the Scheme to whom the pension sharing order applied has made an election under this regulation before the valuation date used when implementing the pension sharing order; or
- (b) any additional pension purchased by the member under regulation 19(7)(b)(i) (additional voluntary contributions).

## **A.2 Excerpts from the 2015 Scheme Transitional Regulations<sup>3</sup>**

### **Lump sum commutation**

#### **12.—**

(1) Where a member elects to commute pension under regulation 34 (election for lump sum instead of pension) of the 2014 Regulations, the member's benefits under the earlier Schemes which are aggregated with the member's benefits under the Scheme are taken into account for the purposes of regulation 34(1) and 34(2) of the 2014 Regulations.

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<sup>3</sup> The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 (SRNI 2014 / 189)



## Appendix B: Legislative references

- B.1 DOE is required under the 2014 Regulations to issue actuarial guidance in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme on calculating the capital value of a member's accrued rights, for the purposes of determining the maximum lump sum the member may take at retirement. [Regulation 34 (4) of the 2014 Regulations].
- B.2 On a benefit crystallisation event (BCE), before any benefits in relation to that event become payable, a member may elect to commute some of their own pension as a lump sum in addition to any retirement grant to which they are entitled. [Regulation 34(1) of the 2014 Regulations].
- B.3 The total of the additional lump sum derived from commutation, any retirement grant received, and any lump sum taken from the member's AVC funds, should not exceed 25% of the capital value of the member's accrued rights. For this purpose, the accrued rights to be valued are restricted in terms of the Finance Act 2004 to those rights which are actually being crystallised at the point of retirement from Local Government employment. [Regulations 34(2) and 34(4) of the 2014 Regulations].



## Appendix C: Limitations

- C.1 This note should not be used for any purpose other than to ensure that a member's total lump sum at retirement, including any retirement grant, does not exceed 25% of the capital value of the member's accrued rights.
- C.2 The guidance is based on GAD's understanding of the Finance Act 2004. Nothing in this guidance can override any prevailing HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) restrictions.
- C.3 This note should be considered in its entirety as individual sections, if considered in isolation, may be misleading, and conclusions reached by a review of some sections on their own may be incorrect.
- C.4 This note only covers the actuarial principles around the calculation to determine whether a member's total lump sum at retirement, including any retirement grant, exceeds 25% of the capital value of the member's accrued rights. Any legal advice in this area should be sought from an appropriately qualified person or source.
- C.5 Administrators should satisfy themselves that any additional lump sum taken complies with all legislative requirements including, but not limited to, taxation requirements.
- C.6 This guidance is based on the Regulations in force at the time of writing. It is possible that future changes to the Regulations might create inconsistencies between this guidance and the Regulations. If users of this guidance believe there to be any such inconsistencies, they should bring this to the attention of DOE. In no circumstances should this guidance take precedence over the Regulations. Administrators should ensure that they comply with all relevant Regulations.