



focus:



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Take a closer look at your Fund benefits

You know your pension will give you an income for life after work. But it also has plenty to offer while you're still at work.

So here's a reminder:

- 🔍 You're not the only one paying in – your employer does too.
- 🔍 The government gives you an extra boost in the form of tax relief. That means money in your pay that would normally be taxed goes straight into your pension instead. Think of it as a reward for saving towards your future.
- 🔍 You can top up your pension if you want with additional voluntary contributions (BRASS or AVC Extra).

Don't forget, the more you pay in, the more tax relief you get (up to certain limits), meaning a bigger pension should be waiting for you when you retire.
- 🔍 It's yours to keep, even if you leave your current job. You may be able to transfer it out or keep it in the Fund until you want to claim it.

Your benefits could also include life cover and pensions for your dependants if you die in service.



Find out more...

View your full range of benefits at btpensions.co.uk.

Sign in or register with myFund online to view your personal account.

Chair's message...

Welcome to your latest newsletter.

I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce myself to you as the new Chair of the Trustee Board for the BTPFSF (the Fund).

I've been a member of the Trustee Board since 2005 and chaired one of its sub-committees since 2007, so am very familiar with the Fund.

Outside of the Trustee Board, I have been involved in running company pension schemes for over 40 years so I hope to add to the considerable knowledge and experience of my fellow trustees in meeting our responsibilities to you, our members.

I'm looking forward to continuing the good work the Board does. The Fund is a fantastic pension scheme, run for the benefit of you – its members – so it's a privilege to play a part in that.

As a Board, we would like to say thank you to John Chilman for the brilliant contribution he has made in leading us as Chair since 2014. We will continue to benefit from his expertise now that he's taken up the role of CEO of the Fund's administrator, RPMI.

I'd also like to express our appreciation and gratitude to Tony Cotgreave who, after 14 years of serving on the Trustee Board, has chosen to step down. His dedication and commitment has been exemplary.

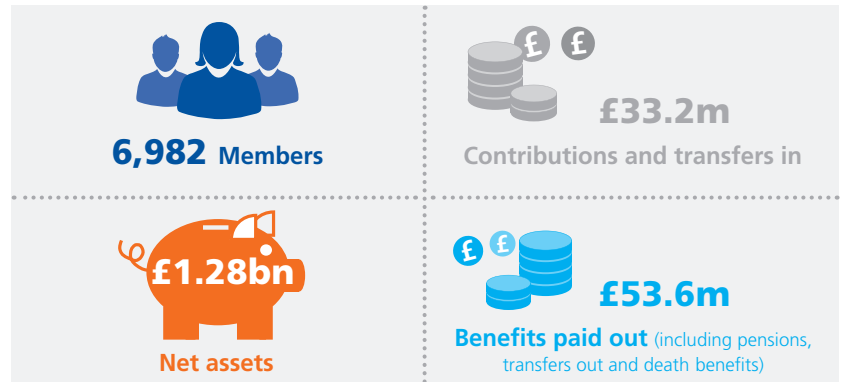
Best wishes.

Chris Hannon
Trustee Chair



Fund overview 2018

At the end of last year, the BTPFSF had:



View the full financial report at btpensions.co.uk/reports.

Does family leave affect my pension?

Maternity, paternity or adoption leave is a life-changing event. We explain what happens to your pension if you're about to go on family leave.

Contributions

You and your employer, BTP, will continue paying contributions into your pension, unless you decide to opt out of the Fund altogether.

Your contributions are based on a percentage of your earnings. If there's any change in your earnings while you're on family leave (for example you start getting maternity or paternity pay instead of your normal pay), your contributions will change too.

If you don't get any pay while on leave, your contributions will stop, but BTP will continue to pay them on your behalf. You may then have to pay any arrears owed once you start back at work.

While you're on family leave, your pension benefits won't be affected (as long as you haven't opted out) and your overall benefits will still be based on your full pay.

Additional voluntary contributions

Any extra contributions you are paying into BRASS or AVC Extra will continue, but you can stop or change the amount if you want to.

More details

Find out more about family leave in the Read as you Need guide, in the Resources section at btpensions.co.uk.

You can also contact BTP direct or visit the Government website, which has broad information on childcare and parenting, at gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting

You do **not** need to tell RPMI directly about your family leave or any change in contribution rates as BTP will do this for you.

News round-up

We take a look at developments in pensions which may be relevant to you as an active member of the Fund.

A new Pensions Bill expected

The next Queen's Speech is expected to include a Pensions Bill to progress items from the government's pension agenda. The Bill would then become a new Pensions Act once it has progressed through parliament and had amendments and scrutiny along the way.

Pensions Acts can be significant pieces of pension legislation. For example, the Pensions Act 2008 introduced the framework for automatic enrolment and the Pensions Act 2014 abolished contracting-out and brought in the new State Pension.

So what might we expect to see in the next Pensions Bill?

Strengthened powers for The Pensions Regulator

The government has been looking to strengthen the powers of The Pensions Regulator (TPR) to address issues that have arisen in some pension schemes. There have been consultations on the government's plans in this area and the Pensions Bill is expected to include legislation to:

- give TPR powers to punish those who deliberately put their pension scheme at risk, by introducing punitive fines;
- introduce a criminal offence to punish those found to have committed wilful or grossly reckless behaviour in relation to a pension scheme; and
- strengthen TPR's information gathering powers and the framework that requires employers to take pension considerations into account in corporate transactions.

The Trustee took part in the consultation on these topics and already has a strong working relationship with TPR for the Fund.

Changes to the State Pension age

Previous Pensions Acts have included legislation to make changes to the State Pension age. In 2017, the government announced plans to bring forward the increase of the State Pension age to age 68 so that it would apply between 2037 and 2039. This would impact you if you were born after 5 April 1970.

These plans have not yet been brought into law, so this may be done using the Pensions Bill.

Pensions Dashboards

In the previous edition of Focus, we mentioned the concept of Pensions Dashboards as a way to help people to see information about all their pension savings, including their State Pension, in one place.

The Pensions Bill is expected to include legislation to support the government's plans in this area, such as putting in place requirements for pension schemes like the Fund, to supply data securely to the Pensions Dashboards providers.

Other items

Pensions Bills often include various other measures to support the operation of pension schemes in the UK. We expect the coming Pensions Bill to be no exception, with items likely to include:

- plans to support collective defined contribution (CDC) pension schemes, such as the one proposed by Royal Mail;
- measures to help defined benefits schemes to consolidate with other schemes, if they wish to do so, as there is a growing number of schemes that are small and not open for new benefits; and
- plans to support TPR's proposals for a new defined benefit scheme funding Code of Practice, which will be relevant for future valuations of the Fund.

With a new Prime Minister in place and the new Brexit deadline of 31 October 2019, it is not yet known when the next Queen's Speech will be or when the Pensions Bill may be published. However, we will keep you up to date on developments in future newsletters.

Useful contacts

Gov.uk – the official government website has lots of easy-to-understand information about pensions, tax and National Insurance.

Citizensadvice.org.uk – provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice about your rights and things you should think about when setting up a pension and getting near to retirement.

Unbiased.co.uk – if you need help with your financial and retirement plans, visit this site for a list of independent financial advisers in your area.



Incapacity benefits

You may be able to apply for an incapacity pension if you're unlucky enough to suffer from ill health which means you have to leave work.

Your case will be considered by the Management Committee, which oversees the Fund. You can only apply if:

- you have left, or are leaving, employment due to ill health
- you have at least five years' membership in the Fund (including any membership transferred in from another scheme)
- you are under your normal retirement age, and
- you apply within a year of leaving work.

See more information in the Read as You Need guide for your section at btppensions.co.uk.

Still time to sign up for Platform



Making better pension communications, together

Want to have your say? All we need is a couple of minutes of your time.

We've had an excellent response to our newsletter appeal for volunteers for our new member advisory group, Platform. We'd like to keep the momentum going by getting even more Fund members on board.

By signing up, you'll also have a chance to **win £150** worth of high street shopping vouchers.

How it works

- Visit btppensions.co.uk/Platform, and sign up with your name, date of birth and Fund reference number (you'll find this on the message sent out with this newsletter).
- You'll receive an email every now and then asking for feedback on a new design, video or concept.
- Tell us what you think in a brief survey
- We'll take all your views on board and let you know the results (once the poll closes). Not all of our ideas will make it past the drawing board, but your feedback will help shape your future Fund communications.

Your questions answered

I'm about to retire. How much of my pension can I take as a tax-free lump sum?

You can usually take up to 25 per cent of the value of your benefits as tax-free cash. Any BRASS funds you may have will be included in the total value of your benefits.

If you pay into AVC Extra, you can take a tax-free lump sum of up to 25 per cent of the value of your personal retirement account.

How do I find a 'lost' pension?

The Pension Tracing Service can provide contact details for your former workplace pension schemes or someone else's (with their permission).

It can't tell you if you have a pension with the scheme or its value.

Request the details online at gov.uk/find-pension-contact-details or telephone 0800 731 0193.

Pension queries

Visit: btppensions.co.uk

Email: csu@rpm1.co.uk

Telephone: 0800 2 343434 (Mon - Fri, 8am-5pm)

Have your say

Tell us what you think about Focus. It only takes two minutes.

Your feedback is very important, so please scan the QR code or visit: surveymonkey.co.uk/r/FocAug19

