

November 2020



PENSION
FUND

Important message about potential scamming

The Pensions Regulator has recently published guidance on **member communications**, highlighting a range of issues linked to the current health crisis. In particular, it has asked trustees of pension schemes to send **this letter** to all members requesting a transfer value quotation. The letter warns that, in most cases, transferring out is unlikely to be in the member's best long-term interests.

Sadly, organised criminals are taking advantage of the concerns and anxieties some pension savers have about the security of their benefits. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has said that protecting consumers against serious and organised crime is a top priority because on average, a scammed pension saver loses 22 years of pension savings which is typically three times their annual earnings.*

The Pensions Regulator also has expressed its own concerns that savers could be increasingly targeted by scammers to lure them to 'safe havens'. So please think carefully before you consider transferring your pension and exercise extreme caution. It is not an easy decision to make.

If you are called out of the blue about transferring your pension, please hang up. Cold-calling in this way is illegal. Cold calls used to be scammers' most common method of approach. However, since the cold call ban was introduced in 2019, their tactics have evolved. Some have moved to more sophisticated online models, making contact through social media, or will use friends and family to reach clusters of people. Others will rely on established practices like offering a free pensions review.

To help you spot the signs and protect yourself from a scam, the FCA and The Pensions Regulator suggest the following four steps:

1 Step 1 – Reject any unexpected offers

This applies to all offers whether they are made online, on social media, or over the phone.

2 Step 2 – Check who you are dealing with

Check the **ScamSmart website**, email the FCA at **consumer.queries@fca.org.uk** or call 0800 111 6768 to see if the firm you are dealing with is authorised by the FCA to give you pension advice.

3 Step 3 – Do not be rushed or pressured into any decision about your pension

Take your time to make all the checks you need – even if this means turning down what seems to be an amazing deal.

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4 Step 4 – Get impartial information and advice

You should seriously consider seeking financial advice, from an FCA authorised financial adviser, before changing your pension arrangements. In fact, the Trustee can only agree to transfer benefits over £30,000 to a new arrangement that provides you with flexible retirement options if you have taken advice from a qualified financial adviser and they are satisfied you have made an informed decision.

Consider using **The Pensions Advisory Service** which provides free independent and impartial information and guidance.

If you are concerned

Please let us know or contact **The Pensions Advisory Service**. The Pensions Advisory Service has published general information on how the Covid-19 outbreak may affect pension benefits [here](#).

You can also find more information at the **Scamsmart website**.



David Gee
Chairman
ICI Pension Fund

Get more help

To avoid losing all of your pension savings, check that your adviser is registered by the **Financial Conduct Authority** and study the list of known scams. If the adviser or the company isn't on there, or if it's listed as being investigated, do not engage.

Don't ever be rushed into a decision. Before you sign anything, call **The Pensions Advisory Service** on 0800 011 3797.

And if you think you've been a victim of a scam, please report it to **Action Fraud** by calling 0300 123 2040.

Contact details: For more information about your AVC pot, please contact the Fund Administrator.

Email: ici@willistowerswatson.com

Write to: ICI PF, PO Box 545, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 1YX

Phone: 0800 916 8021 From 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday (Not bank holidays)

If you are calling from outside the United Kingdom, the number to ring is: + 44(0)1737 227521.

Online: www.icipensionfund.org.uk