



The Options Workplace Pension Trust

Newsletter

March 2022

Message from the Chairman of Trustees

Welcome to our 2022 newsletter. Investing for your future has never been more important and we hope you find this both informative and helpful in formulating your retirement plans.

As we all know the last 12 months have been difficult for everyone in the UK but this has not meant we have not been able to bring improvements.

Options Corporate Pensions UK Ltd have invested heavily in a new administration system that will deliver long term benefits for yourselves and your employers and is consistent with the Government's desire to provide a "dashboard" so it is easier to keep track of and manage your pension savings.

Members are the most important part of the Workplace Pension Trust so we would welcome your feedback and suggestions about what you would like us to include in our future newsletters. You can get in touch with us at workplacepensions@optionspensions.co.uk

The Trustee Board meets on a regular basis to enable robust governance standards to be maintained and to ensure member's best interests are at the heart of what we do.

There is also an Investment sub-committee that focuses on the investments offered within the OWPT, this also meets regularly and is attended by the appointed Investment Advisers to the Trustee Board - Dean Wetton Advisory.

Governance

Master Trust Authorisation

The Options Workplace Pension Trust (OWPT) received Master Trust Authorisation in September 2019 and was one of just 37 Schemes approved by the Pensions Regulator. We have now entered the Supervision stage where the Pensions Regulator ensures

- They remain satisfied that our master trust continues to meet the authorisation criteria
- The master trust meets other obligations, including relevant legislation and codes of practice
- They identify and manage material risks and issues early, and intervene where necessary

We submitted our first Supervision Return in June and with which the Pensions Regulator were satisfied.



Master Trust Assurance Framework (MTAF)

The Options Workplace Pension Trust has commenced the Master Trust Assurance Framework accreditation (AAF 05/20 control assurance report Type 2) for the period ending March 2021. Once this is ready to publish, a copy will be placed on our website, but in the meantime the last report can be found here:

<https://www.optionspensions.co.uk/workplace-pension-master-trust-trustees>

Your retirement needs

Do you know your options at retirement?

Do you know what level of financial income you may need in retirement?

Have you considered increasing your contributions?

Please see our documents 'retirement planning and options' and 'increasing your contributions' on our website by following the link <https://www.optionspensions.co.uk/resources>

There is also a modeller available via your eMember login.



Technology

In March 2021 we went live with our new pensions administration system which didn't come without its challenges. Whilst we appreciate that there was an inconvenience to our members at the beginning, we are pleased to say that we have fully migrated and it is business as usual.

You should have received details on how to access your eMember online portal. Below are some of the key features which are available to you:

A clear, simple, safe and secure member portal that enables you to:

- View your savings including a full history and details for your pension investments
- Update your details
- Update us on who you want your beneficiaries to be
- Review a range of self-select funds (coming in first half of 2022)
- View your options at retirement
- Use the portal calculator to help you see expected values at retirement by changing your retirement age or adding in more money
- Access scheme and personal documents

All available on Smartphone, Tablet and a PC/Laptop.



Feedback

We welcome your feedback on anything to do with your pension arrangement. If you have any comments please contact us by email stating your scheme name and member reference number to: workplacepensions@optionspensions.co.uk

Options Workplace Pension Trust – our year in numbers

[as at 30 December 2021]

Active Members

129,955

Deferred Members

103,099

We now have

3,509

Participating Employers

The oldest contributing member is

78 years old

£2,180.32

is the average fund value for an active member

£487,359

is the largest fund value

1,960

Members are over normal retirement age (age 65) and still contributing to the plan

99%

of our members are in a default fund

Investments – an update



Dean Wetton and Pete Osborn-Barker
Investment Advisers

Dean Wetton Advisory continues to provide full oversight of the Investment Strategy for our Trust. Dean Wetton has many years' experience advising clients, including other Master Trusts, and also specialises in the Sharia Funds which have to meet particular requirements – we have a special section under our Trust for this.

A copy of the latest Statement of Investment Principles dated September 2020 covering the scheme's default funds has been uploaded to the website at <https://www.optionspensions.co.uk/workplace-pension-master-trust-trustees>

An update from Dean:

This year the trustees were proud to implement their new multi-asset shariah lifestyle investments in the Shariah Section of the fund. This diversified investment product for members with Shariah needs adjusts its risk levels as the member ages to suit their requirements. The Trustees are also continuing to work on implementing an improved self-select range of investment options for most members, enhancing member choice and to facilitate pensions being more personal for those that seek this. This will include the new "Your tomorrow fund" an evolving fund that will look to invest in a more environmentally and socially conscious way.

2021 has been a year still dominated by the coronavirus pandemic, though financial markets have generally

seen recovery since the initial shock at the start of the pandemic. However, the pandemic is not over yet and it is still unclear whether further shocks await down the line as governments and businesses respond to the ever changing landscape. Because of this the Trustees and their Investment advisors work to ensure that the default options available within the mastertrust are suitably diversified. This ensures members have the best chance at growing their pension pot for retirement. We would like to remind members that the best thing they can do to improve their pensions outcomes is to invest more money as early as possible if they can afford to do so, as the longer their funds are invested the longer they have time to grow.

Transfer your other pensions to your Options UK pension scheme

If you have worked for several other employers, it's likely you may have several pension saving pots with various pension schemes. You may be able to transfer these existing pots into your pension with us. In some cases, having one larger pension pot rather than lots of small ones may be helpful for you to keep track of, and may reduce the overall charges you may be paying. If you are unsure about transferring, we recommend you speak to an independent financial adviser, details can be found online at sites similar to www.unbiased.co.uk for example.

If you wish to look at the possibility of transferring your other pension pots into your current workplace pension with us, please call a member of our team who will be happy to assist.

Telephone: 0330 124 1510

Monday to Thursday, 8am – 6pm and Friday 8am – 5pm

Benefit Statements

Benefit statements are due to be issued by the end of February 2022. You will receive notification that your annual benefit statement is available to view online. If you have forgotten your password, or haven't yet registered to view your account online, please contact a member of our team on 0330 124 1510 Monday to Thursday 8am – 6pm and Friday 8am – 5pm who will be happy to assist.

Pension News update

Are you contributing as much as you can into the Scheme?

If you want to increase your contribution rate, you can do so at any time by instructing your employer. Remember contributions to the plan are tax efficient so you may find increasing your contributions costs less than you think.

Annual Allowance

The Annual Allowance (AA) is the maximum amount of pension contributions you and your employer can pay into a registered pension scheme in any one tax year without incurring a tax charge. For the 2021/22 tax year this amount is £40,000 per annum but this is reduced for those earning £240,000 per annum or more.

Net Pay Anomaly

When paying into a pension scheme, members may receive tax relief on contributions they make. This means that money that would have gone to the government as tax goes into an individuals' pension instead. There are two ways that members may receive tax relief on their pension contributions, through what is called 'the net pay arrangement' or 'relief at source'. Like most schemes the Options Workplace Pension Trust operates tax relief through the net pay arrangement.

Currently, savers whose earnings fall below the personal tax threshold, and are members of net-pay schemes, can be losing out on 20% tax relief which is automatically applied to savers in relief-at-source schemes. As part of the Autumn Budget, the Treasury said it would introduce a system to make top-up payments to low-earning individuals in a net-pay arrangement. The government has set out plans to address the net-pay anomaly with a 20% top-up to contributions from April 2024.



Pension Schemes Act 2021

The Pension Schemes Act 2021 was passed in February. As provided in the Bill, the Act includes measures to:

- reduce the risk of members losing benefits to pension scams by preventing trustees from making a transfer to other arrangements requested by members unless certain conditions are met
- introduce pensions dashboards - requiring schemes to provide pensions data to dashboard providers
- require new climate change governance and disclosure requirements.

Increasing the Normal Minimum Pension Age

In September 2020, the Government confirmed that the minimum age at which people can access their private pensions will rise from 55 to 57 from 6 April 2028.

Get to know your pension

A new government campaign called 'Get to know your pension' aims to encourage people to find out how much State Pension they could get and when. The website provides easy access to online forecasts and calculators for people of all ages. You can use it to:

- Check if there could be gaps in your National Insurance contributions
- Trace lost pensions
- Learn about the benefits of a workplace pension

Please visit www.yourpension.gov.uk for further details



Watch out for pension scams

Pension scams are on the rise and can deplete your pension savings and potentially land you with a tax charge. If you're contacted unexpectedly with offers to help you access your pension before the age of 55, it's likely to be a scam.

Here are a few tips to avoid being a victim of a pension scam:

- Never give out personal information if you receive unsolicited calls or emails.
- Do your own research if you are considering transferring your savings to an alternative pension arrangement or investment company.
- Be very wary if you are advised to invest in non-regulated products and often abroad.
- Always ask what fees those advising you will charge.

The Trustees of the Options Workplace Pension Trust are required by law to carry out certain checks before it can comply with a request to transfer your pension. Those checks include a requirement to assess transfer applications against the conditions and potential risk flags set out in the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Conditions for Transfers) Regulations 2021.

If you apply to transfer your pension, your application will be assessed against these two conditions. If one of the conditions is not met, your transfer will not proceed.

We are pleased to announce that the scheme's administrator, Options Corporate Pensions UK has agreed to sign up to the Pension scams pledge. This new pledge is to help stop pension scams. Introduced by The Pensions Regulator (TPR), the pledge is designed to help protect members from the ever-growing problem of scammers offering transfers to illicit investment schemes. TPR is asking providers, trustees and administrators, to sign the pledge and then to self-certify that they meet six key commitments, each with an extensive list of requirements. This includes, warning members about scams, carrying out due diligence when handling and recording transfers and reporting potential scams to the relevant authorities. More information on the new scams pledge can be found at: www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/pledge

Keeping us updated

It is really important for us and for you, that we can stay in contact with you whenever we need to. We don't want you to miss out on key information if you move to another employer and/or join another pension scheme. To ensure we can maintain contact with you, we would really appreciate you informing us of a current personal email address. It is also important to inform us if you change your address. If you are actively contributing to the scheme, please let your employer know your new address and this will ensure that our records will get updated. If, however you have left the scheme and not currently contributing, you can amend your address by logging into the portal.

Alternatively, you can keep us updated by either writing to us or calling a member of the team on 0330 124 1510 Monday to Thursday 8am – 6pm and Friday 8am – 5pm.

Options Corporate Pensions UK Ltd
1st Floor, Lakeside House
Shirwell Crescent
Furzton, Milton Keynes
Bucks, MK4 1GA



Expression of Wish

'Covid 19 has shown us all how fragile life can be and it is important that all members have an 'Expression of Wish' on file which advises the Trustees of members' wishes for the receipt of their pension benefits should the worse happen. The Trustees have had to decide on 37 cases this year alone and only 4 of these had an Expression of Wish. So please if you haven't already, please complete an Expression of Wish. More details can be found on our website under <https://www.optionspensions.co.uk/resources>. Alternatively, you can complete one on the portal by going in to 'my information'.

The Pensions Tracing Service

You can track down pensions from previous employers using the Pensions Tracing Service who can provide you with an up-to-date address of that scheme. You can fill in a form online at www.gov.uk/find-pension-contact-details or you can write to: The Pension Service 9, Mail Handling Site A, Wolverhampton WV98 1L or call 0345 6002 537.



New name for pensions support

The Government-backed Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) is offering a new source for financial support.

MoneyHelper, which launched in June, has been created to give everyone access to free and impartial financial guidance on a range of issues, either online or over the phone. This includes savings, debt and budgeting, as well as pensions and retirement. It merges the services previously provided by:

- The Money Advice Service
- The Pensions Advisory Service and
- Pension Wise

These services will no longer exist under separate names.

For more information visit moneyhelper.org.uk

For pensions specific guidance, you can go direct to the pensions and retirement section at www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/pensions-and-retirement/ or call MoneyHelper's Pensions Helpline on 0800 011 3797.

Need financial advice?

We recommend you only take advice about your pension from an Independent Financial Adviser, regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. To find a financial adviser go to:

www.unbiased.co.uk or <https://register.fca.org.uk/directory/s/>

Remember that:

- You don't pay any tax on your pension contributions (free money)
 - Remember your employer is contributing as well to your pension (free money)
 - You can contribute more to your pension and for your future if you wish
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This Newsletter is for information purposes only. Your benefits within the Scheme are based on the Scheme Rules. In the event of any discrepancy between any information provided to you in this Newsletter and Scheme Rules, the Scheme Rules will prevail.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
OPTIONS CORPORATE PENSIONS UK LTD

1st Floor Lakeside House,
Shirwell Crescent, Furzton Lake,
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK4 1GA.

T: +44 (0) 330 124 1510

optionspensions.co.uk
workplaceenquiries@optionspensions.co.uk