

Retirement income, put into perspective.

Your planning pack

Turn pensions, spending and the years ahead into a set of practical questions. Worksheets to keep, examples to follow and space to prepare for advice.



A free UK retirement planning workbook

General educational information, not personal financial, investment, tax or legal advice. This pack does not tell you when you can afford to retire or recommend a provider or product.

Start with the life you want.

Use rough figures first. An honest gap or an unanswered question is more useful than a precise-looking guess.

Work through this pack on your own or with the people who share your finances. Keep the completed copy private. You do not need to send it to Advisedly to use the worksheets.

Your route through the pack	Pages
List spending and income, then map when each changes.	3-5
Follow a worked example and understand the main pension options.	6-7
Test the assumptions, compare costs and check the firm.	8-10
Prepare your meeting and choose your next step.	11-12

What would you like retirement to make possible?

What decision needs attention first, and by when?

Choose one basis for your figures: monthly amounts after tax, in today's money. Label any figure that uses a different basis. Mark estimates with an E and confirmed amounts with a C.

What will an ordinary month cost?

Start with bank statements and annual bills. Separate costs you need to cover from spending you could change.

Spending in today's money	Monthly £	Essential / flexible
Home: mortgage or rent, council tax, utilities		
Food and household essentials		
Transport and insurance		
Health, care and support for other people		
Holidays, hobbies and social spending		
Other regular spending and debt payments		
Annual bills and replacements divided by 12		
TOTAL monthly spending		

For an annual bill of £1,200, set aside £100 a month. Do not also include the same bill in another row. Separate a major one-off expense, such as a house move, from the normal monthly total.

What will stop, start or change when you stop working?

Planning aid: MoneyHelper retirement budget planner. Source [1], page 12.

List income and money separately.

A pension pot is an asset. A pension payment is income. Listing both as income would count the same money twice.

Income source	Net monthly £	Starts / ends	Evidence
Earnings or part-time work			
State Pension: your own forecast			
Defined benefit / final salary pension			
Annuity or other pension income			
Property or other net income			
Partner's income, if planning together			
TOTAL for the period you are considering			

If a statement gives a yearly amount, divide by 12 for a monthly equivalent. Pension forecasts often show amounts before tax: label them as gross until the likely tax has been allowed for. For property, allow for costs and periods without rent.

Assets available to support the plan	Value / access date
Cash, ISAs and other investments	
Defined contribution pension pots	
Money already reserved for tax, debt or a major purchase	

Check your personal State Pension forecast and each scheme's terms. Do not assume a full State Pension or one common access age. Sources [2] and [3], page 12.

Draw your income timeline.

Stopping work, accessing a private pension and receiving State Pension may happen at different times. Give each phase its own budget.

Monthly amounts after tax	Phase one	Phase two	Phase three
Dates or ages covered			
What changes at the start?			
A. Expected spending			
B. Income already identified			
A minus B: gap, or surplus if negative			
How long does this phase last?			
Possible funding to investigate			

A gap is an amount to investigate, not a withdrawal recommendation. Check whether any proposed funding is accessible then, what tax applies and how using it affects later years.

Which date or income figure needs confirmation first?

A gap changes over time.

An invented example shows the arithmetic. It is not a forecast, a typical household or an assessment of affordable retirement.

Alex and Sam plan for spending of £2,800 a month after tax. Their assumed net income changes in three phases. The dates and amounts are placeholders, not State Pension rates or pension-age guidance.

Monthly amounts	First 2 years	Next 3 years	Later years
Spending target	£2,800	£2,800	£2,800
Income already identified	£1,400	£2,200	£2,600
Unfunded monthly gap	£1,400	£600	£200
Annual equivalent	£16,800	£7,200	£2,400

The first five years: £55,200

$£1,400 \times 24 \text{ months} + £600 \times 36 \text{ months} = £55,200$. This is the simple total of the first two gaps, holding every figure constant. A further £200 monthly gap remains after that.

£55,200 is not a sufficient-fund target. The example ignores inflation, investment returns, charges, tax on any extra withdrawals and unexpected costs. A taxable pension withdrawal may need to be larger than the net gap it pays for.

Three questions the calculation leaves open

1. Which accessible assets could meet each phase, after tax and costs?
2. What would remain to support the later years?
3. What changes if work ends sooner or the expected income arrives later?

Understand the pension choices.

These are broad options for defined contribution pensions. A defined benefit pension promises benefits under scheme rules and needs a different assessment.

Option	What it does	What to examine
Leave money invested	Keep some or all of the pot for later, subject to the scheme.	Investment risk, charges and when income will be needed.
Drawdown	Keep money invested and take withdrawals. Income and fund value are not guaranteed.	How withdrawals, investment losses and charges could reduce the remaining pot.
Annuity	Exchange money for income for life or a fixed term, on the terms selected.	Inflation protection, survivor benefits and whether the purchase can be changed.
Lump sums	Take cash in one payment or stages, if your scheme allows.	Tax, remaining retirement funding and the effect on future pension contributions.
A combination	Use different approaches for different parts of the plan.	How the parts work together, their costs and any irreversible choices.

Availability, access ages, tax treatment and protections depend on your circumstances and scheme. Before moving a pension, check guarantees, exit terms and any advice requirement. This pack does not recommend a transfer.

For explanations of your pension options, explore MoneyHelper and Pension Wise. For a recommendation tailored to your circumstances, discuss regulated financial advice. Sources [3], [4], [5] and [6], page 12.

Which option or scheme feature do you want explained?

Test the assumptions.

A plan becomes more useful when you can see what might change it. These are discussion prompts, not a prediction that your money will last.

What if prices keep rising?

At an illustrative 3% annual increase, something costing £1,000 a month today would cost about £1,344 in 10 years. Calculation: $£1,000 \times 1.03^{10}$, rounded to the nearest pound. This is an assumption, not an inflation forecast.

Change to explore	Question for your plan
Higher spending	What happens if regular costs are 10% higher than your estimate?
Longer retirement	How would funding change if it had to last another five or ten years?
Early investment losses	Could you still meet bills without selling more investments at lower prices?
A large one-off bill	Which reserve would pay for it, and what would remain afterwards?
A partner dies or needs care	Which income continues, which expenses remain and what support is needed?
Lower or delayed income	What would you change if part-time work or a sale did not happen as planned?

When money is being withdrawn, the order of investment gains and losses can matter as well as the average return. Ask an adviser to explain the assumptions and the actions available if results disappoint. See source [4], page 12.

Which two uncertainties concern you most?

Put every charge in pounds.

Ask for the same scope and the same investment amount when comparing quotes. A lower fee does not by itself establish better value or suitability.

Illustration only: on a constant £250,000 balance, a 1% annual advice fee equals £2,500. If separate platform and investment costs total 0.40%, that adds £1,000: £3,500 a year in total. An additional £3,000 one-off fee would make the first year £6,500 under these simplified assumptions.

These figures are invented, not market averages or a firm's quote. They assume the same balance and a full year of recurring charges, exclude changes in value and any additional VAT, and apply only if the costs are genuinely separate. Check for minimums, tiers, caps and double counting.

Ask for a written breakdown	Your notes / £
Planning and implementation: what is included?	
One-off charges, including applicable VAT	
Ongoing advice: rate, amount and service	
Platform, investment and product charges	
Minimum, tier, cap or additional-work charges	
Total first year / later year on the agreed assumptions	

[Explore our sourced comparison of 50 firms' published fees](#)

[Compare two written quotes with the Advisedly tool](#)

The research is a selected sample of public fees, not a whole-market average, personalised quote or recommendation. Source [7], page 12.

Know who you are dealing with.

A professional-looking website or familiar company name is not enough. Verify the firm and its contact details independently.

Before sharing documents or agreeing to work

Check the official FCA record for the legal firm, its status and the relevant service. If it is an appointed representative, identify its principal and confirm the permitted activity. Use verified contact details to guard against a clone firm. An entry on the register is not an endorsement or a guarantee of an outcome.

Check	Record or question
Legal firm name and FCA reference	
Principal, if an appointed representative	
Relevant service and any restrictions	
Independent or restricted: what does that cover?	
Verified contact details and secure document route	
Complaint process and applicable protections	

Pause if you are pressured to act, offered guaranteed high returns or asked for passwords or security codes. Do not treat an unsolicited pension offer as evidence that the sender is genuine. Source [8], page 12.

[Check the official Financial Services Register](#)

[Read the FCA's pension scam guidance](#)

Take these questions with you.

An initial conversation should establish whether the firm can help, what the proposed work covers and what it costs.

How often do you help people with pension arrangements like mine?

What would you check before recommending a withdrawal or transfer?

What assumptions would you use for tax, inflation, returns and lifespan?

What could I change if the income plan becomes less affordable?

What is included in the fee, and who would review the plan with me?

Leave with an action list

Information or action needed	Who / by when

Ask for written scope, fees and terms before paid work begins. You can take time to decide. Source [9], page 12.

Choose your next step.

You do not have to make a pension decision to make progress. Start by resolving one missing figure or one important question.

If you would like help finding advice, tell Advisedly what you need. We review enquiries and contact you about a possible adviser introduction. Our enquiry service is free; any advice and its charges are agreed with the receiving firm.

[Start a retirement enquiry at advisedly.co.uk](https://advisedly.co.uk)

[Return to the pack and web explanation](#)

Sources and further help

Prepared by Advisedly. Sources checked 7 October 2026. Links open the original guidance; they do not imply endorsement of Advisedly. Check current rules and your scheme before making decisions.

[1] [MoneyHelper: retirement budget planner](#)

[2] [GOV.UK: check your State Pension forecast](#)

[3] [GOV.UK: how you can take your personal pension](#)

[4] [MoneyHelper: pension drawdown explained](#)

[5] [MoneyHelper: annuities explained](#)

[6] [MoneyHelper: Pension Wise](#)

[7] [Advisedly: published financial advice fees and methodology](#)

[8] [FCA: pension scams: verify firms on the official register](#)

[9] [MoneyHelper: choosing a financial adviser](#)

This is an original educational workbook, not a personalised plan or suitability assessment. No investment return, withdrawal rate, retirement age or adviser is recommended. Keep completed worksheets private and share them only through a verified, secure route when appropriate.