

A GUIDE TO ABSENCE FROM WORK (Active Members)



Notice for the visually impaired

Copies of this guide in large type and in a text-only format are available from the Fund Office. Please write to TfL Pension Fund, 8th Floor, Palestra, 197 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NJ, or email the Fund Office at helpdesk@tflpensions.co.uk

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IMPORTANT NOTE

The TfL Pension Fund (the Fund) is established under a Trust and the formal Trust Deed and Rules determine the benefits provided by the Fund except where they are overridden by legislation.

The guide attempts to summarise the provisions of the Trust Deed and Rules as at November 2023 that are relevant to active members of the Fund. However, it is only a guide.

The Trust Deed and Rules are lengthy and technical documents, but they are available on the Fund's website (www.tflpensionfund.co.uk) or on request to the Pension Fund Office of TfL (the Fund Office).

In short, should there be any discrepancies between the information in this guide and the Trust Deed and Rules, the Trust Deed and Rules will always prevail.

If you have any questions about the Fund and the benefits it provides, you should contact the Fund Office. Please see the back cover for details.

USING YOUR GUIDE

Pensions can be complicated. This guide gives an overview of the benefits provided by the Fund. It makes things as clear as possible so that you can understand your benefits and options, no matter what you have planned for the future.

This guide is meant for you if:

- ◆ You are an Active member

MY CHECKLIST

- Read the complete Guide
- If you have any questions regarding the options available contact the Fund Office
- Consider whether you need to take appropriate financial advice
- For career breaks, return your completed form to the Fund Office by the deadline, as failure to do so could mean that an option lapses.
- For all other leave return your completed form to HR services.

SICK LEAVE

If you are temporarily off work due to sickness, your membership of the Fund will continue as usual and contributions will continue to be paid while you receive sick pay. If your sick pay runs out, you will not usually be required to contribute to the Fund, but you will still earn benefits in the Fund during this time.

MATERNITY LEAVE

Normally, during the first 39 weeks of your leave your contributions are paid in the usual way (but based on the pay you actually receive i.e. contractual salary and Statutory Maternity Pay) and you continue to build up pensionable service. For any leave after 39 weeks, you have two options:

- ◆ **Option 1:** You do not have to contribute but you will not earn pensionable service until you return to work. If you do not return to work, then you will be treated as having left the Fund with effect from the date that you left service.
- ◆ **Option 2:** Your membership can be treated as continuous and you carry on earning pensionable service, but you do not have to contribute until you return to work. Once you return, your contributions can be made up, usually by paying double your usual contribution until the arrears are cleared.

If you return to work and subsequently leave before paying the contributions due under option 2, your pensionable service will be adjusted to reflect this. If you do not return to work, then you will be treated as having left the Fund with effect from the date that your paid leave ended. HR Services will provide you with a form to complete confirming which option you would like to take.

ADOPTION LEAVE

Normally, during the first 39 weeks of your leave your contributions are paid in the usual way (but based on the pay you actually receive i.e. contractual salary and Statutory Adoption Pay) and you continue to build up pensionable service. For any leave after 39 weeks, you have two options:

- ◆ **Option 1:** You do not have to contribute but you will not earn pensionable service until you return to work. If you do not return to work, then you will be treated as having left the Fund with effect from the date that your paid leave ended.
- ◆ **Option 2:** Your membership can be treated as continuous and you carry on earning pensionable service, but you do not have to contribute until you return to work. Once you return, your contributions can be made up, usually by paying double your usual contribution until the arrears are cleared.

If you return to work and subsequently leave before paying the contributions due under option 2, your pensionable service will be adjusted to reflect this. If you do not return to work, then you will be treated as having left the Fund with effect from the date that your paid leave ended. HR Services will provide you with a form to complete confirming which option you would like to take.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

During any paid period of Shared Parental leave your contributions are paid in the usual way and you continue to build up pensionable service. For any unpaid leave, you have two options:

- ◆ **Option 1:** You do not have to contribute but you will not earn pensionable service until you return to work. If you do not return to work, then you will be treated as having left the Fund with effect from the date that your paid leave ended.
- ◆ **Option 2:** Your membership can be treated as continuous and you carry on earning pensionable service, but you do not have to contribute until you return to work. Once you return, your contributions can be made up, usually by paying double your usual contribution until the arrears are cleared.

If you return to work and subsequently leave before paying the contributions due under option 2, your pensionable service will be adjusted to reflect this. If you do not return to work, then you will be treated as having left the Fund with effect from the date that your paid leave ended. HR Services will provide you with a form to complete confirming which option you would like to take.

PATERNITY AND OTHER PAID FAMILY LEAVE

If you are paid during your leave, your contributions to the Fund will continue in the normal way and you continue to build up pensionable service.





CAREER BREAKS

As a career break is entirely unpaid there are three options available for your pension membership:

- ◆ **Option 1:** You can choose not to pay contributions for this period of leave and it will be treated as non-pensionable and not count towards benefits when you later leave service or retire. Your pension contributions will recommence when you return to work.
- ◆ **Option 2:** You can choose to pay your own pension contributions for this period of leave so that you continue to accrue Fund membership, which will count towards benefits on leaving or retirement. If your period of unpaid leave is more than 13 weeks you are also liable to pay additional contributions equal to the contribution the employer would have made from the start of the 14th week.
- ◆ **Option 3:** You can choose to pay your own pension contributions for the initial 13 week period of leave so that you continue to accrue Fund membership which will count towards benefits on leaving or retirement. After 13 weeks you can choose not to pay contributions for this period of leave and it will be treated as non-pensionable and not count towards benefits when you later leave service or retire. The contribution arrears for this option will be collected by deducting double your usual contribution rate on your return to work until the arrears are cleared.

Details of your own employee pension contribution can be found on your payslip and is 5 per cent of your contributory pensionable salary. The employer currently pays 5.46 times your contribution. The contribution arrears will be collected by deducting double your usual contribution rate on your return to work until the arrears are cleared.

If you return to work and subsequently leave before paying the contributions due under either option 2 or 3, your pensionable service will be adjusted to reflect this. If you do not return to work, then you will be treated as having left the Fund with effect from the date that your career break commenced.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

- ◆ **The Fund's website.** If you have access to the internet, you can find plenty of information at www.tflpensionfund.co.uk
- ◆ **The Fund's Pension Web Portal.** Allows you to run your own retirement quotations online at <https://pensions.tfl.gov.uk>
- ◆ **Annual Review.** The Annual Review is a summary of the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts and is sent to all members. It is also available on the website
- ◆ **Fund documents.** You can obtain a copy of the Trust Deed and Rules of the Fund and Statement of Investment Principles. These documents are available on request or on the Fund's website
- ◆ **Member guides.** These are available to download from the Fund website and contain details of the benefits payable under the TfL Pension Fund
- ◆ **Benefit statements.** Details of your benefit entitlement under the Fund and Additional Voluntary Contributions plan will be sent to you once a year
- ◆ **Pension Fund Office.** The team in the Fund Office will be pleased to answer any queries you may have. They cannot give financial advice or deal with tax matters but will be able to advise you who to contact for the assistance you need
- ◆ **AVC provider websites.** The Fund currently has three AVC providers; Standard Life and Clerical Medical are closed to new contributions. Their websites contain details of the Funds available and the investment performance of those funds
 - Legal & General
www.legalandgeneral.com/mya
 - Clerical Medical
www.clericalmedical.co.uk
 - Standard Life
www.standardlife.co.uk/1/site/employeezone/login
- ◆ **Government websites.** The Government have set up services to provide free, impartial money advice to everyone across the UK – online, over the phone and face-to-face. The website contains further details about the services provided and how to access them:
 - Money helper
www.moneyhelper.org.uk



PERSONAL DATA

The Trustee is committed to protecting and processing lawfully and fairly the personal data that it gathers, holds (either directly or through a third party) and uses about you and your family and your dependants. The Trustee needs this information so that they can administer the Fund and ensure that benefits are paid correctly and to the right person. The Trustee always ensures legal requirements governing the protection of personal data are met.

The Trustee has a privacy notice that sets out, amongst other things:

- ◆ More detail about the kind of personal data it holds
- ◆ How it gathers that personal data
- ◆ How that data is used
- ◆ How long the Trustee holds the data for and who it is shared with

This notice also sets out individuals' rights in connection with the personal data that the Trustee holds and who to contact if an individual wants to exercise those rights, make a complaint or has any questions. This privacy notice can be found online at www.tflpensionfund.co.uk

Alternatively, if you prefer a hard copy, please contact the Fund Office.

THE TFL PENSION FUND OFFICE

The staff in the Fund Office will be pleased to answer any queries you may have. They cannot give financial advice or deal with tax matters but will be able to point you to who to contact for the assistance you need.

They can be contacted at:

TfL Pension Fund
8th Floor, Palestra
197 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ

Email at: helpdesk@tflpensions.co.uk

If you are telephoning the team, you can reach the call centre on **01737 235 298**. Please have your Member number and National Insurance number to hand when you call.

Fund Office appointments

The Fund Office team are working on a hybrid basis so we are now able to see visitors in the office, but with fewer people in the office each day we require that you contact us to book an appointment by email or telephone to ensure that a member of the team is available to help you.

If you have access to the internet, you can access our Pension Web Portal and find lots of information, including forms and Fund documents, on the Fund's website at www.tflpensionfund.co.uk