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Passing on pension benefits

Providing for your loved ones after your death

If you've spent a lifetime saving for retirement, you'd probably like any remaining money to go to a loved one after your death. But whether pension benefits are payable to a beneficiary, and how they'll receive them, is dependent on the type of pension you've chosen and how you've accessed it in your retirement.

Thanks to changes in the way that pensions are taxed, more of your fund can survive your death and provide an income or nest egg for your loved ones to enjoy, long after you are gone. Since April 2015 it has been easier to safeguard your pension for your heirs, but it's important to make sure you're keeping up with the changes.

The way that you decide to take your pension will affect what you can do with it when you pass away. And while it's not always easy to talk about, the way you eventually pass on your pension has the biggest impact on other people, so it could help if you talk to your spouse, partner, children or other people close to you when you're deciding how you take your pension savings.

PENSION DEATH BENEFITS

If you have not yet accessed your pension, or you have made withdrawals from your pension but left some money invested, it can usually be passed to a beneficiary after your death. The specifics, for example, in what form they will receive these death benefits and whether they will pay tax, will depend on your individual circumstances (such as your age) and the scheme rules.

You should always obtain professional financial advice to assess your specific situation. But if your pension scheme allows you to choose a beneficiary, ensure you have named the person you intend to leave your money to.

ANNUITY DEATH BENEFITS

If you have used your pension savings already to purchase an annuity, this can only be passed on to a beneficiary in certain cases, which must be established when the annuity is purchased. A typical lifetime annuity only provides a guaranteed income for the lifetime of the annuity holder, regardless of how long this is.

For your annuity income to go to a loved one after your death you must choose either an annuity with a guarantee period (which provides an income for a set period, whether you are still living or not) or a joint life annuity (which provides an income for life for whichever partner lives longest).

STATE PENSION INHERITANCE

In certain circumstances, your partner can continue to receive your State Pension after your death. For example, if you're a man born

before 1951 or a woman born before 1953, and you're receiving the Additional State Pension, this can be inherited by your partner (husband, wife or registered civil partner) after your death if they have reached the State Pension age. ■

PROVIDING AN INCOME OR NEST EGG FOR YOUR LOVED ONES TO ENJOY

You've worked and saved throughout your life so that your pension will provide you with enough to live on in retirement. Now, thanks to changes in the way that pensions are taxed, more of your fund can survive your death and provide an income or nest egg for your loved ones to enjoy, long after you are gone. **Contact us to find out more.**