



Don't let a scammer enjoy your retirement

Find out how pension scams work, how to avoid them and what to do if you suspect a scam.



Scammers can be articulate and financially knowledgeable, with credible websites, testimonials and materials that are hard to distinguish from the real thing. Scammers design attractive offers to persuade you to transfer your pension pot to them or to release funds from it. It is then invested in unusual and high-risk investments like overseas property, renewable energy bonds, forestry, storage units, or simply stolen outright.

Scam tactics include:



- contact out of the blue



- promises of high / guaranteed returns



- free pension reviews



- access to your pension before age 55



- pressure to act quickly

If you suspect a scam, report it

- Report to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) by contacting their Consumer Helpline on **0800 111 6768** or using the reporting form at www.fca.org.uk
- Report to Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040** or at www.actionfraud.police.uk
- If you're in the middle of a transfer, **contact your provider immediately** and then get in touch with The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS) at www.thepensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk

Four simple steps to protect yourself from pension scams

1

Reject unexpected offers

If you're contacted out of the blue about your pension, chances are it's high risk or a scam. Be wary of free pension review offers. A free offer out of the blue from a company you have not dealt with before is probably a scam. Fortunately, research shows that 95% of unexpected pension offers are rejected.*

2

Check who you're dealing with

Check the [Financial Services Register \(www.register.fca.org.uk\)](http://www.register.fca.org.uk) to make sure that anyone offering you advice or other financial services is FCA-authorized.

If you don't use an FCA-authorized firm, you also won't have access to the Financial Ombudsman Service or the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. So you're unlikely to get your money back if things go wrong. If the firm is on the FCA Register, you should call the Consumer Helpline on 0800 111 6768 to check the firm is permitted to give pension advice.

Beware of fraudsters pretending to be from a firm authorized by the FCA, as it could be what we call a 'clone firm'. Use the contact details provided on the FCA Register, not the details they give you.

3

Don't be rushed or pressured

Take your time to make all the checks you need – even if this means turning down an 'amazing deal'. Be wary of promised returns that sound too good to be true and don't be rushed or pressured into making a decision.

4

Get impartial information and advice

The [Pensions Advisory Service \(www.thepensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk\)](http://www.thepensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk) – Provides free independent and impartial information and guidance.

[Pension Wise \(www.pensionwise.gov.uk\)](http://www.pensionwise.gov.uk) - If you're over 50 and have a defined contribution (DC) pension, Pension Wise offers pre-booked appointments to talk through your retirement options.

Financial advisers – It's important you make the best decision for your own personal circumstances, so you should seriously consider using the services of a financial adviser. If you do opt for an adviser, be sure to use one that is regulated by the FCA and never take investment advice from the company that contacted you or an adviser they suggest, as this may be part of the scam.

Be ScamSmart with your pension. Check who you are dealing with.