

HOME GROUP PENSION AND LIFE ASSURANCE SCHEME

OPPORTUNITY TO SAVE FOR RETIREMENT

Home Group is the sponsoring employer for the Home Group Pension and Life Assurance Scheme (HGPLAS). Through this pension scheme, colleagues within Home Group can save for their retirement and if eligible, receive life assurance cover.

It is important that colleagues are fully aware of the pension arrangements and the benefits they offer. Saving through a pension arrangement is generally regarded as 'cost efficient' due to the fact that your contributions attract tax relief.

Within Home Group there is a pension arrangement open to colleagues, which is termed a Defined Contribution (DC) arrangement. This arrangement is managed on behalf of HGPLAS by 'Aviva'. On joining HGPLAS you will receive communications directly from Aviva, in addition to having the support of the Pensions Team at Home Group.

WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

The Defined Contribution section is a Matched Contribution (Salary Sacrifice) arrangement.

The Explanatory Booklet, sets out the eligibility criteria, the benefits to members and the general rules and regulations governing the management and administration of the Defined Contribution section.

A link to the Booklet, will be issued following your first pay period and again at enrolment and can be found on the Home Group Sharepoint site.

This note has been prepared to give you a broad understanding of how the process works. It is not designed to provide details of the benefits or the rules and regulations governing the various sections of the Scheme.

SO HOW DOES IT WORK?

This arrangement is designed to comply with Auto Enrolment legislation, however Home Group took the opportunity to help colleagues save towards their retirement in a fair and balanced way, by paying above the minimum contribution, so that both Home Group and the Colleague pay 4% pension contribution.

As the arrangement allows Matched Contributions – you can pay more than the basic 4% and Home Group will match your contributions to a maximum of 7%.

You can also benefit from NI savings on the value of your contributions.

Note: If your earnings drop below the National Minimum Wage because of the salary sacrifice arrangement, Payroll will move you to an identical arrangement which doesn't have Salary Sacrifice applied. You can also request to be transferred to a non-Salary Sacrifice version of the Arrangement.

You will be assessed following the payroll run prior to 3 months service and will be enrolled under the following circumstances:

Eligible Job Holder: This is the term used for someone who, at the assessment, earns over £10,000 a year; is aged 22 or over but has not reached State Pension Age. If you meet the criteria you will ***automatically be enrolled into this arrangement.***

Please note, Home Group must legally enrol eligible job holders into the scheme and at least one contribution must be taken following enrolment*.

Non- Eligible Job Holder and Entitled Worker: These terms are used for colleagues who don't fall within the Eligible Job Holder category. In these cases you won't be auto enrolled however you will be invited to join the arrangement or can ask to join at any time. The choice is yours.

There is no need for you to take action. The auto enrolment process will confirm which category applies to you. You can also join this arrangement following your first payroll run, you will be sent a link to the Opt In form around the time of your first salary payment.

You can contribute to the Arrangement as long as you wish while you remain in employment with Home Group up until your 75th birthday.

Colleagues can opt out of the arrangement within 30 days of receiving confirmation of auto-enrolment. The link to the form to enable you to do this will be included with the email confirming your enrolment.

How your arrangement works

Your pension is a Matched Contribution Salary Sacrifice arrangement.

This works by you reducing your earnings by an amount equal to your pension contributions - which is why it's called Salary Sacrifice.

By participating in this arrangement, you don't need to pay National Insurance on the value of your pension contribution each month.

Contribution rates

Matched Contribution	
Home Group (The contributions are matched to 7% max depending upon Member contribution)	Member Options
4%	4%
5%	5%
6%	6%
7%	7%
7%	8%+

There are some important points to note:

The upper limit of earnings* in the Arrangement is £205,200 (2023/24) per year.

As its name suggests the Matched Contribution (Salary Sacrifice) contributions are paid differently to regular contributions, these work by reducing your salary, meaning you will pay less National Insurance. Before you decide to use this method you should read the process on Salary Sacrifice to ensure this is suitable for you.

*Full list of earnings taken into account for calculations can be found on the Pensions page in Sharepoint. However this will normally include all earnings that qualify for National Insurance.

The Retirement Age

Home Group has flexible retirement policy and although the Scheme has a default retirement age of 65 for calculation purposes, this can be adjusted on the Aviva platform.

Life Assurance

Colleagues receive Life Assurance cover for the first 9 months of employment whether or not they are members of the Matched Contribution Arrangement. The cover is the equivalent of three times annual salary as at the preceding 1 April subject to an earnings cap which is currently set at £205,200 (2023/24).

After six months employment only members of the Pension Scheme will receive life assurance cover.

The life assurance arrangements for all members are administered by the Home Group Life Assurance Trust.

HELP AND SUPPORT

For Home Group colleagues there is a pension area on Homeworld containing all relevant documents about the scheme, some of these documents have been added to our External website below:

<http://homeworld.group.homegroup.org.uk/organisation/Human%20Resources%20and%20Development/Pensions/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

Aviva offers support both through its website and helpline and you can also ask for more information from the Pensions Administrator at Home Group simply email pensions@homegroup.org.uk