

Dependants Pension Entitlements

Dependants Benefits are a complex area, and it is difficult to give general advice. Schemes differ as to the level of benefits, as there were rule changes across schemes following privatisation. Some increased the levels of partner and child benefits.

There can be different benefits within the same scheme. Some schemes have a number of sections arising from amalgamation of electricity companies with different benefits to groups.

Levels of contribution may also affect your benefits. At one point it was possible to opt out of spouses' benefits. Others have voluntarily paid additional contributions to increase benefits.

As a result, we believe that it is important that members check that the company's records mirror their expectations. There is good reason for this as we have discovered that the company records are wrong. Sadly, many of the records are not as good as they should be. Some companies have lost records and others have data issues due to transfer issues when administrators changed or failure to account for variations in contributions.

We have helped many members who have found that the company was planning to pay lower payments to dependants than they were entitled to. In today's corporate culture it is difficult to get the company to admit mistakes. You can imagine that it is far more difficult when the main source of information – the member, is gone.

Our advice is that members should check their benefit entitlement with their Scheme Administrator and challenge in writing if they think the statement is wrong. At the same it is a good opportunity to check that your Expression of Wishes.