LAW SOCIETY
OF IRELAND

YOUR MEMBER GUIDE

Law Society of Ireland Retirement Trust Scheme

What's in this guide?

Need more?

This guide contains certain expressions which have specific definitions with regards to your benefits. The **Some Terms Explained** section at the back of this guide explains the terminology used.

April 2023 edition

Your retirement Scheme

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Welcome to the Law Society of Ireland Retirement Trust Scheme (the ‘Scheme’). The Scheme has been helping Law Society members prepare for retirement since 1975. It is watched over by the Scheme Trustee and by a Committee of Law Society Members.

Your Scheme is designed to help you build up benefits for when you retire. You receive tax relief on your contributions, making your Scheme the most tax-efficient way available to save for your retirement.

You choose how much to contribute and you choose how to invest your contributions. The choices you make will affect the level of benefits available to you so we recommend you read this guide carefully.

Remember: **it’s your Scheme, it’s what you make of it!**

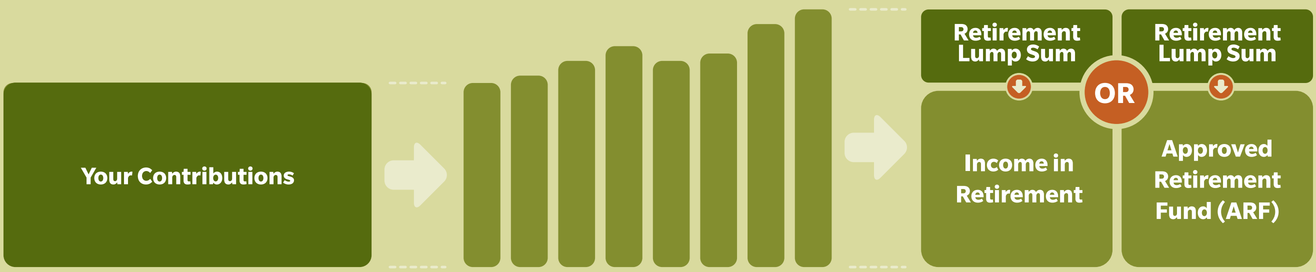
How does the Scheme work?

To help build income for your retirement you may make regular, or occasional, contributions to your Retirement Account. You will choose how to invest this money and the accumulated value of the Retirement Account that you build up will be used to provide you with retirement benefits. The greater the amount paid into your Retirement Account while you are working, and the better the investment returns achieved, the higher your benefits will be when you draw on them.

1 Contribute
You pay contributions into your Retirement Account to pay for your benefits

2 Grow
Your contributions are invested with the aim of growing your Retirement Account

3 Benefit
The value of your Retirement Account is used to fund a package of benefits of your choice



Planning for retirement in three easy steps

Step 1 – Contribute to the Scheme

You choose how much and how often to contribute to the Scheme. You may choose to make regular contributions monthly, quarterly or annually, and/or you can make once off contributions whenever suits you.

You may change the amount you contribute, or stop contributing altogether, at any time without penalty.

Tax relief is available on your contributions, up to Revenue limits.

You may even transfer funds in from other personal pension arrangements allowing you to manage your benefits in one place (transfers in from Occupational Pension Schemes or PRSAs are not permitted).

Step 2 – Grow your Retirement Account

The value of the benefits available from your Scheme will largely depend on the size of your Retirement Account when you retire. How much your Retirement Account will grow between now and retirement depends on the investment strategy it follows.

Step 3 – Choose Your Benefits

You can choose the age that you receive your retirement benefits between age 60 and 75. Your Retirement Account can be used to provide one or more of the following benefits (depending on your circumstances):

- A Retirement Lump Sum up to 25% of the value of your Retirement Account
- A regular income for life (an "Annuity")
- An income for your dependants, payable after your death
- Continued investment through an Approved Retirement Fund (subject to Revenue requirements)
- Taxable cash withdrawals (this option may not be available to everyone)

How do I join the Scheme?

Joining is easy – simply complete a **Membership Application Form** and return it to The Law Society Scheme Administrator.

For full details on joining the Scheme see page 20.

Can I leave the Scheme?

You may choose to stop contributing to the Scheme at any time. If you cease contributions you can leave your pension savings invested in the Scheme until you choose to retire (i.e., draw your Scheme benefits): there is no requirement to transfer your benefits to an alternative arrangement.

If you wish, you may transfer your benefits to another pension arrangement (either a personal pension or PRSA).

For full details on leaving the Scheme see page 19.

What's in it for **me?**

Paying for retirement is likely to be one of the biggest expenses you'll ever face. By contributing to the Scheme, you save for retirement, reduce the income tax you pay and gain an investment that generates tax free growth: **all in one**!

Your Scheme offers several key benefits:

- A flexible Lifestyle Strategy that is linked to your chosen retirement age. Relief from income tax can be claimed on any contributions that you make up to Revenue limits.
- Investment returns within the Scheme are exempt from tax.
- You can take your retirement benefits any time from age 60 to age 75, regardless of whether or not you continue working.
- Contribution terms are flexible: you may contribute by regular standing order or through single lump sum contributions.
- You can manage your Scheme decisions, or check up on Scheme and fund information, online via Mercer Oneview.
- The JustASK member helpline can answer any questions you have about your entitlements.
- Charges are transparent, with no charges deducted from contributions as they are made, no charges applied to benefits as they are taken, no flat policy charges and no charges applied to transfers out of the Scheme. The only charge applicable is the annual management charges, which are outlined for each fund on page 8.

Support for you

Getting in touch

There may be occasions when there are questions you want to ask, or issues you need assistance with. You can contact us by:

Phone +353 (0)1 411 8505

Web www.merceroneview.ie

email JustASK@mercer.com

Post The Law Society Scheme Administrator
Mercer
Charlotte House
Charlemont Street
Dublin 2

Don't forget - stay in touch

Thousands of pensions go unclaimed because their owners have lost touch with their pension providers.

We keep a record of your last known address so you can be contacted about your benefits or any issues affecting the Scheme, but if you change contact address without letting us know we may not be able to issue your Annual Benefit Statement (which contains personal sensitive information) to the correct address or contact you when your benefits become payable.

Please help us and yourself by contacting the Mercer JustASK Helpline or updating your records on Mercer OneView, if you change your address.

Calling the **JustASK** member helpline

The JustASK member helpline is available on **weekdays** (excluding holidays).

You can contact the JustASK member helpline on **+353 (0)1 411 8505.**

Take control of your Scheme with **Mercer OneView**

You can chat online, shop online, bank online and you can even manage your Scheme online – with **www.merceroneview.ie**

Log on and find out how your Retirement Account is doing. You can check out the current value of your Retirement Account, change your contact details, change your investment choices and even project how much you will get when you take your benefits – it's up to you to take control.

Logging on to Mercer OneView

Visit **www.merceroneview.ie**

Step 1

- Enter the **Employer Code**: LawSoc (please use this "Employer" Code, regardless of your actual employment or self-employment status)
- Click **submit**

Step 2

- Enter your **Employee ID**: This is your Scheme Membership Number, issued to you on joining the Scheme and included on your Annual Benefit Statement
- **Personal Access Code** (PAC): Issued to you on joining the Scheme
- Click **submit**

Lost or forgotten your PAC?

If you have forgotten or lost your PAC, click **Forgotten your PAC?** under the Personal Access Code box to reset your PAC online.

Online PAC reset will only be available if you have previously logged in successfully and registered your security information. If you have not yet done so, and have lost or forgotten your original PAC, contact the Mercer JustASK helpline to request that a new printed PAC be posted to the contact address we have on record for you.

Contributing to the Scheme

2

The tax relief available for retirement savings make contributing to the Scheme worthwhile, no matter what age you are.

How much do I contribute to the Scheme?

You choose how much and how often to contribute to the Scheme.

You may choose to make regular contributions monthly, quarterly or annually.

You may change the amount you contribute, or stop contributing altogether, at any time without penalty.

You may also make a Single Premium Contribution at any time, to boost your Retirement Account. This can be a great way to maximise your tax efficient savings (subject to Revenue requirements) at the end of the tax year. The deadline for making end of year Single Premium Contributions in respect of the previous tax year is normally 31 October.

Why does tax relief make investing in the Scheme so efficient?

Tax relief is available on the amount you pay at your highest rate of income tax, subject to Revenue Limits. The table below illustrates how much it would cost you to contribute €200 to the Scheme, based on tax rates in 2018.

Your Top Tax Rate	**40%**	**20%**
Total Contribution	€200	€200
Less tax saving (Income Tax Relief)	€80	€40
Actual cost to you	**€120**	**€160**

Remember

There are limits to the contributions which you can make each year. See page 23 for more information.

How do I claim tax relief?

You may reclaim income tax paid (up to Revenue Limits) as part of your normal annual tax return.

RAC certificates are issued by the Scheme Administrator on behalf of the Trustee to members in respect of contributions made. These certificates can then be used by you to support claims for tax relief. RAC certificates are available in two forms:

- An **Annual Certificate**: this is designed to certify regular contributions, e.g., monthly, quarterly, annual etc. This certificate remains valid as long as the contribution amount and frequency remain the same. If either changes, then a new certificate will be issued (unless you stop your contributions).
- A **Single Premium** certificate: this is designed to certify any other contribution, that is, where a contribution is not one of a regular series.

How do I know if I'm saving enough for my retirement?

Each year you will receive an annual benefit statement showing how much is in your Retirement Account and a Statement of Reasonable Projection estimating the benefits that you may receive from the Scheme if you were to draw your benefits at age 60 (or, if you are already at, or above, age 60, then age 75). If you select a Lifestyle Strategy Target Date as part of the Lifestyle Strategy your Statement of Reasonable Projection will be aligned with this date.

You may also check your Retirement Account online at **www.merceroneview.ie**.

How do I make contributions?

If you wish to arrange a regular contribution to your plan, you should set up a **Direct Debit** through your bank (see details below) and email JustASK@mercer.com with the amount you are making.

If you wish to make a once off Single Premium Contribution you should complete and return a **Single Premium Contribution Remittance Form.**

Regular contribution payments

Set up a direct debit to the Scheme Bank account, as detailed below.

Direct debit payments, clearly stating your name and membership number, should be directed to:

Account:	Mercer (Ireland) Limited Client Asset Account
Bank:	Barclays Bank
Account Number:	IE96 BARC 9902 1244 9342 01
BIC (Swift):	BARCIE2D
Payment Reference:	Please include your name and scheme membership number

Once the direct debit is set up through your bank, please email JustASK@mercer.com to let them know you have set up the direct debit and the amount of the contributions you will be making.

Growing your Retirement Account

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To increase the value of your benefits, your Retirement Account is invested with the aim of growing over time.

In this section we set out the investment choices available to you through the Scheme and some of the issues you should consider when making investment decisions. The types of funds available are described here, as are the risks that you should be aware of when choosing a fund or a mix of funds.

What are my investment fund options?

The type of investment you should choose depends on your personal circumstances and the degree of risk you are comfortable taking. You can choose to invest your Retirement Account in any one, or more, of the funds available through the Scheme. The table below gives an overview of the funds available through the Scheme.

Fund Name	Fund Type	Management Style	Function	AMC
Diversified Equity Fund	Equity	Active	Growth	0.93%
Law Society RTS Managed Fund	Balanced	Active / Passive	Growth	0.96%
State Street Long Bond Fund	Bond	Passive	Conservative	0.35%
Euro Cash Fund	Cash	Active	Conservative	0.17%
Absolute Return Fixed Income	Bond	Active	Conservative	0.52%

What charges are made?

A competitive charging structure for the Scheme has been negotiated. The investment Manager deducts the charge from each fund which is then used to pay all the costs associated with running the Scheme. The Annual Management Charges applied to each Fund at the date of publication are shown above.

Your Annual Management Charges (AMCs) may change over time

Mercer monitors and reviews the underlying investment managers for all of your Funds. As a result of that ongoing review, Mercer may change the underlying investment managers and asset allocations of your Funds. Specialist asset managers apply different AMCs on different asset classes, so changes to the managers and asset allocation as a result of Mercer's ongoing investment oversight may cause slight increases or decreases to the AMCs that apply.

Need more?

Information on the types of funds in which you may choose to invest is available later in this chapter. Full details of the individual funds are available in the Investment Managers' Fund Fact Sheets, updated quarterly on the investment section of Mercer OneView.

The Lifestyle Strategy

You can have your Retirement Account automatically invested for you based on your time to retirement by using the the Lifestyle Strategy. If you use the Lifestyle Strategy approach, your Retirement Account will aim for growth when you are younger. In the last years before retirement there will be a gradual and automatic transition towards a position involving less risk. When you join the Scheme, your Retirement Account will use the Lifestyle Strategy approach by default, unless you make other investment choices.

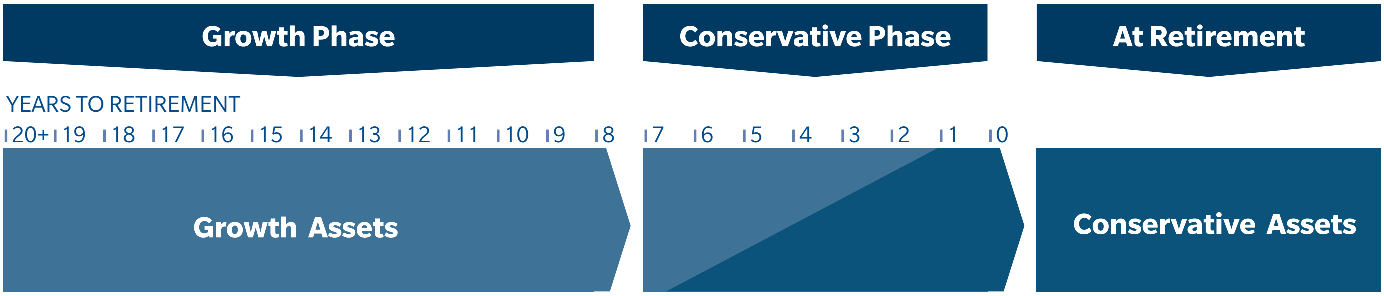
How does the Lifestyle Strategy approach work?

When you are far from retirement...

your Retirement Account will automatically aim for investment growth, with a view to being able to provide the best possible support for you at retirement age. Looking for growth means taking some investment risk and you should expect to see the value of your Retirement Account both rising and falling in value over the short term. Over the long term, your Retirement Account should grow – though values can fall as well as rise.

When you are approaching retirement...

it becomes more important to try to safeguard what you have built up to date and reduce the risk of sharp drops in value. To achieve this your Retirement Account will gradually be moved into more conservative investments over the last seven years before your Lifestyle Strategy Target Date.



The chart above illustrates the positioning of a Retirement Account using the Lifestyle Strategy approach as retirement gets closer. Your Retirement Account will be invested in the LSRTS Managed Fund when you are far from retirement. In the last seven years before your retirement date, the Retirement Account gradually and automatically moves to a more conservative investment position, suitable for a member who wishes to invested in an Approved Retirement Fund at retirement.

Lifestyle Strategy Target Date

By default, the Lifestyle Strategy approach assumes that you will take your retirement benefits at the age 67. If you intend to retire earlier or later than this, it may make sense for the automatic risk reduction to start earlier or later than normal in your case. You can make this happen by altering your Lifestyle Strategy Target Date on Mercer OneView – simply log in, click on **Manage My Investments**, then on **Lifestyle Strategy** to be given the option of altering your Lifestyle Strategy Target Date.

You should note that altering your Lifestyle Strategy Target Date does not commit you in any way to retiring at any particular time, or guarantee you the ability to do so. It simply alters the timing by which the Lifestyle Strategy approach will operate for you. You are allowed to select a retirement date between age 60 and age 75.

How can I be sure Lifestyling is right for me?

If you are within seven years of your Lifestyle Strategy Target Date (age 67, by default), or approaching that point, it is important to make sure that the benefits targeted by the Lifestyle Strategy you are invested in (whether through an active decision, or by default) are consistent with the benefits you intend to take at retirement. It's also important to verify that the timeline being followed suits you, and that you are happy with the general principles being followed under the Lifestyle Strategy.

There may be circumstances in which it is not suitable and we take a look at the pros and cons of the Lifestyle Strategy below.

The Lifestyle Strategy MAY suit you if:

- You intend to retire at your Lifestyle Strategy Target Date, **AND**
- You are happy for risk to be taken when retirement is distant, with the aim of generating growth, **OR**
- You are happy for risk to be gradually and automatically reduced in the last years before retirement, knowing that this will also at that time restrict growth potential.

The Lifestyle Strategy MAY NOT suit you if:

- You do not intend to retire at your Lifestyle Strategy Target Date, **OR**
- You are unhappy with the level of risk being taken when retirement is distant under the Lifestyle Strategy, **OR**
- You do not wish for risk to be gradually and automatically reduced in the last years before retirement.

PLEASE NOTE

You should also verify that the Lifestyle Strategy has an investment destination that suits how you intend to use your Retirement Account to provide benefits.

Investment considerations

In this section we explore some of the issues you should consider when deciding which Funds may suit your needs and some of the specific features of different types of Funds.

Issues that may affect your investment decisions

- **The amount of time you have left to save and invest for retirement**
  The more time you have, the more risk you may be able to take with a view to growing your Retirement Account as your savings may have more time to recover from any short term falls in value. As you enter the last seven years before retirement, you may wish to select Funds that match your choice of retirement benefits.

- **For those closer to retirement, your intended retirement benefit choices**
  It can make sense closer to retirement (say in the last seven years) to start lining up your investment choices with your intended retirement benefits.
  - The SSgA Bond Fund is likely to move broadly in line with the cost of buying an income for life (Annuity) at retirement.
  - The Cash Fund invests in cash, and may be suitable for that portion of your Retirement Account that you are planning on using towards your Retirement Lump Sum.
  - If you are considering moving to an ARF you may wish to choose investments that match the characteristics of the ARF that you plan to put in place.

- **The level of risk you are comfortable with**
  The more risk you take, the higher your long-term returns could be – but your Retirement Account could also see significant falls in value that may or may not be recoverable.

- **How much money you will need when you retire**
  The more money you need in retirement, the greater the savings you will need to build up and the higher the level of growth you may wish to aim for.

- **Whether you will have any other sources of income at retirement**
  If you expect to have other sources of income in retirement (e.g., rental property, private savings, or a former employer's pension plan), the level of income you will need to provide from this Scheme may be reduced.

- **The investment management charges that may be applied to your Funds**
  All other things being equal, a Fund with a higher investment management charge will produce a lower return when compared with a similarly performing Fund with a lower investment management charge. You can find the charges that apply to each Fund on page 8.

How much time have you left to invest?

If you are far from retirement, you have a long investment timeframe and may be able to tolerate greater short-term ups and downs in value in order to maximise the long-term growth of your Retirement Account. As you approach retirement, you may wish to review your Funds and match their level of expected risk with the benefits you wish to target at retirement.
The flow chart below offers suggestions as to which of the Funds may suit your needs depending on your length of time to retirement, level of short term risk you feel comfortable taking and your preferred benefits at retirement.

START HERE

Roughly, how many years do you have to go before retirement?

More than 7

What level of short-term risk do you feel comfortable taking when aiming for long term-growth?

High

Moderate

Reduced

You may wish to continue using a Growth Fund until retirement.

7 or less

What benefits are you thinking of taking at retirement?

ARF

Income

Cash

FUNDS TO CONSIDER

Diversified Equity Fund
This Fund aims for high levels of long-term growth but is likely to experience high volatility in the short term.

Managed Fund
This Fund aims for moderate levels of investments to advise long-term growth but is likely to experience moderate volatility in the short term.

A combination of funds
A combination of the funds available can provide a reduced level risk to provide a more cautious approach. For example the Lifestyle Strategy invests in a mix of the Managed Fund and Absolute Return Fixed Interest Fund.

CONSIDER GRADUALLY TRANSITIONING TO A FUND WHICH MATCHES YOUR PREFERRED BENEFITS

Bond Fund
This Fund aims to protect the value of investments to advise your Retirement Account relative to the probable cost of providing an income for life at retirement. This Fund can go up and down in value significantly.

Euro Cash Fund
This Fund aims to protect the cash value of your Retirement Account from short-term volatility as you approach retirement. This Fund can go up and down in value.

WARNING

This is a very general guidance only. Nothing in it should be taken as constituting individual advice to you. The choices you make, or do not make, around the investment of your Retirement Account are your own responsibility. Neither Mercer nor your Scheme Trustee can be held responsible for any financial loss arising from your investment choices or lack of them. Values can fall as well as rise whatever Fund is chosen and no particular level of retirement benefit from your pension can be guaranteed.

REMEMBER!

The **Lifestyle Strategy** approach **automatically** selects investments for you with a level of risk set in accordance with your time to your Lifestyle Strategy Target Date.

REMEMBER!

If you do not choose the **Lifestyle Strategy**, you can pick and choose your own selection of Funds to suit your time to retirement and targeted retirement benefits.

What risks do my investments face?

When considering investment decisions there are five main types of risk you should be aware of: market risk, inflation risk, Annuity risk, manager risk, and liquidity risk.

There's not always a 'right' answer when it comes to investment. Often it will depend on your own view of how much risk you can afford to take or feel comfortable taking. At any given time, economic and market conditions will favour one type of investment over others. Since it is impossible to predict which will produce the best returns in the short term, choosing a variety of investments – a practice called diversification – can help you avoid being too exposed one particular type of risk.

Market risk

When looking at investing you will often hear the warning "the value of your investments can fall as well as rise". This is due to market risk, which means the ups and downs that normally occur in investment markets.

Different investment funds have different levels of market risk. The more volatile fund types (i.e., funds with high equity content such as equity and balanced funds) are expected, though not guaranteed, to produce the highest investment returns over the long term. However they are also likely to experience pronounced ups and downs.

The less volatile fund types (cash and bonds) tend to be more stable; however, they can fall in value and are not expected to generate as much growth over the long term. They are therefore considered to be less suitable if you are far away from your chosen Benefit Date.

Inflation risk

Over the long term, increases in the cost of goods and services means that a fixed amount of money could buy less. This effect is known as inflation risk. In order to maintain the benefits that your Retirement Account can afford at retirement, you should aim to achieve an investment return that keeps up with, or ideally, outperforms inflation over the long term. Over long time periods, equity and balanced funds probably have a better chance of beating inflation than cash or bond funds.

Annuity risk

If you plan to use part of your Retirement Account to purchase an income in retirement (by purchasing an Annuity) you may be exposed to Annuity risk. This is the risk that the price of Annuities increases faster than your Retirement Account is growing. Part of this risk can be managed by investing in bonds when close to your chosen Benefit Date – long bonds tend to rise in value as Annuities get more expensive.

Manager risk

Your funds are invested by professional investment managers. These managers make different investment decisions and can therefore achieve different results. This is known as Manager Risk.

Some managers make active decisions about investments, trying to outperform the market in order to achieve the best results. When it works, this can achieve excellent results. However active managers can underperform compared to the market. The fees for actively managed funds go to pay for the investment work involved.

Other managers take a passive approach: following market trends to achieve results in line with standard performance. While this approach is unlikely to achieve investment returns above the market average, their operating costs and fees can be lower.

Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk refers to the danger of there being no market for the assets held by your fund at the time when you need to move out of it. Where there are no willing buyers in the short run, it can be difficult or impossible to get value for your fund holding.

The types of fund available

There are four classes of funds available for you to invest in: Equity, Balanced, Bond and Cash funds. The information below explains the general characteristics of these fund types.

Equity funds

Are:

- shares in companies traded on stock markets
- affected by rises and falls in stock markets; their value can go up or down, sometimes suddenly, by a large amount and for a sustained period

Historically have:

- offered higher long-term returns than most other investments
- offered long-term returns greater than inflation

Balanced funds:

Are:

- made up of investments in a range of different assets such as equities, bonds, property and cash, with the majority of the fund invested in equities
- expected to rise and fall in value over time, but because of the mix of assets, returns are not expected to fluctuate as much as equity funds

Historically have:

- offered long-term returns lower than equities but higher than cash or bonds

Bond funds

Are:

- made up of loans to governments or companies where the governments or companies borrow an amount of money for a stated period
- also called fixed interest securities (because they receive interest at a fixed rate) or, in the case of bonds issued only by governments, gilts

Historically have:

- delivered returns tending to rise and fall in line with movements in interest rates and the cost of buying an Annuity

Cash funds

Are:

- cash deposits and cash-like investments issued by financial institutions

Historically have:

- offered lower returns over the long term than equities or bonds and are not expected to keep pace with long-term inflation and the costs of providing an Annuity

Need more?

Full details of the individual funds are available in the Investment Managers' Fund Fact Sheets, updated quarterly on Mercer OneView.

Registering your investment decisions

How do I register my fund decisions?

If you wish to take an active role in choosing your funds you may initially do so when you complete your **Membership Application Form**.

Once you have joined the Scheme you will be issued log on details for Mercer OneView, where you will also be able to update your choices online.

What if I don't make a choice?

In the absence of an investment decision your investment strategy will initially be defaulted to the Lifestyle Strategy with a Lifestyle Strategy Target Date of 67. You can update your investment strategy logging on to Mercer OneView.

If you do not feel comfortable making a choice, you may wish to seek independent financial advice.

May I change my mind about my choices?

Yes. Your choice is not a once and for all decision and you should review your Funds on a regular basis.

You may make investment switches whenever you like.

If you want to change the way your funds are invested, you can switch your investment funds by logging on to Mercer OneView.

It's your money, it's your responsibility

The Trustee monitors the investment range on an ongoing basis. However, it is **your responsibility** to ensure that you have selected an Fund that is appropriate to you and your own circumstances: neither the Trustee nor the Law Society can accept responsibility for any loss which may be incurred as a result of poor performance.

Your benefits

4

Your Scheme is designed to provide benefits when you retire and this section explains the options that will be available when you draw your retirement benefits. Of course you may also choose to leave the Scheme, or you may die unexpectedly and those scenarios are also covered.

Your retirement benefits

Your Retirement Account funds your benefit options at retirement

You can pick and choose the particular retirement benefits that best suit you.

The greater the value of your Retirement Account the greater the value of the benefits you can purchase.

	Sample Benefits Selection A	Sample Benefits Selection B
The value of your Retirement Account	Retirement Lump Sum	Retirement Lump Sum
	Income For Life	Approved Retirement Fund

When may I draw my benefits?

As a member of the Scheme, you may commence drawing benefits on your Benefit Date. This is a date between ages 60 and 75 notified by you in writing to the Trustee. In the absence of such notification, your Benefit Date will be age 75. You may change your Benefit Date at any time. You may draw on your benefits earlier than age 60 on grounds of ill health as prescribed by the Trust Deed and Rules, with the permission of the Trustee.

Please note that drawing your retirement benefits from the Scheme and retiring from your legal practice are two separate actions. If you retire from practice you are not obliged to draw your Scheme benefits, and vice versa. After drawing your retirement benefits you may apply to rejoin the Scheme and build up additional benefits, providing you meet eligibility criteria.

What retirement benefits can I take?

The retirement benefits that will be available to you are set out below. You may pick and choose the benefits you wish to take and decide how much of your Retirement Account you wish to invest in each benefit.

You don't have to choose your retirement benefits now: you can wait until you are near retirement before making up your mind but you should consider your options in advance of your Benefit Date. More information about how you can take your retirement benefits is available on Mercer OneView.

Retirement Lump Sum

You may elect to take up to 25% of your Retirement Account as a Retirement Lump Sum when you draw your retirement benefits.

So long as the total value of the retirement lump sums you receive (including those from other pension arrangements) in your lifetime is less than €200,000 (under current legislation), your Retirement Lump Sum from the Scheme can be taken tax free.

Annuity

You may purchase an income for life called an Annuity (what was traditionally known as a "pension"). You have the option to ensure that your dependants can continue receiving a portion of your Annuity if they outlive you after you draw your retirement benefits.

The cost of purchasing an Annuity will depend on a number of factors at retirement, including your age, long-term interest rates and the Annuity options you choose (e.g., including an income payable to a dependant on your death).

Approved Retirement Fund

You may transfer some of your Retirement Account to an Approved Retirement Fund (ARF) (depending on your circumstances). An ARF allows you to continue to invest some of your retirement savings after you draw your retirement benefits. Unlike Annuities, ARFs can be inherited. However ARFs do not provide the certainty or security of income for your lifetime which a purchased Annuity provides.

Taxable cash

After taking your Retirement Lump Sum, you may be able to take some or all of your Retirement Account as taxable cash. The precise tax treatment will vary depending on your circumstances. This option is not guaranteed to be available.

Please note

Your retirement benefits (with the exception of the tax free element of your Retirement Lump Sum) are usually subject to income tax and the Universal Social Charge (USC).

Remember!

The decisions you make about your contributions and investments now will affect the amount of benefits you can take at retirement.

While you do not have to commit now to taking any specific benefit, it may be worth considering what you would like to take at retirement so you can make sure you are contributing enough and that your investment strategy is appropriate for your preferred benefit package.

Benefits if you die

What happens if I die before drawing retirement benefits?

If you die before drawing your benefits from the Scheme the value of your Retirement Account will be payable by the Trustee to your estate or legal personal representatives, unless otherwise directed by a Pensions Adjustment Order.

What happens if I die after drawing retirement benefits?

What happens if you die after retirement will depend on the options you select at the time of drawdown.

If you select a pension for a dependant, that pension will become payable on your death.

If you select a pension and elect for this to be guaranteed for, say five years and you die within five years after you draw down your retirement benefits, a lump sum will be paid equal to the total of five years' pension payments less any pension payments you had already received.

If you invest part of your retirement fund in an ARF, the proceeds can be left to your beneficiaries on your death.

If you take all of your benefits in cash when you draw down your retirement benefits, then no further benefits will be payable after retirement.

What happens if you leave the Law Society

The Retirement Account you build up as a member of the Scheme is intended to provide you benefits at retirement. If you leave the Law Society you may leave your Retirement Account invested in the Scheme until you retire, or alternatively, you could transfer those benefits to another pension arrangement.

If I leave the Law Society do I have to leave the Scheme?

No. Once you have joined the Scheme as a Law Society Member, you may continue to make relevant contributions to the Scheme.

You may also leave your pension savings invested in the Scheme until you draw your retirement benefits.

May I transfer my benefits out of the Scheme?

You can transfer the accumulated value of your Retirement Account to another personal pension arrangement or PRSA. An instruction to withdraw from the Scheme must be made in writing and be forwarded to the Law Society Scheme Administrator, for the attention of the Trustee.

Information will be requested from and given to the provider of your new pension arrangement before any transfer can be made. Once all relevant information has been provided, the transfer process can proceed.

Please note

You don't have to leave the Scheme if you want to stop contributing. You may choose to reduce your contributions or stop contributing to the Scheme at any time without having to leave the Scheme.

The rules of the Scheme

5

We've tried to keep this guide as short and simple as possible by focussing on the main features you need to understand to make your decisions. However, pension Schemes are subject to complex rules and regulations which may affect you. We deal with those issues in the following section.

The information in this Guide is based on the Trustee's understanding of tax regulations and legislation in force at the time of publication. If any significant changes occur in the future, you will be notified. While this Guide aims to give you an overview of your benefits and options under the Scheme, it is recommended that you seek independent financial advice in relation to those options.

Joining the Scheme

Who may join?

All members of the Law Society who are self employed (sole practitioners or in partnership) or who are in non-pensionable employment may apply to join the Scheme.

You must be under 75 years of age and have a source of Relevant Earnings (i.e., you must have earnings from a profession, trade or non-pensionable employment).

Do I have to join?

No: it is not a condition of membership of the Law Society that you join the Scheme.

Do I have to leave the Scheme if I leave the Law Society?

No. Once you join you can retain membership and can continue to contribute to the Scheme, whether you remain a member of the Law Society or not.

If I join the Scheme, may I leave at a later date?

Membership is entirely voluntary. You may leave the Scheme at any time by transferring your benefits out of the Scheme and ceasing any further contributions without affecting your membership of the Law Society.

If you transfer your benefits out, or draw your benefits down, you may apply to rejoin the Scheme at a later date.

Are there any costs?

Yes. The costs of investing your contributions are met by a deduction from the assets in which your Retirement Account is invested. These charges are shown in the Disclosure Document available on Mercer OneView, and on page 8 of this booklet.

May I transfer in assets from another retirement scheme?

The Scheme may accept transfers in from other personal pension schemes, subject to certain conditions. It cannot accept transfers in from PRSAs or Occupational Pension Schemes. You may wish to seek independent financial advice before making this decision.

To transfer assets from a personal pension arrangement please contact the administrator of that pension.

How do I join the Scheme?

Membership of the Scheme is entirely voluntary and you can join by completing and returning a **Membership Application Form**, together with any documentation outlined on that form.

Your Scheme and the law

The Scheme is a group, personal pension arrangement, exempt-approved under Section 784(4), Part 30, Chapter 2, Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

The Scheme is a Trust based Retirement Annuity Contract (Trust RAC), which for the purposes of the Pensions Act 1990, is defined as a "defined contribution" scheme. This means that your contributions are invested in your Retirement Account. At the point you draw benefits, you use the accumulated value of your Retirement Account to secure benefits as you decide.

Changes in legislation and other unforeseen circumstances may make it necessary or desirable to amend the Trust Deed and Rules. The Law Society and the Trustee may amend the Scheme at any time provided that no such amendment shall be made which shall (a) be such as would affect the continuance of approval of the Scheme by the Revenue Commissioners or (b) be such as shall in the opinion of the Trustee prejudice the interests of any member of the Scheme. Information on any changes to the Scheme will be made available as per the disclosure requirements of the Trust RACS (Disclosure of Information) Regulations, 2007.

Under the Trust RACS (Disclosure of Information) Regulations, 2007, Schedule B, Section 15, a statement concerning the condition of the Scheme, in particular concerning the financial, technical and other risks associated with the Scheme and their distribution must be disclosed.

Under law, the Trustee is required to describe the condition of the Scheme and the risks associated with the Scheme, and disclose these to members.

The Scheme has been registered with The Pensions Authority (Registration Number: PB 212930).

Statement of risk

As it is registered as a "defined contribution" scheme, where the ultimate proceeds cannot be forecast with certainty, it is not possible to provide a guarantee in relation to the level benefits that you will receive when you draw your retirement benefits. The value of your benefits is dependent on the amount of contributions paid, investment returns earned, charges deducted and, if you choose, the cost of buying Annuities. The very nature of the Scheme means that there are financial and operational risks borne by the members. In brief, the following risks have been identified, amongst others:

- The fund managers made available for your Retirement Account may underperform relative to other fund managers, or the funds in which your contributions are invested may underperform relative to other funds available.
- The administration of the Scheme may fail to meet acceptable standards. The Scheme could fall out of statutory compliance, the Scheme could fall victim to fraud or negligence or the projected benefits communicated to members could differ from what will actually be payable.
- When you draw your retirement benefits, investment returns may have been poorer than expected or the cost of purchasing an Annuity may be higher than expected. In such circumstances, the benefits payable from your Retirement Account may be less than you had planned for. It is particularly important for you to monitor this risk in the period close to your chosen Benefit Date, if you plan to purchase an Annuity.
- There may be regulatory or legislative changes that will restrict the level or type of benefits you may receive and how they are taxed.

Apart from the last item, which is outside the control of the Trustee, the Trustee is satisfied that it is taking all reasonable steps to protect the members from the effects of these risks. For example, a range of funds is made available so that members can take control of their own investment risk. Experienced professional advisers and administrators are employed to minimise compliance and administrative risks. However, it is not possible to guard against every eventuality and, in particular, it may be appropriate for you to take some investment risk with your Retirement Account with the aim of maximising your benefits.

Are my benefits subject to external controls?

Yes. Your benefits under the Scheme are subject to maximum limits imposed by the Revenue and to the requirements of the Pensions Act 1990 (and any subsequent amendments).

Contacting the Pensions Authority

The Pensions Authority can be contacted at:

Post - Verschoyle House, 28/30 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2

Telephone - (01) 613 1900

email - info@pensionsauthority.ie

website - www.pensionsauthority.ie

Your benefits

May my benefits be used to obtain a loan?

No. You may neither use your benefits for this purpose nor assign them to a third party. If you attempt to do so you may lose your right to benefits.

What if my situation changes and I separate, divorce or my Civil Partnership dissolves?

Your retirement and death benefits could be subject to a Pension Adjustment Order (PAO) in certain circumstances including judicial separation, divorce or the dissolution of a Civil Partnership. These orders are secured under the Family Law Act 1995, the Family Law (Divorce) Act 1996 and the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act, 2010. Further information about the operation and impact of Pension Adjustment Orders may be obtained from the Pensions Authority.

What if a dispute arises regarding the payment of benefits?

The Trustee has established an Internal Dispute Resolution (IDR) procedure to deal with certain complaints or disputes made by actual, or potential, beneficiaries in relation to the Scheme. Please contact the Law Society Scheme Administrator for further details. The Trustee will try to resolve any dispute but in the event it is unable to do so, the complaint or dispute may be submitted to the Pensions Ombudsman for review at The Office of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman, Lincoln House, Lincoln Place, Dublin 2,D02 VH29 (www.fspo.ie).

Could Government Pension Levies affect my benefits?

The Government has the power to impose levies on pensions, and did so between 2011 and 2015. Where such levies are imposed, the Trustees will arrange the necessary deductions from your benefits.

Tax

All tax reliefs and limits reflect the legislation in force at the date of publication.

What are the limits on tax relief on pension contributions?

Tax relief on pension contributions

Relief is available on income tax at your marginal rate – i.e., 40% if you are a higher rate taxpayer and 20% if you are a standard rate taxpayer, based on tax rates in 2018. Contributions do not receive relief from PRSI or the Universal Social Charge (USC).

Maximum annual tax relief on contributions to pension schemes

The Revenue sets limits on the maximum pension contributions on which tax relief is available each year.

You should note that these limits cover the total of all contributions you can make to all pension arrangements in a year. These limits are based on your age and a percentage of your Earnings (up to €115,000):

Age	% of Earnings up to €115,000
Under 30	15%
30 - 39	20%
40 - 49	25%
50 - 54	30%
55 - 59	35%
Over 60	40%

Tax on your retirement benefits

Your retirement benefits (with the exception of the tax free element of your Retirement Lump Sum) are usually subject to income tax and the Universal Social Charge (USC).

Retirement Lump Sum

You may take a maximum Retirement Lump Sum of 25% of your Retirement Account. Subject to a lifetime limit across all your pension arrangements, your Retirement Lump Sum is exempt from tax for the first €200,000, and any Retirement Lump Sum from €200,000 to €500,000 is subject to tax at 20%.

Lifetime limit on pension benefits

The Revenue places a lifetime limit, known as the Standard Fund Threshold, on the value of pension benefits of €2.0 million (as of date of publication). This limit applies to the aggregate of your pension benefits, including both your Scheme benefits and from all other pension arrangements. Where the Standard Fund Threshold is exceeded, the excess will be subject to punitive levels of tax. The government could alter this limit in the future.

Lump sum death benefits

On death before drawing your retirement benefits, the value of your Retirement Account will be paid to your personal representatives and become part of your estate, unless otherwise directed by a Pensions Adjustment Order.

Some terms explained

This guide contains certain expressions which, for the purpose of your benefits, have the meanings below.

An **Annuity** is a benefit option which can provide an income for life. The cost of purchasing an Annuity will depend on a number of factors at retirement, including your age, long-term interest rates and the Annuity options you choose (e.g., including an income payable to a dependant on your death).

An **Approved Retirement Fund** is a benefit option whereby, subject to Revenue requirements, you can continue to invest after retirement. For ease of reference these may be referred to as an "ARF".

Benefit Date means the first day of the week, as specified by you in writing to the Trustee, on which you are aged 60 or over, but not over 75. In the absence of such notice, your Benefit Date will be the first day of the week in which you attain age 75.

Please note that drawing your retirement benefits from the Scheme and retiring from your legal practice are two separate actions. If you retire from practice you are not obliged to draw your Scheme benefits, and vice versa.

Committee means the Solicitors' Retirement Fund Committee being not less than five members of the Law Society, nominated by the Council of the Society (see the latest version of the Law Directory for the current Committee).

Earnings means your total income from all sources and any other taxable benefits you receive for the purposes of calculating allowable tax relief on personal contributions to all forms of pension arrangements, including PRSAs.

The **Law Society** means the Law Society of Ireland.

The **Lifestyle Strategy Target Date** is the date you notify to the administrator as the date you plan to retire, for the purposes of the Lifestyle Strategy. The Lifestyle Strategy will gradually and automatically move your Retirement Account into more conservative investments as you approach your Lifestyle Strategy Target Date. See page 9 for more information on the Lifestyle Strategy. By default, your Lifestyle Strategy Target Date is age 67, unless you nominate a different Lifestyle Strategy Target Date. Nominating a Lifestyle Strategy Target Date is not considered an official application to retire at that date, nor does it oblige you to retire at that date.

The **Lifestyle Strategy,** is an investment approach whereby your Retirement Account is automatically invested in assets that target growth when you are far from retirement and is gradually transitioned to more conservative assets as you approach retirement.

Relevant Earnings means earnings from a profession, trade or non pensionable employment (as defined in 783(3), Taxes Consolidation Act 1997), adjusted in respect of losses, capital allowances and charges.

Retire / Retirement, for the purposes of this booklet refers to the process of drawing your retirement benefits from the Scheme, which in no way requires you to retire from your legal practice.

Retirement Account, on any date, means the accumulated value, taking into account investment returns earned, of the contributions which have been paid by you to the Scheme. Your Retirement Account may include any transfer payment to the Scheme from another personal pension arrangement. The benefits available to you from the Scheme on retirement, transfer or death will depend on the value of your Retirement Account at that time.

A **Retirement Lump Sum** is a benefit option whereby you take part of your Retirement Account as a cash amount. You can normally take part of your Retirement Account tax free up to Revenue Limits. After taking the tax free element of your Retirement Lump Sum, you may be able to take some or all of your Retirement Account as taxable cash.

The **Scheme** means the "Law Society of Ireland Retirement Trust Scheme". For ease, this is referred to as 'the Scheme' or 'your Scheme' throughout the Guides and in other correspondence. The Scheme is a group, personal pension arrangement, exempt-approved under Section 784(4), Part 30, Chapter 2, Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

The **Scheme Administrator** is Mercer Ireland Limited.

To contact Mercer please phone or email the JustASK member helpine at the contact details at the bottom of the page, or write to:

The Law Society Scheme Administrator
Mercer
Charlotte House
Charlemont Street
Dublin 2

The **Trustee** means Irish Pensions Trust Limited, 25/28 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2.

PLEASE NOTE!

This Guide aims to summarise clearly the Trust Deed and Rules, which are technical, legal documents which may include other, more precise definitions. Should any difference in interpretation arise, the Trust Deed and Rules (which are available for inspection), must be followed.

Notes

Notes

Law Society of Ireland Retirement Trust Scheme

it's your plan it's what you make of it

Your Membership Application Form

You must complete this form to apply for membership and to notify the Trustee of your investment choices. Please use black ink and BLOCK CAPITALS throughout. You should return this form to The Law Society Scheme Administrator, Mercer, Charlotte House, Charlemont Street, Dublin 2.

1 Your personal details

Title mr mrs miss ms other

Forename

Surname

Address

Date of birth d m y

LawSoc membership no.

2 Your anti money laundering documentation

To complete your membership you must comply with the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010 (as amended) and as such it is required that you submit the documentation set out below with your application (select one option):

- ☐ **Original Documentation** - One document from list A and one from list B
- ☐ **Certified* Copies** - One document from list A and one from list B

List A - Photographic ID

- ☐ Current valid Passport
- ☐ Current valid driving licence
- ☐ Current valid National Identity card

*Certified Copies

These copy documents may be certified by any one of the following:

- Garda Siochana/Police Officer
- Practising Chartered & Certified Public Accountants
- Embassy/Consular Staff
- Regulated financial or credit institutions
- Notaries Public
- Practising Solicitors (other than yourself or a spouse)
- Justice of the peace
- Commissioner for oaths
- Medical Professional

List B - Non-photographic ID

- ☐ Official documentation/cards issued by the Revenue Commissioners and addressed to the individual
- ☐ Official documentation /cards issued by the Department of Social Protection and addressed to the individual
- ☐ Current Local Authority document
- ☐ Current statement of account from a credit or financial institution or credit /debit card statements
- ☐ Current utility bill (less than six months old)
- ☐ Current household/motor insurance certificate and renewal notice

3 Your contribution decisions

- ☐ I wish to make regular contributions and attach a Standing Order Mandate
- ☐ I wish to make a once off contribution and attach a Single Premium Contribution Remittance Form
- ☐ I do not wish to make contributions yet, and do not attach any contribution forms

4 Your investment decisions

If you don't feel comfortable making investment decisions you can decide not to take an active role in managing your Retirement Account by selecting the Lifestyle Strategy. In the absence of any investment decision your contributions will be invested 100% in the Lifestyle Strategy.

Please tick box A or B as appropriate.

A I would like all of my contributions to be invested as follows:

100%	Lifestyle Strategy

B I would like all of my contributions to be invested as follows:

Percentage	Fund Name
%	Diversified Equity Fund
%	Law Society RTS Managed Fund
%	The State Street Long Bond Fund
%	Euro Cash Fund
%	Absolute Return Fixed Income

The total of this investment decision must equal 100%.

5 Your declaration

I wish to join the Law Society of Ireland Retirement Trust Scheme. I confirm that I am a member of the Law Society of Ireland and that I meet the eligibility criteria. I have also enclosed all necessary anti-money laundering documentation as listed in section 2.

Signature ____________ **Date** d m y

IT'S YOUR
PLAN
IT'S WHAT
YOU
MAKE OF IT

Need help or more information?

Mercer OneView
www.merceroneview.ie

JustASK eMail
JustASK@mercer.com

JustASK Helpline
+353 (0)1 411 8505

About Mercer

Mercer is a global consulting leader in talent, health, retirement, and investments. Mercer helps clients around the world advance the health, wealth, and performance of their most vital asset – their people. Mercer's 19,000 employees are based in more than 40 countries.

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While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this Guide, in the case of a discrepancy, the official Scheme documentation will govern.

The information contained in this Guide is based on legislation at the time of publication (February 2023).

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