

Scammed out of his retirement.

Don't be next.



I ADAM BURNS confirm I
HAVE RECEIVED, READ AND
UNDERSTOOD THE CONTENT
of THIS DOCUMENT.

DATE: 23/5/18
Adam Burns



Visit **www.pension-scams.com**

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ActionFraud
National Fraud & Cyber Crime Reporting Centre

The PENSIONS
Advisory Service



Geoff's story

Tricked into being part of the scam

Bold text highlights typical hallmarks of a scam. These are based on real life experiences of scam victims.

Age: 56

Situation: Two company pensions that he's been paying into for 30 years altogether

Investment offer: overseas property developments

Geoff is looking forward to his retirement. Now he can access his pension more flexibly, he's been thinking about how to spend his money – he wants to help his daughter with a deposit for a flat, and is hoping he'll have a bit left to do up the house and maybe upgrade his car.

His friend mentions an investment opportunity he's bought into, where he got 30% of the value of his pension pot upfront, plus promises of good annual investment returns. Geoff's interested and agrees to have a chat with Chris, his friend's financial adviser. Chris explains that he just needs to sign a document saying he wants to transfer his pension into another scheme, and the money will then get **invested in a hotel** complex in an up-and-coming tourist region **overseas**.

Geoff has a read of the brochure Chris gives him and checks out the website, both of which **look very credible** – they've got government logos and mention the Financial Conduct Authority. He knows he has to **act quickly** as the offer expires in a couple of days so decides to go for it. You only live once.

Within a couple of hours, a **courier** comes round with some papers to sign. Geoff has a quick look through and notices that they say he is now a company director and trustee of his pension scheme. He's a bit confused by that but assumes it's probably all fine, and the courier's waiting, so he signs on the dotted line.

Geoff gets some of his **cash upfront** and spends it on home improvements. He wants to know when he can get the rest of the lump sum, so he tries to call Chris to find out. The line is disconnected, so he searches online and is unable to find any contact details for Chris or his firm.

After several more months of trying to locate Chris and the missing money, Geoff calls The Pensions Advisory Service for advice. It quickly becomes apparent that he has probably lost all his pension savings. By **signing the papers and becoming a company director**, he has also taken on new legal duties with Companies House and HMRC that he didn't know about. This leads to HMRC fining him for tax-related offences. Now Geoff can't help his daughter buy a flat, and he'll have to keep on working for far longer than he'd planned so he can pay back his fine. All his savings are gone.

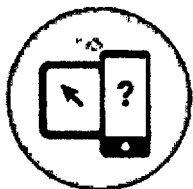


Don't be next.



How not to be next

If you're thinking about how to invest your retirement savings, follow these ten steps to protect your pension



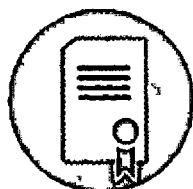
1. Be wary of cold calls and unsolicited texts or emails

Scammers will often claim they're from Pension Wise or other government-backed bodies. These organisations would never phone or text to offer a pension review.



2. Check everything for yourself

People have fallen for scams because they'd been 'recommended by a friend'. Do your homework, even if you consider yourself to be financially savvy – false confidence can lead to getting stung.



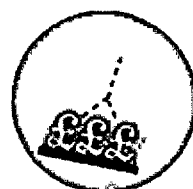
3. Make sure your adviser is on the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) approved register

Pension scammers may pose as financial advisers. Check to make sure yours is FCA-registered at www.fca.org.uk/register.



4. Check the FCA's list of known scams

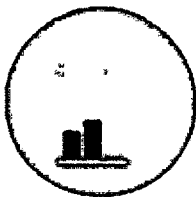
Visit www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart to see if the deal you're being offered is a known scam.



5. Steer clear of overseas investment 'deals'

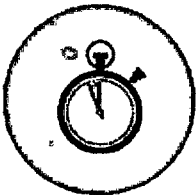
Well-known scam types include unregulated investment in a hotel, vineyard or other overseas opportunity, and where your money is all in one place – and therefore more at risk.





6. Don't fall for 'guaranteed' returns or professional looking websites or brochures

You can never guarantee returns on an investment, and anyone can create a smart website or brochure these days. Question everything, however credible it sounds or looks.



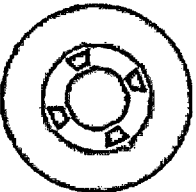
7. Don't be rushed into a decision

Scammers will try to pressure you with 'time limited offers' or send a courier to your door to wait while you sign documents. Take your time to make all the checks you need – even if this means turning down an 'amazing' deal.



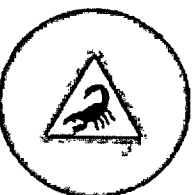
8. If you're aged 50 or over and have a DC (defined contribution) pension, talk to Pension Wise

Pension Wise is there to help you investigate your retirement options. Visit www.pensionwise.gov.uk for more information (and to check what kind of pension you have).



9. Ask The Pensions Advisory Service for help

You can call them on 0300 123 1047 or visit www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk for free pensions advice and information.









10. Contact your provider and call Action Fraud if you think you've been scammed

If you've already signed something you're now unsure about, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 and contact your pension provider immediately. They may be able to stop a transfer that hasn't taken place yet.



What can you do with your pension pot?

If you are over 55 years old you can now access your pension savings in new ways, giving you more options about how you fund your retirement years.

Under age 55	Age 55 or older
 You can't release or 'cash in' your pension (unless you are too ill to work)	 You can use your pension to buy a regular income for the rest of your life (an 'annuity')
 You can transfer your pension from one regulated scheme to another	 You can use your pension to provide a flexible retirement income ('drawdown')
	 You can take your pension as cash in stages
	 You can take the whole pot as cash in one go

There may be tax implications for how you access your savings. HMRC charges a tax penalty of at least 55% of an unauthorised withdrawal from your pension savings. Make sure you understand how you will be affected before you make a decision about how to use them.



People like you have lost their life savings after falling for a scam. Don't be next.

A cross-government initiative by:

ActionFraud
National Fraud & Cyber Crime Reporting Centre



Pension scams
Help for individuals

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I ASSESS BUDGET CUTS HAVE
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THE CONTENT OF
THIS DOCUMENT

21 October 2013

DATE: 23/5/12

Adrian Fine



**Pension
Liberation
Update**

Pension Liberation – a message from HM Revenue & Customs

Pension liberation is on the increase with promoters using increasingly more sophisticated liberation models to encourage taxpayers to put their hard-earned pension savings at risk through liberation.

Over the last year HMRC has formed part of a multi agency government task force working closely to warn individuals about the consequences of pension liberation and to address growing industry concern.

Current work

We have an active programme to tackle all attempted misuse or abuse of the pension tax rules and are taking firm action to deter and pursue those who promote pension liberation schemes.

We have improved the way we gather, review and use intelligence and are working in real time to spot patterns and trends linked to liberation promoters. We continue to liaise closely with the pension industry to identify potential liberation activity. This has enabled us to successfully pursue tax charges where unauthorised payments have been made as a result of pension liberation activity.

We are proactively liaising with scheme administrators at an early stage and won't hesitate to de-register pension schemes where the rules are not adhered to.

HMRC is taking firm action and applying tax charges wherever there is abuse of pension tax relief – but it is far more important that individuals recognise the dangers of entering into these schemes and don't put their retirement savings at risk in the first place. We want to ensure that individuals with pension savings are protected so that those savings are available to provide an income for the individual later in their life.

We continue to educate individuals and scheme administrators about pension liberation and have published information on our website to create greater awareness about the tax consequences of liberating pension savings.

In addition, HMRC has made changes to strengthen processes around new applications to register a pension scheme for tax relief.

We have moved away from a 'process now, check later' approach so that scheme registration will no longer be confirmed on successful submission of the online form. This will allow us to conduct a more detailed risk assessment before a decision is made on whether the scheme can be registered.

One of HMRC's functions is to protect the integrity of the tax relief afforded to pension savings. Increasing pension liberation activity is putting the integrity of this tax relief at risk. Transfers between pension schemes are a key component of pension liberation arrangements.

To protect the integrity of the tax relief afforded to pension savings, HMRC has revised the process for responding to requests for confirmation of the registration status of the receiving scheme. Under this new process we will respond to requests for confirmation of the registration status without seeking consent from the receiving scheme.

However HMRC will only provide confirmation where the receiving scheme is registered and the information held by HMRC does not indicate a significant risk that the scheme was set up, or is being used, to facilitate pension liberation. Otherwise, a response will be issued setting out the conditions in which we will confirm registration status and explain that one or both of the conditions are not satisfied.

The confirmation is provided to assist scheme administrators as part of the checks they carry out when considering whether or not a transfer should be made. Requesting this confirmation should not be the only check carried out and relied upon when deciding whether or not to make a transfer. Further checks should be undertaken.

Next steps

These changes are part of HMRC's continuing strategy to combat pension liberation and ensure pensions tax relief is used appropriately.

"The pensions community must work together to stamp out liberation activity and the changes to HMRC's scheme registration process will create a significant barrier."

The Pensions
Regulator

"We are proactively liaising with scheme administrators at an early stage and won't hesitate to de-register pension schemes where rules are not adhered to"

HM Revenue &
Customs



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& Customs

The Pensions
Regulator

21 October 2013

Pension Liberation – a message from The Pensions Regulator

Retirement savers are being misled by 'introducers' or 'advisers' who use mass marketing techniques like spam text messages, cold calls and website promotions to encourage people to release a proportion of their pension as a lump-sum or loan before age 55.

Individuals are often not aware that a large part of their fund will be deducted as fees, and that there are significant tax consequences for accessing your fund before the law allows. In addition, individuals are not always aware that their remaining pension pot may be transferred into high risk and entirely unsuitable offshore investments which may not provide adequate, or indeed any, benefits on retirement.

A campaign to raise awareness of the scam among pension professionals and consumers was launched by The Pensions Regulator in February, in partnership with other Government, criminal justice and pensions industry bodies.

Action taken

Pension liberation is a complex problem that can only be eradicated through organisations working together effectively. The Pensions Regulator and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) have played a leading role in establishing the 'Project Bloom' task force that brings together government, regulators and criminal justice agencies to stamp out this activity.

Project Bloom is the central hub for sharing intelligence and information so that the appropriate agency can respond to incidences of pension liberation, for example through case investigations or considering whether a policy or communications response is required.

Pension providers and administrators are at the front-line of disrupting pension liberation fraud. In February, the regulator urged them to carry out due diligence when processing transfer requests and to include our Scorpion information leaflet as an insert when issuing transfer packs to pension scheme members.

We also asked providers and administrators to include an awareness leaflet in all their general communications relating to transfer requests and enquiries.

Many firms are now blocking transfers they believe to be suspicious and we welcome the enthusiasm and willingness to tackle the problem that we've seen from the industry.

In terms of enforcement action, City of London Police, supported by the regulator, carried out raids in May this year on a number of call centres in London, Scotland and Cheshire, resulting in several arrests.

The Pensions Regulator is now involved in a number of ongoing High Court cases in a bid to disrupt those liberation models that pose the most risk. The Pensions Regulator has used powers to freeze assets, and independent trustees have been appointed in a number of cases to take control of suspect schemes.

Looking ahead

The regulator is working with DWP to explore whether changes to legislation could help. The regulator held an industry workshop in September to explore the options, attended by providers, stakeholder groups and Government partners, including Pensions Minister Steve Webb.

There were frank, productive discussions about how the rules around pensions transfers might be refined and the regulator will be having further conversations with Government and industry stakeholders in order to decide next steps. However, it is clear that there is no overnight solution or 'quick fix' and it is only by staying vigilant and working closely with the pensions community that we can beat pension liberation.



Pension Liberation Update

"Pension liberation is a complex problem that can only be eradicated through organisations working together effectively."

The Pensions Regulator

"...pension liberation activity is putting the integrity of this tax relief at risk"

HM Revenue & Customs

Useful links

[HMRC website](#)

[The Pensions Regulator website](#)

[Action Fraud website](#)