Individual Submission 121
08/03/2021

My submission in brief is in relation to person who joined Public Service (Garda) after 1995 and who on retirement at 60 are basically restricted from earning any further income, even part-time for mental health benefits without loosing a portion of their pension 13 k approx. These persons may still have mortgages and children at school and have no scope to boost their income. They are discriminated against insofar as they can not remain in employment after 60 years of age and owing to the mental and physical nature of the job, and possibly rightly so.

I am unsure even if the supplementary pension is guaranteed for persons who have to retire from Gardai prior to 66 years of age.

I feel it is unfair that a person who has broken PRSI contributions (working life started when 16 or 17 years and then were say paying class B C or D stamps and who later commenced paying class A contributions are penalised when it comes to calculations for state pension in comparison to someone whose working life commenced here in Ireland at 56 for example and make 10 years contribution and are entitled to full state pension. I don't see the rationale behind this. Why should someone who choose to get a part-time job when they were 18 years of age and make class A contributions be treated less fairly that the 18 year old who choose to remain unemployed.

Thank You

--

[redacted]

Individual Submission 122
02/03/2021

I saw an advert looking for suggestions on the future of the State Pension system in Ireland. While I do believe this needs to be addressed I think a good starting point would be to examine how other countries have dealt with the issue of a population living longer and the pension pot not adjusting to meet the increased demand.

Rather then asking citizens to come up with suggestions maybe it would be better if we had a base to work from, outline how other countries have adapted and look for feedback on these systems, otherwise we are working from a blank sheet. Obviously there is still the opportunity that people can make specific suggestions.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Individual Submission 123
02/03/2021

General Observations:
The terms of reference are quite specific and narrow. Sustainability seems to be defined in such a way that perpetuates current thinking i.e. that those working today by their contributions support those currently on State pensions. The argument then is reduced to seeing how those currently working, and who enjoyed a much greater investment in their education by the State, will support the pensions needs of those who worked expecting to retire at 65 having funded the prolonged education of the next generation. The argument is fundamentally flawed and unfair to those now approaching the traditional pensionable age.

Specific Proposal relating to the pension age, sustainability, and the questions of carers and others outside the State pension at present:

New concepts:
1. **Universal Basic Income Advanced Years (UBIAY)** is a payment for all those who reach the age of 65. It replaces the jobseekers for 65s and is equivalent to the jobseekers' allowance plus €20 to distinguish it from the jobseekers' allowance. This is payable to all who are 65 AND have 1.retired, or 2. are working part time, or 3.those who work as carers and other categories of persons identified and named by the Minister for Social Protection in Statutory Instruments, as deemed appropriate. This comes into immediate effect.

2. **Universal Basic Income Advanced Years Plus (UBIAYPLUS)** is a payment for those who reach the age of 68 years and who qualify and comes into effect in 2030. This is an amount equal to the contributary state pension.

Entitlements and Legislation:
1. **Up to 2030:** State pension from 66, no change. Employers are encouraged to replace 65 years ceiling contracts with an option to work full time or reduced hours up to age 70. Those opting to retire at 65 receive UBIAY. Legislation required to make it illegal to oblige workers to retire before the current pensionable age (currently 66).

2. **From 2030:** Those aged 65 to 68 have legally imposed option to work full or part time or retire. Legislation required to impose the option of working up to 70. Those retiring receive UBIAY and move to UBIAYPLUS at 68. Those working part time also receive UBIAY and their part time salary from employer as do other groups identified by Minister in Statutory Instrument. They also continue to build up qualifications for UBIAYPLUS. Those age 68 to 70 have the option to continue working full or part

time until 70. All those who qualify receive the UBIAYPLUS at age 68. Those who do not qualify receive UBIAY only.

Qualifications:
Qualifications for the (Contributory) State Pension (and consequently for UBIAYPLUS) need to be reviewed. It is suggested that the services of the Pension Commission are retained specifically to make recommendations on this. The time allowed for this present Pension Commission to report is too tight to deal comprehensively with this. It's part of a broader debate. The margin between UBIAY and the (Contributory) State Pension or UBIAYPLUS is deliberately reduced so as to minimize the money foregone in the meantime by those who may qualify under a review. Backdating adjustments is also an option.

Cost to the State:
If people continue to work full or part time beyond 65 and up to 70, they make a contribution to the State not only in income tax, but in the wealth generated by their work, and by their effective demand and VAT contributions by virtue of their longer participation in the workforce. It is disingenuous and incorrect to assume otherwise. Those who do not participate directly in the workforce beyond 65 often play a vital social role which saves the State in real terms. The traditional model of accounting is not appropriate. It should also be noted, in a post COVID period of economic recovery its likely too that there will be a net saving in Social Protection if a portion of those aged 65+ have their jobs transferred to those of much greater financial liability as their age demographic and household composition and other circumstances will suggest. Using over simplified models will yield the wrong answer, and this is a real concern.
Giving people the option to continue working while at the same time supporting those whose disposition and circumstances is otherwise will yield a fairer society, and likely a significant portion continuing to participate in the workforce well beyond 65. Longer life expectations work on averages , and the State must recognise difference and accommodate it.

The proposals made here recognise the desire of people to participate in the world and the need to be productive, while at the same time facilitating and respecting that we are not all the same and circumstances vary in advanced years. Allowing people to be productive will reduce the burden on the State of imposed retirement of those capable of continuing to contribute.
ENDS
02/03/2021
[redacted]

Individual Submission 124
03/03/2021

Submission - Pensions Commission

Payment of State Pension

The State Pension should be paid to those who are required to retire at age 65 on their contract of employment.

The rate should be the State Pension rate and not Jobseekers Rate if the applicant has the qualifying contributions for the Full State Pension There should not be a separate payment for those retiring at 65 (referring to DEASP recent change to payment of jobseekers to eliminate requirement to be jobseeker) The State Pension should be calculated and paid pro-rata over 30 years and not 40 i.e. 15 years equates to 1/2 pension

Working beyond retirement age

Many people dont wish to retire at 65 or even 66. There should be a provision for them to continue to work paying a reduced rate stamp and also reducing their State Pension proportionately. e.g. earnings of varying thresholds paid x or y amount but continuing to make it marginally financially attractive to continue working if they wish to do so. The social impact of this will provide economic value to the state in terms of health and wellbeing.

Self Employed

Many self employed will have had their earnings reduced below €5000 threshold required to pay social insurance. Many will be advised by their financial advisors that they do not need to pay Class S PRSI in 2020 and 2021. In this regard self employed should be give a social insurance waiver for 2020 and 2021 due to COVID so that their record is not broken.

Thank you

[redacted]

[redacted]

Individual Submission 125
03/03/2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am grateful for the chance to express concern regarding future State Pension age. As I am 58 years old and the main carer to both my [redacted] year old disabled daughter and my disabled [redacted] year old husband we are gravely concerned about our future. My husband is unable to work due to a [redacted] injury and our daughter was born with [redacted] Syndrome and a physical disability. She will never live independently and has the mental age of a 5 year old. My husband in particular worries constantly about the uncertainty of what is going to happen to our State Pension as we will be totally dependent on it as we were never financially able to afford a private pension. [redacted] on top of his physical inability to work. I had to give up working many years ago to look after our daughter and now also my husband who loved going to work. I hope carers like myself will be remembered favorably.We would be grateful if you could consider people like us and our circumstances when decisions are being made.

Most Sincerely

[redacted]

Individual Submission 126
03/03/2021

[redacted]
I believe there should be no change in the retirement age

Individual Submission 127
03/03/2021

Dear Sir.

As some one who has worked almost 40 years and took early retirement, I like many of my colleagues are upset at the planned increase in pension age. Part of my pension payment is made up by a supplement payable up to age 65.The private occupational pension fund was funded on this basis and cannot be altered. This represents approx 12000 euros per year. The expectation was that at 65 the state pension would apply. Having made contributions and PRSI contributions for so long the expectation of a modest pension is now in doubt. Changing a promisary contract of this nature is very damaging to public confidence. We have only one working life where we paid for our retirement years. Cutting the retirement age or benefits is unfair.

My expectation is to receive the promised pension at age 65.

Many thanks.

[redacted]

[redacted]

P. S. Its interesting to note that there are no plans in train to amend the age at which pensions are payable to Politicians, Civil or Public Service retirees.

Individual Submission 128
03/03/2021

[redacted]

March 3, 2021

The Pensions Commission
Aras Mhic Diarmada
Store Street
Dublin 1

Dear Sirs,

The sustainability of the Irish Pensions System

My view is that the scaremongering that persistently surrounds the sustainability of the Irish Pensions System is entirely misplaced for the following reasons:

1. It stems from a view that the world is standing still and that demographics do not respond to changing circumstances.

2. Even if gaps develop in the labour force they will be filled from external sources – witness the role currently played by our Eastern European friends and colleagues in various sectors of the Irish Economy.

3. Our schools are bursting at the seams so Ireland can look forward with confidence to a new generation of a highly educated workforce that will be progressively more productive from generation to generation.

4. Even if the Age Dependency ratio does creep up, where is the economic evidence that GNP will be inversely related to a rising age structure?

5. As GNP is at least likely to remain constant through technological change and greater productivity and innovation, the real answer will be in finding ways to redistribute the Nation's wealth in a sustainable way.

6. Over concentration on the Age Dependency ratio also fails to see the big picture which should be viewed through the TOTAL Dependency Ratio – taking account of not just numbers of people in various Age groups but levels of productivity and savings in areas such as security (I expect the incidence of thuggery among octogenarians is quite small!).

Rather than wringing our hands over questionable theories about the sustainability of our modest levels of Social Protection, we should seek to develop ways in which we can offer our retiring population levels of secure retirement incomes commensurate with our developed European Neighbours where, as a percentage of Average Industrial Wages retirees enjoy State or Collectively Insured levels of retirement incomes that are about 70% of the Average Industrial Wage as compared to the Irish State Pension which is just about half that.

I have a simple and perfectly equitable solution which takes due account of the changing Private Sector pensions landscape in Ireland whereby, over a generation, Defined Benefit Pension Schemes will be replaced by Defined Contribution Arrangements. The transfer of risk to employees which is an inherent element of Defined Contribution Pension Arrangements is a well trodden path and there is no point in dwelling on that issue in this brief Paper.

My simple suggestion is that when a person reaches State Pension Age he or she should have a VOLUNTARY OPTION to purchase Supplementary Social Welfare Pension up to a prescribed monetary limit which would equate to the prevailing rate of State Pension (Contributory).

The Supplementary Social Welfare Pension (SSWP) would be paid in unison with the normal rate and subject to the same payment conditions (weekly and indexed linked). It would be priced by reference to a real yield of 4% per annum – broadly in line with a long term Equity Risk Premium). It would be offered in units of €10 per week so that people with modest amounts of Defined Contribution pots or Additional Voluntary Contributions could purchase modest amounts of SSWP and enjoy the convenience of receiving their weekly combined basic State Pension and their SSWP.

If one is prepared to see the bigger picture, all this is doing is giving Irish retirees an opportunity to enjoy a level of secure retirement income commensurate with that of our European neighbours. It would be a near perfect example of a Public/Private/Partnership in the sense that the Private Sector looks after the retiree's savings up to the point of retirement at which stage some or all could be used to secure a State Guaranteed SSWP at any level up to but not exceeding the prescribed monetary limit.

Despite arguments to the contrary, there can be no issue as regards the State involvement in the Annuity Market; within a European context this would be entirely justifiable on grounds of Social Protection.

In a macroeconomic context there can be no credibility to the argument that the State cannot get involved in issuing individual Index Linked annuities. Every time a

Public Sector employee retires the Government issues an Index Linked annuity at present which is entirely funded on a pay as you go basis by the tax paying public. My proposed system is an extension of this principle which would enable Private Sector retirees (and indeed Public Sector retirees to the extent that they have a Defined Contribution pot or AVCs) a modicum of the security for part of their retirement income commensurate with that enjoyed by Public Sector retirees – the essential difference being that the retiree pays up front for the privilege.

In times of very low Bond Yields, of course my system offers preferential value to retirees, but so what; it is justifiable on the grounds of Social Protection. It is also consistent with the principle that has long been enshrined in the An Post State Savings Schemes whereby preferential deposit/bond rates are available to the general public UP TO PRESCRIBED MONETARY INVESTMENT LIMITS. Just like the An Post system, my proposal would be a continuous source of Retail Funding for the Government – significantly rising over time as Defined Contribution Pension Schemes begin to reach increasing levels of maturity.

I hope you will regard my submission as in some way constructive. It is deliberately devoid of excessive detail as my intention is to concentrate on issues of principle for due consideration by the Commission.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Individual Submission 129
02/03/2021

Current Situation : The State Pension enables older people to age with some dignity, independence and helps to keep them out of poverty. The State Pension is particularly important to the majority of people in the private sector employment who have no private pension arrangements. It is administered very efficiently by the State. The current eligibility is very fair - the more beneficial of the current yearly Average Method OR the Aggregated Contributions Method (very similar to the proposed Total Contributions Approach - TAC).

My Concerns:

1. TRANSITIONAL MEASURES.

I would be very concerned if the State Pension is decided solely by the Total Contributions Approach (TAC) as this could result in significantly reduced pensions for certain pensioners. ie For a pensioner currently with an average of 20 years contributions gets €211.40. a week but under the proposed TAC calculations would only receive €124.15. a week. This is a very big issue for people who are now now in their late 50's or early 60's who are now close to retirement age . No government should be able to change the rules of the game that would seriously negatively affect a group of people for the rest of their life.

2. 40 YEARS / 30 YEARS REQUIREMENT for FULL PENSIONS.

I also consider that the 40 year requirement for a full pension under TAC to be a very high bar. It should be noted that 30 years was recommended by the National Pensions Framework Report in 2010. People increasingly live more complex lifes - jobs for life will become less common into the future-people travel abroad- people become ill-people take time out for whatever reason- people spend more time in education etc. If 40 years was the current requirement for existing pensioners then a lot of pensioners would be receiving considerable smaller pensions- this would not be a desirable outcome in my opinion.

3. SELF EMPLOYED

The self employed have only been in the PRSI system since 1988 and therefore no self- employed person could meet the 40 years requirement.

All the above problems could be resolved by offering pensioners a CHOICE of using the existing Averaging rule or the TAC rules.

4. Pension for Carers. The State Pension system should allow for a system to pay those people who have provided care to citizens who need full time care. The State might have to draw up special rules for this group.

SUGGESTIONS TO FINANCE THE STATE PENSION INTO THE FUTURE.

- Increase PRSI contributions on a gradual basis over a number of years.

-Requirement to pay PRSI on income irrespective of age

- Standardise tax relief on private pensions.

I hope that these views are helpful.

[redacted]

Individual Submission 130
03/03/2021

Dear Sirs and Madams,

I want to make some comments on this both from the private taxpayer viewpoint funding the system, and also as a potential user of the State Contributory Pension:

1. People are living longer. For those who have contributed to the PRSI system they expect to be able to retire and to take a pension based on contributions. It is for many people a long term planning horizon (40 years), and not one that can be adjusted on a whim at short notice. Many of us in the private sector believe that we have a 40 year contract with the State, and do not appreciate that the State may want to unilaterally change that contract. The time of retirement will for many of us be dictated by our work contracts, or our physical or mental ability to do our job as we get older. So being able to work longer may work for some people but not all, and must be optional. For those that want to retire at the normal 65 age that should remain an option, and old age pensions should be payable from that point. It was insulting for many people to be asked to sign on the dole as an interim from age 65 to 66 rather than simply recognize that a person is retired at age 65 and should get the old age pension (contributory or non-contributory) from that age.

2. There is a rapid growth in the number of pensioners year on year over the next 30 years, projected to almost double. The current system of funding for the Social Insurance Fund is inadequate, and will rapidly need additional and rising funding each year. Pension funding is a long term commitment, and should not be confused nor mixed into the same fund used to pay e.g. short term illness cover. This state pension fund deserves to be planned and saved for, and not to need additional top ups each year from governmental income due to deliberate under funding. This pension fund should be built up into a fund that is actuarialy sufficient to be able to pay out all projected pensions. Separate out all the pension monies into a ring-fenced fund that cannot be dipped into by any government in office on the day, and manage this pension fund professionally and relatively conservatively.

3. There must be no repeat of government dipping into the pension capital of privately owned pension funds as has happened during the last economic crisis in Ireland. This would be detrimental in building confidence in the population that pensions are all our responsibility and we must plan individually and collectively, because if we do not do that, and save, then we inevitably fall back on the State.

4. People must be encouraged to save for their own old age, and its important that all stakeholders respect that this is a long term activity and sometimes it is not

possible to replace if diverted. Either you save through private pension funds, or State backed schemes e.g. PRSI.

5. Saving for pensions is a responsibility of all workers, and all should contribute sufficiently. The public sector contribution to their pensions must be increased so that their pensions can be genuinely funded without being too large a draw on the monthly income of the State. These personal contributions should be tax relieved. The typical State support for public sector pensions should be no more than would be paid by a private sector company e.g. State pays 5% of the employees salary and employee pays the remainder as per actuarial calculations.

6. The current "tax relief" available for saving in private sector pensions is a form of tax deference, not real tax relief. The capital threshold is currently set at Euro 2.0 million, which is insufficient capital to be able to pay some of the actual state employees' pensions. It is important for society to be seen to operate in an equitable way. Whatever money is saved through this "tax relief" mechanism is just putting off tax payments to later years on pension drawdown. So suggest raising this capital value limit to Euro 2.5 million for tax purposes for private pensions, and for equality use the same max capital value for calculations of all state and public sector pensions. So irrespective of what the public sector salary is there would be a max payout on the pension based on the max capital value. Where a person held multiple jobs over years the max capital value used for pension payout would remain the same for any one individual person.

7. It must be remembered that public sector employees have secure tenure of employment with none of the risks inherent in private sector employment. Pension payouts for public sector employees should be based on the salaries of those employees at the time of leaving employment, and should have no linkage to the pay of anyone else doing those roles at any future date, nor any increases in salaries paid to current job holders.

8. Any adjustments upwards of public sector pensions should be based on a transparent CPI calculation, and restricted to what the pension fund can bear. This is key to making pensions affordable and sustainable. For example it is astonishing to many of us that during the pandemic when up to 650,000 people are out of work that public sector workers are getting pay increases, and increases in linked pensions, which can only be paid for by private sector workers. We need both public and private sector workers to be in harmony, but there is an increasing divergence where the risks are higher and the pay is lower in the private sector which is not dominated by large unions.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Individual Submission 131
03/03/2021

Pensions Commission Submission – a case study

I am a single female, with no dependents. I was born in 1963.

I started work in 1981, aged 17.

I took a break from full-time employment in 1987 for five years, during which I funded my own third level education through savings and part time work. I received no third level grant of any description.

I resumed full time work in [redacted] 1992 and have been working continuously since then. I pay PRSI and Income Tax at the higher rates.

I contribute to a private pension scheme which is a defined contribution scheme. The pension payable at retirement age will be determined by the ups and downs of the stock market and, on its own, will not be sufficient to keep me out of poverty. Having paid into this pension for 20 years, the most recent report of the scheme showed the scheme is valued at €7,000 less than the contributions paid into it. The cost to the exchequer of the tax relief I have received on my contributions is approx €40,000.

For the past eight/ten years, I have chosen to forego the possible tax relief I could get from paying additional voluntary contributions to the private pension scheme in favour of buying Savings Bonds in the Post Office. I do this because (a) I am sure of what will be there to draw down when I retire and (b) I am not paying investment fees for something that performs poorly. As a result of doing this I pay almost €1,000 per month in income tax.

In 2029, I will be 66. At that point I will have worked full time for 42 years and will have paid 2,184 PRSI Class A contributions (I will have additional contributions from part-time work which I have not included).

I believe my expectation of retiring at age 66 is not unreasonable and neither do I believe it to be unreasonable to expect to receive a State Contributory Pension at that time, as opposed to the €45 per week less which is payable on the Benefit Payment for 65 year olds (which in the event of increasing the State Pension Contributory qualifying age to 67 and then 68 will inevitably have to be extended to cover the gap period for people that will arise at the end of their working lives).

Perhaps one of the ways of funding the State Pension into the future would be to examine the cost of the current practice of giving tax relief to those of us who pay into private defined contribution pension schemes. Research has been published on this topic.

Given the performance of monies invested in these schemes, and the lack of transparency of the calculation of fees paid for their administration and management, the state is merely propping up the insurance industry at a high cost. This system is not succeeding in providing a secure retirement for the majority.

The monies saved from revising this practice could be diverted into the social insurance fund and be used to pay a State Contributory Pension that would do more than merely "protect people from poverty" by giving a reasonable standard of living. This would give greater certainty/security to people as they approach retirement age.

I would happily divert what I am paying into my private pension scheme, and more, into a defined benefit scheme underwritten by the State in order to provide for my retirement. I would have welcomed the option of doing this at an earlier stage of my working life and I would certainly have done this in preference to paying into the private insurance scheme I pay into.

Thank you for reading my submission.
[redacted] 3/3/2021

Individual Submission 132
08/03/2021

Dear sir or madam, Thank you for the chance to give my views on pensions.. I am a 59 year old woman caring for my [redacted] year old daughter.. She is severely mentally and physically disabled, [redacted].. I started working at 16 when she was born I continued working part time jobs.. When she was 20 I had to give up work completely.. My mam who used to mind her couldn't manage her any longer.. Since then I am on carer's allowance.. I am terrified when the comes when I am 66 I will get no pension.. When I am 66 I wont be able to care for her.. I should be looking to find her a nice residential community home for her future but then I will face poverty with no full pension.. Please think of us carers when we reach pension age.. We have given our lives to care for our loved ones.. All we ask in our later years is peace and rest and a pension like other workers.. Believe me we work hard 24/7..7 days a week..year after year..... Help us...

Thank you [redacted]

Individual Submission 133
04/03/2021

I suggest that that everyone should pay in towards a state pension by making a contribution based on their rate of earnings but the mechanisms for contributing towards a state pension need to be simplified. As the profiles of careers are changing it's important that individuals can take more charge and make contributions even at times when they're self employed, taking breaks, between jobs I.e. travelling or taking time out for child rearing. This could be facilitated by contributing towards your own pot by adding spare money or windfalls too. Through online banking Making contributions would be straight forward . Taking individual responsibility towards making up your own pension would incentivise staying in some form of employment throughout a pre retirement lifetime and it would also provide more funds for government funds for state investment. In line with these new arrangements, contributory state pensions would rise against non-contributory ones and be fairer towards the goal of having a 'working' population of 18- 67 year olds. It would also be fairer towards women who often take 'time out' for child rearing and then miss out on pension contributions when they come to retirement age.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Individual Submission 134
04/03/2021

Josephine Feehily
Pensions Commission
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada
Store Street
Dublin 1

D01 WY03

Re : Pensions Commission Submission

Dear Ms Feehily,

I believe that my current personal circumstances encapsulates many of the issues that need to be addressed by the Pensions Commission.

I expect that you will recommend raising the age at which citizens qualify for the contributory old age pension. However, this cannot be implemented as a unilateral measure, it needs to be linked with an entitlement to stay at work until pensionable age is reached, whatever level that may be set at. It is inequitable that retirement would be compulsory at age 65, while state pension entitlements only arise 3-5 years later.

Even an option to continue working beyond 65 in itself will not resolve the countries pensions issue, as many will not be physically or mentally able to stay at work until 69-70.

What support will the state give to anyone who has, by virtue of failing mental and physical health, be unable to continue working from, say, early 60's onwards ? How will someone in such circumstances survive from age 64 to 69, for example ? I am in that position.

I started working and contributing SWI / PRSI A1 contributions over 46 years ago in 1975, and have long since exceeded the maximum weekly contributions of 2,040. However, as I spent some time sporadically working overseas in the last few years, I do not qualify for a single cent of any state benefit because of the "2 Year Look Back Rule", other than the contributory old age pension, which should be payable from next November when I reach age 66 – unless the Commission decides to defer this to a higher age.

Although I reached 65 last November, and I am still working in a short term contract until next May, I have absolutely no means to qualify for any single benefit from the state between now and pension age, despite my long track record of contributions. How is this fair and equitable ? How is possible that I lose all benefits after paying the full contributions for all those years ? What will the Commission do to address this issue for me and others in a similar position ?

Regards,
[redacted]

[redacted]

Individual Submission 135
04/03/2021

[redacted]

People reaching 65yrs should be entitled to full pension and not put on €203 for a year.

Individual Submission 136
04/03/2021

Good afternoon,

I received your instagram ad from the department of social protection asking for our views on pensions in ireland.

As a dual citizen, born in Ireland, lived in Australia for 10 years from 2007 - 2017, I understand what a poor setup looks like (Ireland) and a well thought through approach (Australia). I returned home to give business a go here with my new family as it is my birth country but the poor pension and health systems really stood out as two areas we really just need to replicate systems that work. Basically I don't think we need to reinvent the wheel here. The challenges facing the Australian people in retirement are the same as what Irish people will face. An opt out system is a cope out really.

In 1992, the Keating government made superannuation compulsory to ensure that every working Australian saved for their retirement. The policy aimed to address the challenge of retirement income in three ways:

1. mandatory employer contributions to super funds

2. more contributions to super funds and other investments

3. a means-tested, government-sponsored age pension.

With all these measures in place, the government hoped that every Australian would have a financially secure life in retirement. Having worked there for 10 years I understand your pension just builds up regardless of you observing it. It means not only wealthy people end with a good retirement, it means everybody has something at the end. The job market and economy seemed to self correct when this new norm was introduced. What I mean by this is that those on lower incomes here need what they get to get by. In Australia this is also the case but the difference is there 9% super is on top of their salary. When discussing roles and employment people discuss the take home salary and the assumption is it is plus super, it is assumed and a given. From my time there it was possibly the single most amazing difference I noticed between Ireland and Australia.

I am guessing it might not happen in my lifetime, if anything it will be too late for my generation who did not start a pension. I believe it should not be an opt out system. I believe it should be based on a system that clearly works.

Best of luck with it.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Individual Submission 137
09/03/2021

This is the submission of [redacted], private citizen

I understand clearly that this consultation refers only to the State Contributory and State Non-contributory pensions, but as the Exchequer pays the latter and sometimes the former, I consider the first point relevant and important.

a) It is outrageous that the exchequer pays out a lump sum to public servants on retirement. Public servants have secure jobs and pensions. The idea that at 65, or 70 in the future possibly, they are to be presented with sums like €120,000 to a retiring teacher at a time when their mortgages are paid and their children done for, while the state struggles to pay the state pension is scandalous. The system should end.

b) It appeared to become in recent years the default position that a €5 increase in the state pension would happen in each budget . This should not be. Increases should be a response only to a rise in living costs.

c) Consideration should be given to abolishing the centenarian bounty and the Presidential expenses it takes saved. The cost itself is not really the point, but it might help to emphasise to the public the ageing demographic and the problem it poses by pointing to it as no longer an exceptional rarity.

I am unclear if further contact details than my email address are necessary. If so please let me know.

Individual Submission 138
05/03/2021

Hi all,
I'm approaching my last year in my twenties, other than the fact I'm working in the industry I probably would not have considered a pension as I didn't realise the importance. As a financial advisor I try to raise this importance to my friends who are currently busy living 'their best lives' and scoff at the fact I even consider mentioning a pension when we've a drink in hand! This is society today. We are aware of that.
Really the publication on pension and pension planning is bland and a struggle to read if you are not in the industry. Therefore, how can you blame anyone for not understanding the importance of future saving.
Due to prior years of malpractice and lack of compliance, it makes selling for me quite difficult as you can imagine. All the parents that lost trust and got burnt, their children are who I am talking to now, without trying to sound like a sleazy salesperson. You see, the insurance industry has a reputation. Life Insurance, in fairness is a little better than general, but nonetheless, the past has made my job effort. Anyway, I digress...
The state pension as it currently stands is unsustainable. The government has published much detailed information on this. Remember that pension reform document – a hard one to read. I've attempted to finish it several times. Again, I'm in the industry so, anyone outside of the industry – good luck to them. I suppose, finishing that reform document remained on my list of things to do – it's on my bedside locker...
(You know where I'm going with this..)
At this stage, that thought is fairly defeating. Why may you wonder?
Well, agreed actions such as the increase to age 67 have been pushed back. Baffling right? The government was the one publishing the unsustainable nature of the scheme.
That's like a smoker saying they're going to quit for their health but then keeping up the alcohol cigarettes.... You're foolin' no one pal
This decision was weak and clearly obvious that the government is trying to gain/ retain votes. Anecdotally (and a little professionally), I'm aware there was outcry – mostly from the ICS on this increase in age. *"We can't be signing on..."*
I'm selecting (maybe unfairly) out a specific cohort but you get my drift, and this cohort normally comes with a guaranteed pensions regardless. The one or two year wait for the state pension, if unaffordable, is a decision that needs to be discussed in that particular household – "*Can I actually afford to retire now?"*
This is not one for the government to decide (or rather undecide).
Now.

What do we do down the line? When people of similar age to myself (20/30/40) haven't still considered a pension or future savings.. What do we do when they are approaching retirement and hoping to bank on the state.
Where's that fund? – somebody else's problem? Or is there an obligation on those in this role now to protect the future of this pot?
We come to auto-enrolment, (or do we – where is that gone?)
Contributions here although SO small, at least are a start. I often say to clients looking to start a pension that procrastination is the biggest hurdle. But every month you procrastinate, is a month of savings lost <- You know what I mean?!
C'mon lads, you've a chance to change things here.

1. Get it going. Tear down the bureaucratic restrictions. 2020 has displayed fully this can be done with the correct motivation behind it.
2. Stop pushing back agreed targets. They were conservative anyway.
3. Up your game on public communications, get in a marketing agency. People like funny, understandable and relevant information. The 56 page publications should stay in the industry and for government – at least we're paid to read them.

I mean, look the less you do the more potential for me to make sales on the back of the incompetence, but really looking at my friends. I like these guys and want to be enjoying life with them in retirement.
Many thanks,

Kind regards,
[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Individual Submission 139
05/03/2021

Dear sir or madam,

I believe in supplementing the State Pension with increased contributions to PRSI. I am 65 this year and was very happy to contribute to the AVC scheme when it was available but as it was managed by private financial institutions I lost my total contributions in 1 year due to the financial crash & decided to cease contributions.

The current AMRF scheme is very unsatisfactory as it seems to be established to provide employment for financial institutions, due to the high fees charged, the options provided for investing being high risk as I've lost €20,000+ of my pot to a fraudulent scheme in Germany managed by Wealth Options [Trustees Limited] in Ireland and negative interest charged by the Bank of Ireland if funds are not invested. The current regulations require that I am in receipt of €12,700 per annum before I can access my AMRF which is dwindling daily. I am therefore relying on the State Pension for income and access to my AMRF.

My case is an example of why we need a comprehensive State Pension scheme underwritten by the State for citizens going forward.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Individual Submission 140
06/03/2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

Due to severe cuts in the services for my now 32 year old severely disabled daughter, in 2010, I had to retire from the public service.

I also had to work part time in order to care for her as a legally separated woman.

I now at the age of 65 this year , am receiving a reduced pension.

I am financially okay at the moment due to receiving the Carers Allowance.

However should I be unable to care for anymore or should she pass away(she is just home having spent 4 weeks very seriously ill in [redacted] Hospital), I would find it very hard to survive on my work pension.

I feel as I have dedicated so my years of my life to caring and could only work reduced works in the public service that I should also get some state pension in recognition of this work.

And not left in the autumn of my life with financial worries.

Regards

[redacted]

Individual Submission 141
06/03/2021

A Chara,
I welcome the chance afforded to me by your good office that allows me to "have my say" in the work of the commission on pension. As a man who worked from the age of fourteen until the age of sixty five years of age only to be put in Limbo for another 365 days on job seekers benefit, an insult perpetrated by politics not engagement .
Please allow me to share my thoughts with you, I know that there is a determination by government to implement legislation to move the State Pension qualifying age to 67 years, I was part of the movement that prevented your plans by lobbying candidates who knocked on my door during the 2020 National Elections .
I will continue to support the "Stop67 Campaign" I know the campaign will continue, I will continue working with the thousands opposed to the State Pension moving to 67 years of age.
I ask you in your debilaritions over the next months, to park up 67, and look down another road, by implementing a "Living State Pension" starting at the age of 65, the menial payment afforded to people when they reach 65 years, and the pennies added at 66 years of age, are an insult and should be removed.
Also consider in your debilaritions removing the mandatory retirement age of 65, and allow people in the Private Sector, the choice of remaining active in their employment until they reach the age of 70.
Remove the stigma between Contributory, and Non Contributory, it is blatant discrimination, your commission should do so before you debilarate on any other element of your work, as a level playing field has to be established before your work begins.
Trusting you will give the above some consideration.
Regards
[redacted]

Individual Submission 142
07/03/2021

Good morning,

I would like these points to be considered, that women stop being penalised, and those who work part time from a young age to support themselves through school and university are not penalised.

Under current rules, as I worked part time from 17 years old, I.e. didn't work 52 weeks of the year, and though I paid stamps and continue to work now full time, I will receive less pension than someone who only works full time for the last x years of their life. Surely that cannot be fair? If I work for 50 years and someone for 10 or 20 yet I receive less because the equation to calculate is diluted by the number of years I worked rather than taking all the years I contributed 48 stamps or more and using that?

I am also a mother, and believe it is still more challenging for women to access the state pension they are entitled to.

I would also like to understand that as a now public servant, who has joined the hse in [redacted] at the age of 42, that my state pension may be absorbed by my hse pension and if I do not get a permanent role in the public service I am penalised for that too. Fyi I am on a fixed term contract.

Regards,

[redacted]

Individual Submission 143
07/03/2021

I would like to say that retirees should not have an either or pensions!!

I receive widows pension as I am widowed.

But I am not entitled to the old age pension even though I was contributing towards it as a HSE employee.

This I think is grossly unfair.

Ministerial TD's are given a pension even if they only serve for a short period as Government ministers on huge salaries. Travel expenses are also claimed on ridiculous grounds.

I paid my income taxes, was levied on my pension contributions, paid into a Universal Social Charge only to be told that I was not entitled to an old age pension.

This is discriminatory.

With regards,
[redacted]

Individual Submission 144
07/03/2021

Hi my name is [redacted].

The whole subject of pensions for life time / long term carers need to be looked at, especially in regard to making them contributory pensions.

My wife was a high earner that had to leave the workforce over a decade ago because our daughter was born who has profound special needs.

She has worked harder than any high ranking position she ever held, and saved the state hundreds of thousands in critical care at this stage. She is a key worker in this state and pensions need to reflect that.

Modern care settings in the home can be like mini hospitals and the work taking place 24hr in these settings needs to be recognised and valued across the state. One way of ending discrimination, of recognising and valuing the critical state saving work being done is to reflect same in pensions and not leave them poor in old age because they could not actually even leave their house, without both a nurse and carer being present while their gone (loco parentis rule).

Kind regards
[redacted]

Individual Submission 145
07/03/2021

Dear Commission members,

As a husband, father and grandfather of 64 years of age and a tax payer for 48 years I ask you to consider my views on the grossly and disproportionately unfair proposal to increase the old age pension to 67. Over two recessions, the 1980s and 2000s, I have contributed at times 60% of my gross earnings to the Irish economy. This is not a complaint, merely a fact and I consider myself fortunate to have been able to do so. Further, my wife and I provided our own home and two of our children went on to 3rd level education in Ireland and abroad with no state aid in the form of grants. We do not seek glorification for this as we are delighted to have been able to achieve these milestones. I merely point out by way of example our independence in work, in raising our families and our contribution to the running of our country. The suggestion then that my fellow generational colleagues and I, men and women on reaching 65 are to be denied what we consider our pension entitlements is both outrageous and insulting after a lifetimes work.

Think, if you will by comparison, a sitting TD or Minister who after 20 years work is entitled to an index linked gold plated pension for life. No fair society can stand by this injustice where certain sections in society are entitled to such a compensation package – and my fellow sexagenarians and I am not entitled to ours. Is it felt perhaps that they have worked harder, or perhaps contributed more? I do not doubt that many politicians are conscientious and work hard. The truth however is that I and a great deal of my generation have contributed enormously to the economy of this state without complaint – and for far longer than 20 years

The very notion then that when I reach 65, the state will withhold my pension entitlement that I contributed to with seamless contributions for almost 50 years strikes to the core of gross unfairness. It penalises law abiding, tax paying citizens by giving them the equivalent of a 'dole' payment after 50 years of work, which I respectfully point out to you – is very wrong.

I ask you to give due consideration to my expressed points and to refrain from recommending the regressive, unjust, unnecessary and discriminatory proposal of increasing the pension age to 67 against those of us who have consistently contributed to and supported the Irish economy.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Individual Submission 146
07/03/2021

The following ideas are what i would suggest to help the pension timebomb

(i) Need to put an immediate stop on all future increases in the current pension payments. This needs to be mandatory such that however politically unpopular it may be, we have no other choice. No more increases to current pensioners.

(ii) Need to encourage greater personal responsibility through education and simplification of the tax benefits
People don't understand tax relief - (which is the key benefit) so we need to convert the tax relief system into a savings top up - SSIA style

(iii) The tax benefits should apply equally to all - there is no need for high rate and standard rate tax relief. Our tax system favours the high earners - which is all wrong. We should give every one a 50% bonus - for every 2 euro you save we will top it up with 1 euro. Thats a lot simpler and cheaper than the current tax relief for high rate tax payers.

(iv) We need to move away from words like pensions and retirement and move towards savings products with free top ups. In New Zealand they have a pension product known as Kiwi Saver - in Ireland we have a PRSA!! I often wonder what % of the population even know what PRSA stands for?

We need a Shamrock Saver or something along those lines

(4) We now need to set expectations that the future state pension in its current form is not sustainable. This is my suggestion of the transition period

From 2025, the new state pension will be capped at €180 for all those entering the state pension from that date

We need gradually enter people into the pension system - maybe from age 65 to age 70 they get 75% and from age 70 they get 100% of the new state pension

From 2035 onwards - the state pension commences at age 70

From 2045 the state pension commences at age 75 - with 50% payments to those aged between 70 and 75.

To help this transition - we need to help people contribute more immediately to their Shamrock Saver - the top up system on the shamrock saver will get everyone saving.

Shamrock Saver 3 for 2
for every 2 euro you invest , you will get one free
Very easy to build a campaign and creative around this

I'm very happy to contribute more to this debate and flesh out the ideas above

Thanks

[redacted]

Individual Submission 147
09/03/2021

As a recent retiree who is in receipt of the SPC, I welcome this opportunity to add my views to this State Pension Consultation.

Retirement planning is essential. I was unable to get a forecast of my entitlement prior to my retirement, I was told **forecasting** was discontinued and to just apply 3 to 6 months before retirement age. I believe it is a requirement now for pension managers to provide an individual with an annual report on pension entitlements or for an individual to request a report.

Although there is plenty of information on the DEASP website, the **calculation methods are convoluted** and difficult to follow.

Recent changes to the rate bands and retirement age for the State Pension have negatively impacted many people at a vulnerable time. In my own case I ended up in a lower band than I was expecting and I ended up working till my 66th birthday which I had not intended. Changes to a pension scheme that you pay into for decades should not be made in such an ill-considered manner.

Extending the retirement age. Statistically people are living longer but not necessarily healthier which would allow them to work longer. Medical advances have made it more possible to fix people or sustain them with treatments and therapies. The State Pension Scheme should allow a person to receive their state pension at 65 or to continue paying into the scheme till they decide to retire.

For people who are **required to retire before the age of 65** they should receive a percentage of the state pension based on their contributions. Or these people should be allowed to work and pay into the scheme till age 65 or longer.

The state pension scheme should allow a person to **purchase gap years** in their record at a reasonable cost and/or to make **voluntary contribution** to the scheme while working abroad in order for them to maximise their entitlement upon retirement.

People who cannot do paid employment because they are **full time carers, who are ill or have a disability** should be included in the state pension scheme as if they were making weekly contributions.

Financing the State Pension Scheme going forward. My understanding is that there is a proposal for automatic pension enrolment for PAYE workers who are not already members of a scheme and this would be administered by private financial institutions. Also, that the State would form an agency to collect workers contributions and State contributions on behalf of the financial institutions. The employee would pay a percentage of earnings and the State would contribute a percentage also. If this goes ahead, I believe the funds should stay in with the State Treasury and be used to finance the State Pension Scheme with enhanced entitlements for those workers that contribute extra to the scheme. The funds could be used for infrastructure some of which would yield a return or benefit the public at large. The alternative is to give the funds to private financial institutions to invest in schemes which may be unethical, unsustainable and actually work against the interests of workers.

Yours Sincerely,
[redacted]

Individual Submission 148
07/03/2021

Submission to the Pensions Commission: Replace the current PRSI system with an Individual Pension Account
[redacted]

The problems with the present system

- The present system is completely unsustainable. Tinkering with the contribution rates, pension levels or retirement age will not make it sustainable.
- The amount contributed is far too low for the benefits people receive.
- People see no connection between what they put in and what they get out.
- PRSI is seen as "just another tax" so some will go to great lengths to avoid and evade it.

The self-employed problem

- A PAYE worker earning €60,000 a year will have €9,000 (15.05% of their salary) contributed to the Social Insurance Fund.
- A self-employed person earning €60,000 a year, will have a total of €2,400 contributed to the fund.
- A self-employed person earning €60,000 but declaring €20,000 for tax purposes, will contribute €800 to the fund.

This is outrageously unfair to PAYE workers. For almost 4 times the contribution of a self-employed person, they get the same pension.

A contribution of €2,400 a year during a 40 year working life is not enough to pay €13,000 a year to a single person for 30 years of retirement, never mind €24,000 a year for a married couple.

The political problem

Under the current system, the government must make the following decisions:

- What PRSI rate should be contributed.
- What the retirement age should be.
- How much the retirement pension should be.

The short-term horizon of politicians means that they keep the contribution rates too low, the retirement age too low and the OAP rates too high.

Each person should have their own Individual Pension Account into which their PRSI is paid.

The pension which a person receives in retirement should be linked to the *amount* of PRSI contributed by them and on their behalf and not to the number of contributions made or credited.

- The more they contribute, the greater their pension would be in retirement.
- The later they retire, the greater their pension would be.
- A person who contributes €15,000 a year in PRSI would get a much higher pension than someone who contributes €800 a year.

The big advantage of this proposal is that it would be sustainable.

- As the amount paid out is directly linked to the amount paid in, it would be sustainable.
- A deficit would not arise.

The other advantages of this system

- People would understand and appreciate the extremely high cost of pensions.
- They would no longer see PRSI as a tax – as they would see it going into their **Individual Pension Account** and each year, they would get a statement showing the amount in the Account.
- As a result, people would be prepared to contribute more.
- It would remove difficult decisions from politicians.
- People who under-declare their income for tax purposes would be paying less in and so they would end up getting less out.
- It would remove all the complexities and anomalies in the present system.

Dealing with carers

- The Exchequer could contribute directly to each carer's **Individual Pension Account**

The Income Tax system, and not the Social Insurance system, should be used for addressing income inequality.

A criticism of this proposal is that it is regressive as those who earn more, would get more and low paid workers would get less.

And that would be a fair criticism if it were being assessed in isolation.

The PRSI system should not be used for redistributing income. The Income Tax system should serve that purpose.

This system would take many decades to implement fully.

We have had a system for many decades where people contributed far too little to adequately fund the pensions they are getting in retirement and that leaves us with our current unsustainable system.

This huge underfunding cannot be fixed overnight but a start must be made.

The cost of pensions being paid out now could be dramatically reduced by linking the pensions to the amount contributed over the years by the pensioner.

This would result in a lot of existing pensioners having their pensions greatly reduced. It would not result in poverty as most will have income and assets from other sources. Those who have no other income would be entitled to the means-tested non-contributory OAP.

Over time, the contribution rates should be increased to make each person's **Independent Pension Account** adequate.

Individual Submission 149
09/03/2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

It was by chance that I came aware of your Public Consultation request and the short time allowed to make a submission and the following are a few points I would like to make.

1. With the Life Expectancy as indicated in your supporting documents showing in 2016---- 80-for males and 83 for females major decisions will have to be made as it is expected to rise further.
2. The Ratio of Working Age Population from 15--64 is questionable as most people nowadays continue in school until later .

This would question your diagram indicating 1991- 5 Working to 1-pensioner, 2031--3.5 Working to 1 Person and 2051-- 2.3 Working to 1 Person.This would appear to be unsustainable.

3.The current Irish State Pension is €248.30 which is very high by comparison with other countries.

4.The concept of frequent increases in this amount would appear to be unsustainable unless the number of Government Services are reduced or terminated.

5. Legislative changes need to be brought in to address gaps between retirement from work and State pension age.

6. What age do the self employed retire at ?

Some of these points I have made above I would have liked to have had more time to analyse in further depth and I await some queries I made to CSO.

Also it is important that the weaker sections of Society must be protected .

KInd Regards,

[redacted]

Individual Submission 150
08/03/2021

Hi Kasey,

I contacted the Department of Finance regarding Pensions. I told them I was engaging with the Pensions Commission and had suggested that the commission should provide examples of possible changes to the current pension system, that are In place in other jurisdictions as a method of gauging reaction. I did express my surprise to the Department of Finance that the Commission has only provided generic responses and not a response to my specific suggestion. What surprised me more was when Finance said there is already a Consultant document with a range of suggestions that the Government has already commissioned. The Department of Finance immediately sent me a link to this document, it is very long with a lot of detail which I won't have time to go through. Can I make a further suggestion that the commission takes the key points from this existing document, on how a pension system could be repurposed, and provide this to the public, so that it is a starting point to work from on suggestions the public makes.

In case you don't have it here is a link to the Interdepartmental Pensions Reform and Taxation Group's Consultation Document on Pension's Reform.

https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/1533591008-interdepartmental-pensions-reform-and-taxation-group/

Kind regards,
[redacted]

I saw an advert looking for suggestions on the future of the State Pension system in Ireland. While. I do believe this needs to be addressed I think a good starting point would be to examine how other countries have dealt with the issue of a population living longer and the pension pot not adjusting to meet the increased demand.

Rather then asking citizens to come up with suggestions maybe it would be better if we had a base to work from, outline how other countries have adapted and look for feedback on these systems, otherwise we are working from a blank sheet. Obviously there is still the opportunity that people can make specific suggestions.