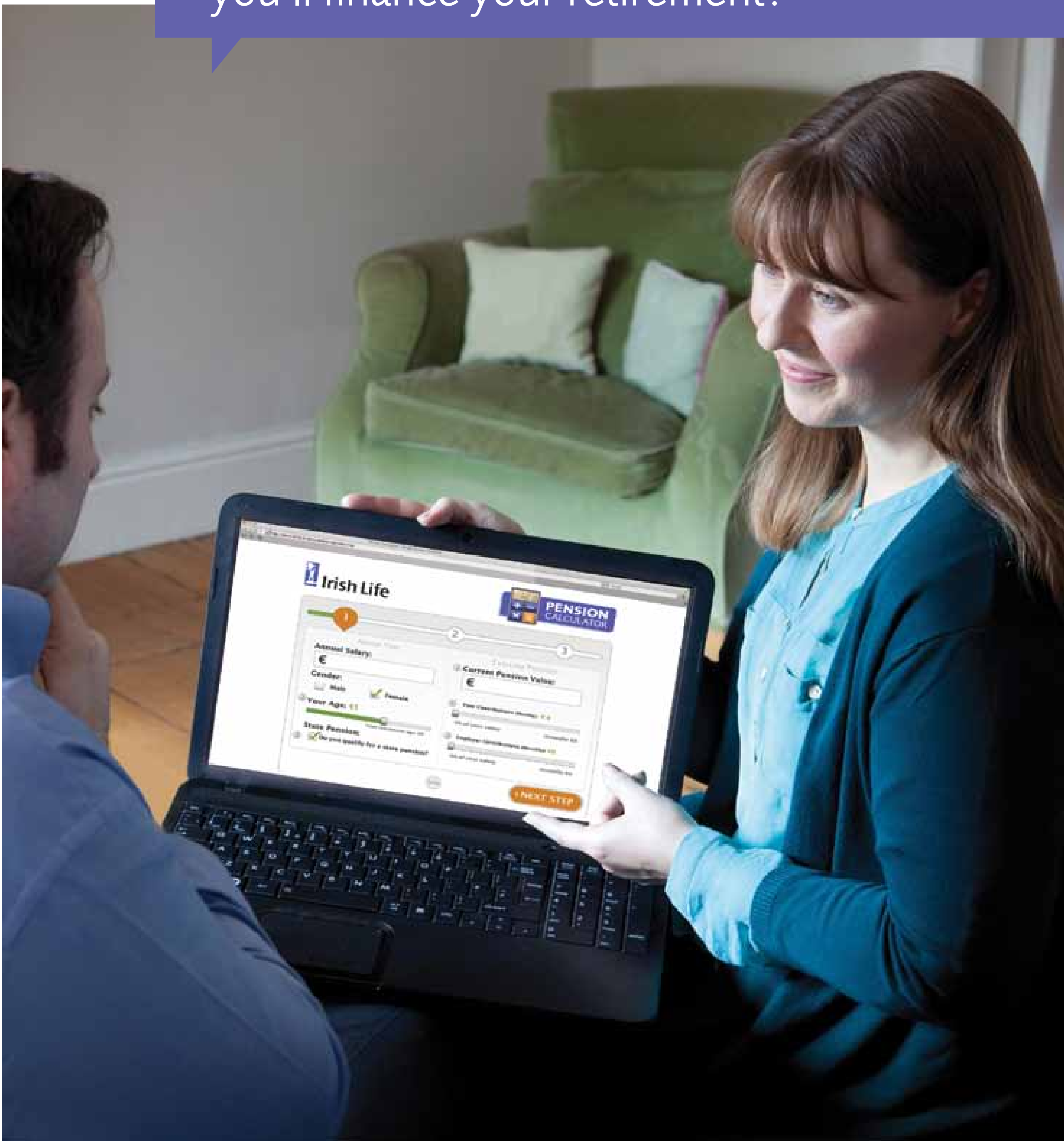
Irish Life

Have you really figured out how you'll finance your retirement?



Pension planning with Irish Life

CONTENTS

Start planning for a longer life

First the good news – as a nation, we're living longer! And not just by a little. According to the 2011 Census, there are 58,416 people aged 85 or over – that's 10,000 more than 5 years ago.

Of course, as life expectancy increases so does our need for a realistic retirement plan. For most of us that will include a well-funded pension. Your pension will help you ensure that your retirement years are spent doing the things you always wanted to, not regretting the opportunities you missed.

A man aged 40 years today will live twice as long in retirement as a man in their 40s in the 1980s.

(Source, CSO, 2011 Yearbook)

Introduction

Have you made a realistic plan for your retirement yet?

That's the question we all need to ask ourselves, whether we're in our twenties or closing in fast on retirement age.

In recent years there has been extensive media debate about the challenges around retirement. Challenges like whether the Government can afford to maintain the State Pension at the present level. Concerns about changes in Government policy, such as the pensions levy and a possible change in income tax allowances. The difficulties we face because of a rise in the official State retirement age. And, of course, stress caused by the general economic crisis.

We can't solve every problem in one go. But we can make a good start, with realistic retirement planning with Irish Life.

Take advantage of income tax relief

Even if you're sure you have all the savings you'll ever need, a pension would still be worth it for the income tax relief alone. The Government actively encourages you to put your money into a pension, as a good way to keep your own taxes working for your own benefit.

€100 invested	Tax rate 20%
	Tax relief €20
	You pay €80

€100 invested	Tax rate 41%
	Tax relief €41
	You pay €59

For lower rate taxpayers it means that every €100 invested in a pension saves €20 off your tax bill. For higher rate taxpayers the benefit is even greater, saving €41 for every €100 you invest. And at the end of the day, when you come to cash in your pension, you can take up to 25% of it as a tax-free lump sum (up to a limit of €200,000). For a company pension your lump sum may be based on your salary and service (up to a maximum of one and a half times of your annual salary but up to a limit of €200,000).

Warning: The value of your investment may go down as well as up.

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Income tax relief is not guaranteed.
To be eligible to claim income tax relief, your income must be taxable either Schedule E or Schedule D (case I or II). To claim income tax relief, you can apply to your Inspector of Taxes to adjust your tax credits. Contributions deducted from salary will receive immediate tax relief. If you are self-employed, you must include your pension contributions in your self assessment tax returns in order to obtain income tax relief.

Pension income in retirement is subject to income tax at your highest rate on withdrawal, Universal Social Charge, PRSI (if applicable) and any other charges or levies (tax) applicable at that time.

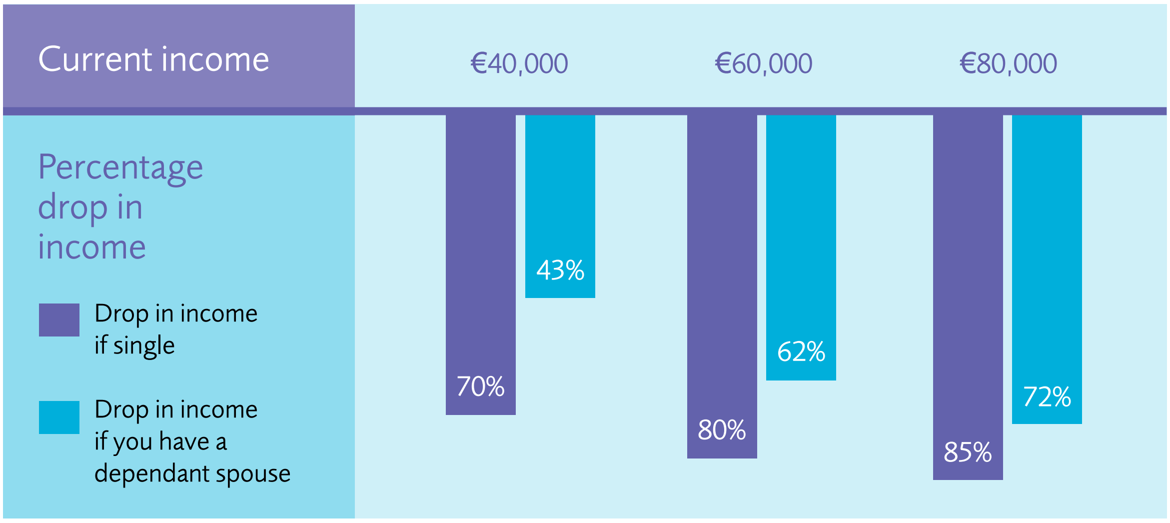
Life on the State Pension

The fall-back retirement option is of course to make do with the State Pension, assuming you are eligible. Sounds like a good idea until you hear what you actually get. Currently the State Pension (Contributory) for a single person is just €230.30 a week, which adds up to a grand total of €11,975 a year. That's even lower than the minimum wage.

That might seem hard enough, but in view of our aging population it will probably get worse. Today there are six workers paying taxes to support every one pensioner (Source: Census 2011). By 2050 it's estimated there will be just two workers supporting each pensioner. That just doesn't add up. Already, everyone under 50 will have to wait an extra three years till they're 68 to claim the State Pension.

How can you tell how much you'll need?

Most of us find it hard to look so many years into the future and imagine what it takes to provide a comfortable retirement. The easiest way is to compare it with the lifestyle and income level you have now. The difference between the State Pension and your income is the gap you need to fill with a pension. The more you earn now, the bigger the drop in lifestyle you face as you can see in the graph below.



So, in the example above, if you earned an annual income of €60,000 and were planning to rely solely on the single State Pension (Contributory), you would be taking a drop in income of 80% of your current salary, or a yearly drop of €48,025.

FACT: Eight out of ten people say that the State Pension would not meet all their needs in retirement.

(Source: Pensions Board, August 2012)

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Keep on checking

A pension is a long term investment. But that doesn't mean you should lock it away in a drawer and forget about it. Just like other investments, it pays to make regular checks on how it's performing. Are you doing enough, should you increase your payments? Should you be switching into a lower risk fund?

Easy-to-use online Pension Calculator

To help you get a rough picture for yourself, try the quick-to-use Pension Calculator at www.irishlife.ie. You can see the effect of paying more, or less, into your pension. And you don't have to be a pensions professional to use it.

> FACT: One in two people have not reviewed their pension for the last five years or even at all.
>
> (Source: Amarach Research, 2011)

Where to now?

On the following pages we've outlined useful tips and next steps in retirement planning relevant for different age groups. You'll also find a handy checklist at the end of each section. Use it to see where you are at with your retirement planning.

So if you're:

- In your 30s - go to page 6
- In your 40s - go to page 10
- In your 50s - go to page 15

or

- If you're a business owner - go to page 17

Meet Mary, married to Brian with two children. Mary is a 37 year old accountant who has many demands on her income. There's the mortgage to pay, and the future cost of education. She is thinking about starting a pension.

Check out our online Pension Calculator on **www.irishlife.ie** to see the kind of income you can expect in retirement.

For advice on how to make the most of your retirement savings now, book a meeting with a Pension Adviser today.

What to do if you're 30-something

When is the best time to start a pension?

It's true to say that the sooner you start a pension, the longer it has to grow and the easier it is to reach your target. Even a small regular investment could deliver big results if you start in your twenties.

The strange thing about your thirties is that, although you're probably getting paid more than when you were younger, you seem to have less in your pocket at the end of the month. So how do you fit a pension into all of this?

As a rule of thumb, the tax relief limits on your pension contributions are around half of your age. If you're thirty now, that would mean setting aside 15% of your income for a pension. It may seem a lot but with the income tax relief it's not so hard.

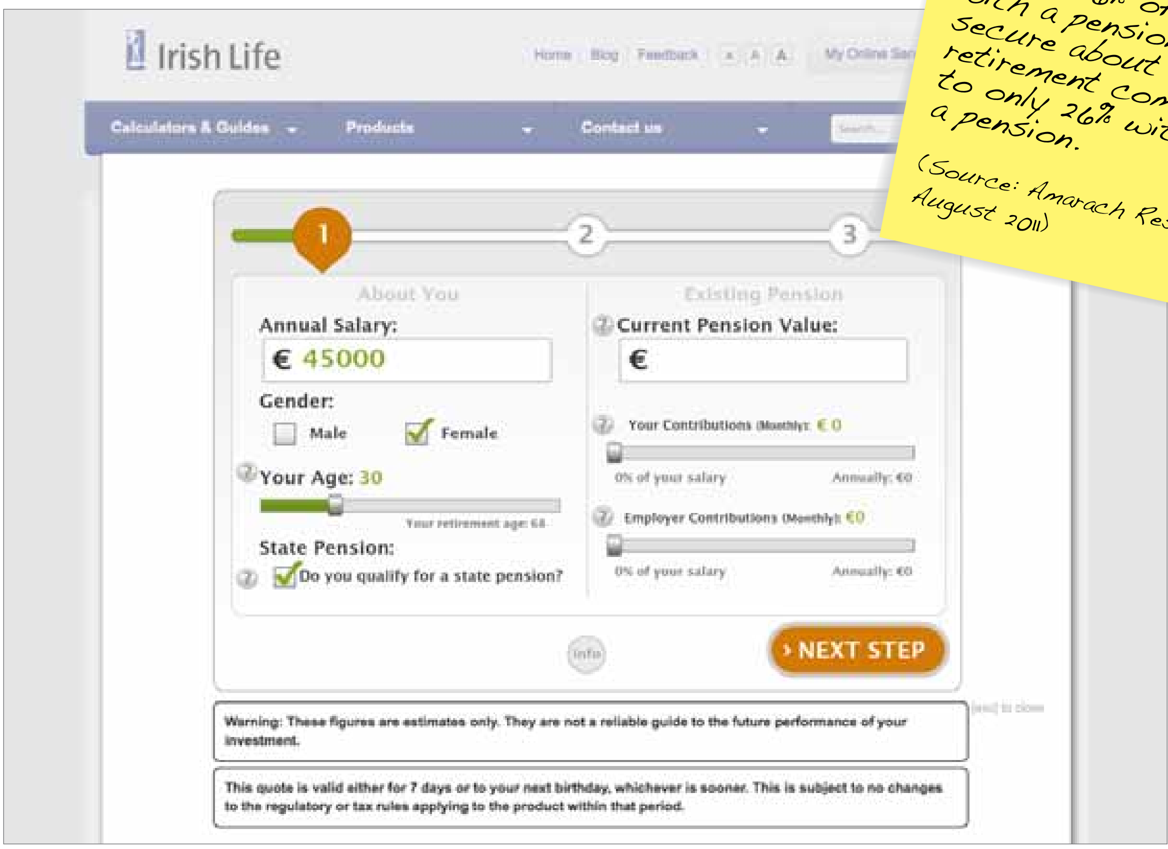
So, someone earning €40,000 should be saving €500 a month – but with income tax relief at 41% it would cost them just €295 from their take-home pay, or €400 with 20% relief. The important thing is to start now, even if you put just €50 a month away.

Take a look into your own future with the easy-to-use online Pension Calculator at www.irishlife.ie. You can set your own lifestyle target, then adjust the figures up and down. You can see for yourself the actual result of investing more or less.

PENSION CALCULATOR

FACT: 56% of those with a pension feel secure about their retirement compared to only 26% without a pension.

(Source: Amarach Research August 2011)



Q&A

"I'm still young, I'll worry about it later."

Retirement seems a long way off when you're in your thirties. Whereas paying a mortgage, raising kids and buying a new car all seem very close and urgent. It's something you can afford to put off, isn't it?

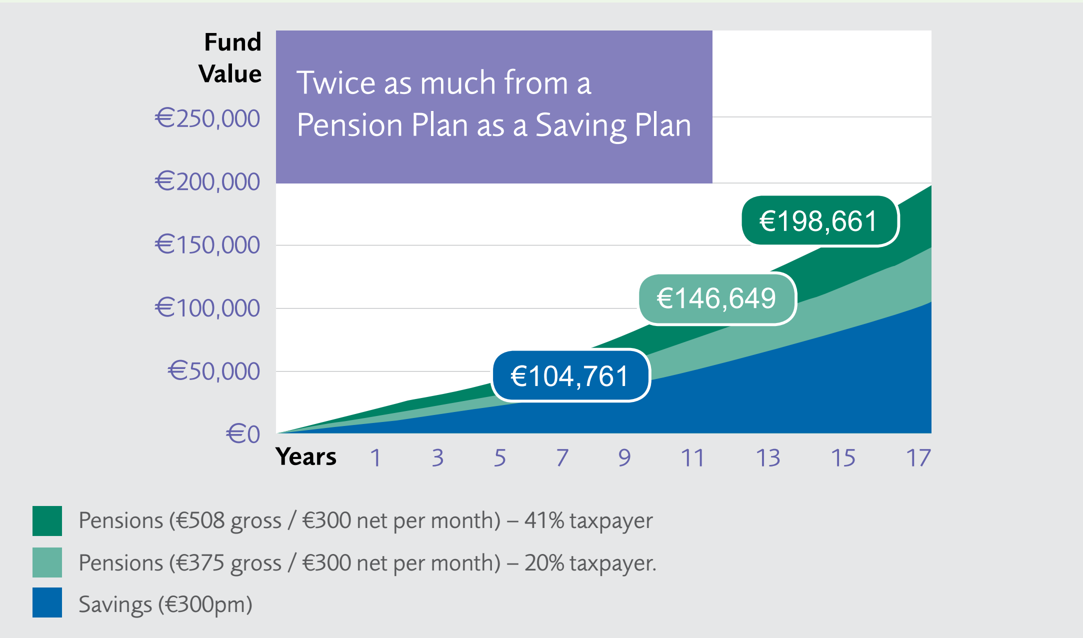
Well, no. The person that will lose most is your future self. The sooner you start, the easier it will be and the less it will cost you in the long run.

"I don't want to commit to a pension. I'll use a savings plan instead."

A savings plan is another way to put money aside and of course you can get at it any time you need it. But for long term needs like retirement, easy access is a drawback, not an advantage. It's all too tempting to dip in. More significantly, the tax benefits that come with a pension means that it is likely to out-perform all but the most high-risk form of alternative saving.

A pension versus an ordinary savings plan – who wins?

The simple answer is that the income tax relief on a pension gives it a head-start. For example, supposing you saved €300 into a savings plan. If you put that into a pension instead it would be equivalent to investing €375 per month with 20% income tax relief) or €508 per month (with higher 41% rate income tax relief). By the time you retire that could give you twice the return compared to the average savings plan:



The savings plan shown allows for exit tax of 33% being deducted every 8 years on the plan. On retirement 25% of the pension investment can be taken as a tax free lump sum, the remaining investment you withdraw is subject to income tax at your highest rate. The graph assumes 100% of your contribution is invested, 1% fund charge, 6% growth, indexation at 3%, no policy fees. For the pension plan, we have deducted the Pension Levy.

Pension income in retirement is subject to income tax at your highest rate on withdrawal, Universal Social Charge (USC), PRSI (if applicable) and any other charges or levies (tax) applicable at that time.

Warning: These figures are estimates only. They are not a reliable guide to the future performance of your investment.

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Warning: If you invest in this product you will not have access to your money until age 60 and/or you retire.

Checklist for 30-something:

- [ ] See for yourself what you can afford with the easy-to-use Pension Calculator at www.irishlife.ie
- [ ] If you haven't started a pension yet talk to a Pension Adviser today.
- [ ] If you have started a pension, check your most recent Pension Benefit Statement or go online to see how your pension is doing.
- [ ] If you haven't reviewed your pension in the last year or so, set up an appointment with your Pension Adviser.

This is Patrick. He's married to Grace and they have four teenage children. Patrick is 48 and is an IT Consultant. Grace has recently returned to the workforce and started a new pension plan. At the moment the biggest strain on Patrick's pocket are second and third level fees. He started paying into a pension a few years ago but has forgotten about it since.

Check out our online Pension Calculator on **www.irishlife.ie** to see the kind of income you can expect in retirement.

For advice on how to make the most of your retirement savings now, book a meeting with a Pension Adviser today.

What to do if you're 40-something

Time for action

For those of us with a pension already, it's very easy to put it away in a drawer and forget about it. But in fact the benefit of regular reviews and adjustments is invaluable. You could be missing out on tax incentives. Or you could be still contributing the same amount into your pension as you did when you started, even though you now earn far more. Or if you are a couple with both of you earning, there are ways to maximise income tax relief for each of you.

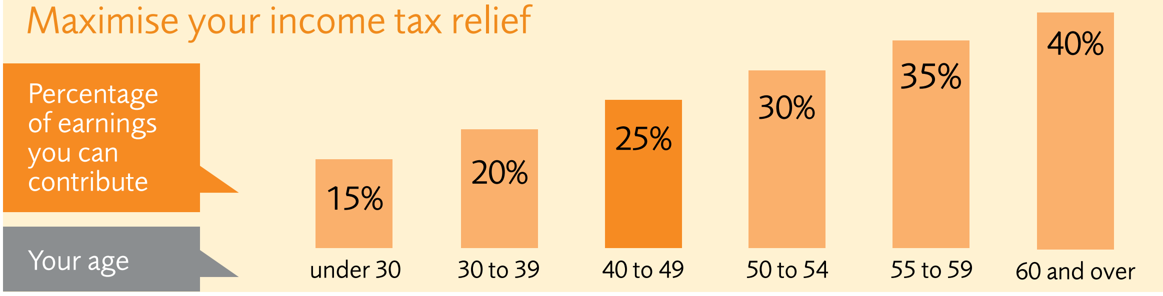
If you haven't started a pension, now is the time to get serious. You can expect to be spending as many years if not more in retirement as you have left in work.

Which makes a proper retirement savings plan all the more important.

It really depends on your own circumstances but as a rule of thumb, the tax relief limits on your pension contributions are around half of your age. So you could be investing about half your current age as a percentage of your income. If you're 40 now, that would mean setting aside 20% of your income for a pension. It may seem a lot but with the income tax relief it's not so hard.

So, someone earning €45,000 should be saving €750 a month – but with income tax relief it might cost them just €442 from their take-home pay!

Maximise your income tax relief



The example shows that if you were 40 years old earning €70,000 a year you would be able to save €17,500 each year into your pension and receive income tax relief on this saving. Pension income in retirement is subject to income tax at your highest rate on withdrawal, Universal Social Charge (USC), PRSI (if applicable) and any other charges or levies (tax) applicable at that time.

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Q&A

"With all these new taxes, am I right to stick with my pension?"

No doubt about it, times are tough for the economy. All of us are paying extra taxes one way or another. Some may question whether putting money into a pension is a priority right now. But if you don't do it, no one else is going to do it for you. The current single State Pension (Contributory) is a grand total of €11,975 a year. That's actually below the Government's own minimum wage. Even if you have no mortgage left to pay in the future, that's not much to get by on.

The good news is that pensions are much more flexible than most people think. You can change the level of contributions, you can even take a payment holiday if something major happens – for instance, a gap in employment due to redundancy. A pension commitment is much more flexible than a mortgage repayment.

"What if I just rely on the State Pension?"

The State pays for pensions out of current tax income, not what you contribute in taxes yourself. Which means that you will be relying on the taxpayers of the future to pay for your pension. However, based on current trends there will be far fewer people in work versus retirement by the time you retire. That will make the current State Pension less and less affordable:

(Source: National Pensions Framework, 2010)

FACT: 238,000 additional people will reach 65 during the next 10 years.
(Source: Central Statistics Office 2011)

Don't leave yourself dependent on future taxpayers

Did you know that the qualifying age for the State Pension is set to go up from 65 to 68 for today's 40-somethings? That means, if you were planning on retiring at 65, you will have a three year gap to fill. Fortunately, if you start planning now, this needn't be too much of a strain. Talk to your Pension Adviser today and make sure you keep all your options in place.

"What's my pension worth right now?"

If you already have a pension, you can ask one of our Pension Advisers any time for an update. We'll also give you an estimate of what your pension would be worth in retirement. It's important to meet with your Pension Adviser each year to check if you are on track with your retirement plan. During the Pension Review the Pension Adviser will discuss all aspects of your retirement plan and help you take control of your future.

FACT: Research shows that one in five Irish people don't know how much they are currently saving into their pension.
(Source: Amarach Research August 2011)

Checklist for 40-something:

- [ ] If you have started a pension already, do you know what type of funds your pension is invested in?
- [ ] Are you on track with your expected retirement income?
- [ ] Have you met your Pension Adviser in the last year?
- [ ] Do you take time to read your Pension Benefit Statements or keep track online?
- [ ] Do you know that you can claim income tax relief on your pension? (Up to 25% until age 50 and higher afterwards.)
- [ ] As a couple, are you both maximising your income tax relief benefits?
- [ ] Do you know that you may be able to arrange Pension Life Cover and claim back income tax relief?
- [ ] If you haven't started a pension, then see for yourself what you can afford with the easy to use online Pension Calculator at www.irishlife.ie. Then talk to your Pension Adviser.

This is John, who is married to Jane with one child. John is a 57 year old engineer. He had a pension with his previous employer and when he became self-employed he set up another plan. Their only daughter Susan has finished college already and their mortgage is nearly paid off. John would like to be able to help Susan when she is ready to step onto the property ladder.

Check out our online Pension Calculator on **www.irishlife.ie** to see the kind of income you can expect in retirement.

For advice on how to make the most of your retirement savings now, book a meeting with a Pension Adviser today.

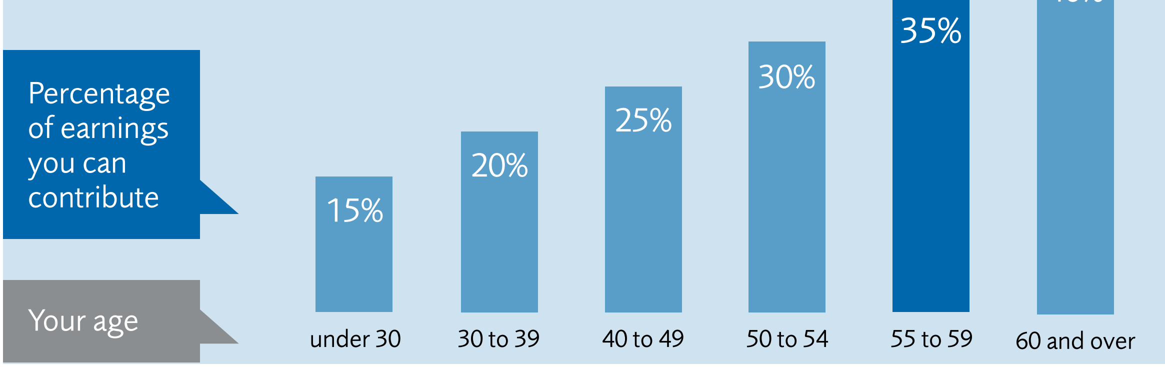
What to do if you're 50-something

Set up a Pension Review

As you enter your 50s retirement doesn't seem quite so far away. It's time for some more detailed planning. The key thing to realise is that, whatever your current situation, there's plenty you can do to improve your lifestyle in retirement, providing you act now.
The Pension Adviser will review your existing Pension Plans and discuss your expected retirement goals.

It's true to say that the sooner you start a pension, the longer it has to grow. But if you don't have a pension, that doesn't mean you've missed the boat altogether. The system is designed to help you catch up. The older you are, the more income tax relief you get. Don't worry about the years that have gone, just maximise your efforts in the years to come and use all your extra relief.

Maximise your income tax relief



So for example, if John's salary is €60,000 he could invest up to €21,000 (35% of €60,000) and receive income tax relief on this contribution, resulting in a net cost of €16,800 at 20% income tax relief or €12,390 at 41% income tax relief. Pension income in retirement is subject to income tax at your highest rate on withdrawal, Universal Social Charge (USC), PRSI (if applicable) and any other charges or levies (tax) applicable at that time.

Taking less risk approaching retirement age

As you're approaching retirement age you're probably more cautious and may want to consider investing in lower risk funds.

Irish Life offer a very practical solution called Lifestyling. This involves gradually moving your own choice of funds to a mix of medium-risk to low-risk funds as you move closer to retirement. These strategies are suitable if you want to invest in high-risk or medium-risk funds over the term of your pension plan but want to move gradually into a mix of medium-risk and low-risk funds as you get nearer retirement. Ask your Pension Adviser for details.

FACT: 60% of personal pension holders are not aware that they can have a Lifestyling option.

(Source: Amarach Research, August 2011)

Options for retirement

When you reach your retirement age there are some different options of what to do with your Pension Fund. It is important that you start looking at them early to plan for the approach that suits you best. For more information on your options please look at page 21.

Warning: If you invest in this product you will not have any access to your money until age 60 and/or you retire.

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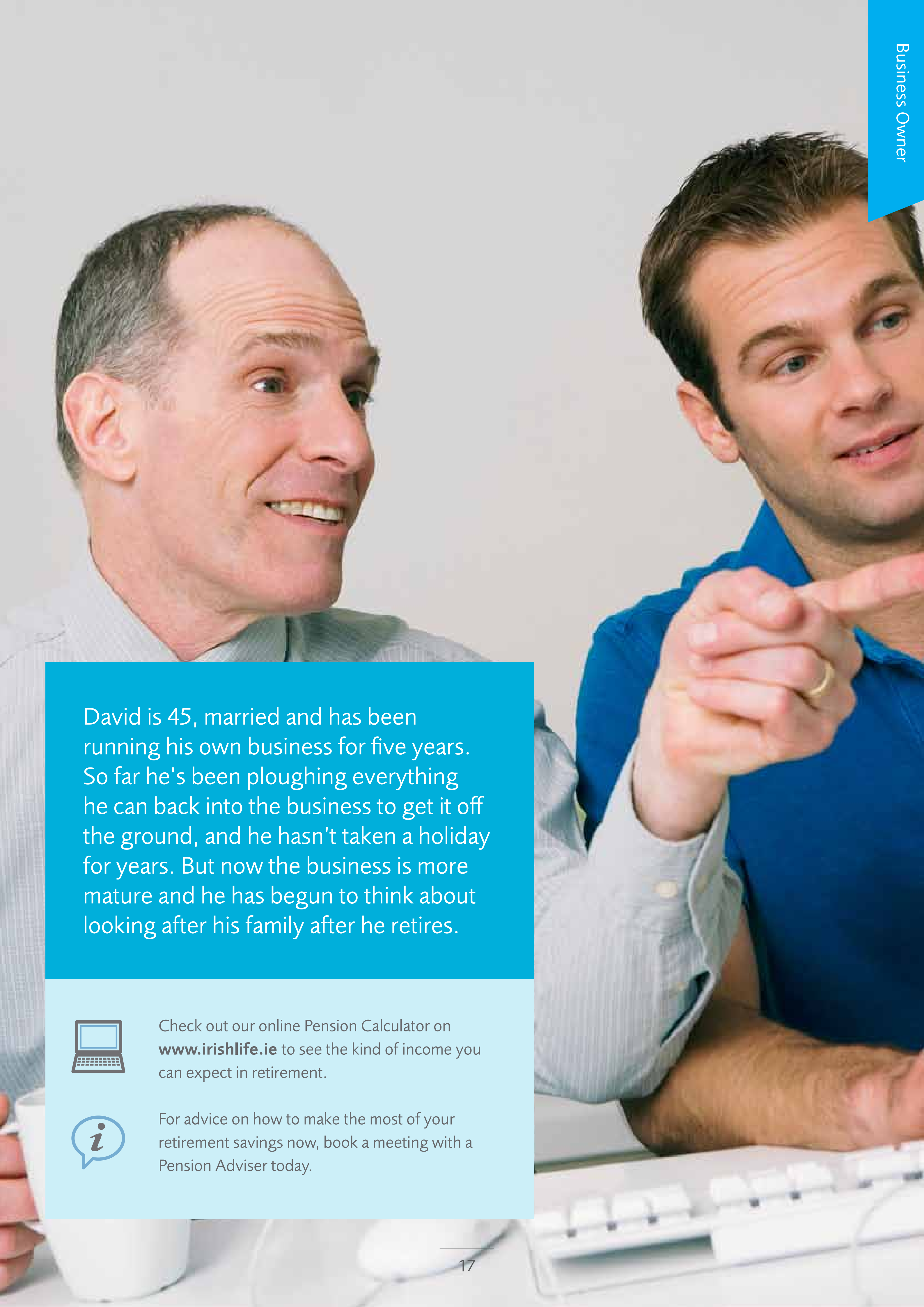
Warning: This product may be affected by changes in currency exchange rates.

Checklist for 50-something:

- [ ] If you have a pension already, do you know what type of funds it's invested in?
- [ ] Have you considered moving to lower risk funds? Your Adviser can help you with this.
- [ ] Have you considered and made plans for your options in retirement? For example, whether you're going to take your pension as an income or mix of lump sum and income.
- [ ] You should take time to read your Pension Benefit Statements and keep track online.
- [ ] Are you reviewing your pension with your Pension Adviser at least every year?
- [ ] Are you claiming the full income tax relief you're entitled to?
- [ ] If you have a company pension, are you keeping track of your employment details?
- [ ] If you haven't started a pension, then contact your local Pension Adviser.



David is 45, married and has been running his own business for five years. So far he's been ploughing everything he can back into the business to get it off the ground, and he hasn't taken a holiday for years. But now the business is more mature and he has begun to think about looking after his family after he retires.

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What to do if you're a Business Owner

One of the most attractive, tax efficient ways for business owners to take profits from their company and turn them into personal wealth, is to transfer these profits into a company pension. Unlike other remunerations such as salary increases, bonuses or company cars, an employer contribution to an executive pension plan is not normally viewed as income. That means it's tax free – and that could add up to a very significant saving. You have the option at retirement to take 25% of the fund as a retirement lump sum (up to €200,000 can be taken tax free).

For a company pension to be approved as a tax-free arrangement it must be set up in trust. The main advantage of the trust is to make sure that the benefits of the pension plan are kept totally separate from the company and are kept for the member and their beneficiaries (the people who will benefit from the scheme). Clearly, business owners should consider maximising their company contributions to their pension plan.

Options for David

Let's take a look at David's situation. David is 45 and is currently drawing a salary of €50,000 a year. He wishes to retire at age 65. He is contributing €12,000 a year into a director's pension plan which has a current value of €70,000.

The company regularly makes additional profit of €150,000 a year and is considering increasing his pension contribution to increase his retirement fund.

What contribution options are available for David?

There are three options for David depending on whether he wants to use full company profit or not and the tax treatment for each of these options.

Option	New Single Premium Contribution	New Regular Premium Contribution
1	€119,000	€37,800 p.a.
2	€41,000	€41,000 p.a.
3	€0	€43,000 p.a.

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If David chooses option 1 above, then what tax relief would be available assuming the business paid the contributions?

David's company could offset the €37,800 a year regular contribution in the current trading year and also could offset the €119,000 single premium investment over the next 3 years (€39,667 x 3 years), thereby reducing the company's corporation tax bill.

If David chooses option 2 or 3 above, then what tax relief would be available assuming the business paid the contributions?

Under both options 2 & 3, David's company could offset all contributions (Regular & Single if appropriate) in the current trading year and thereby reduce the company's corporation tax bill.

Investing the contributions detailed in Option 1 will take into full consideration the €150,000 company profits. Option 2 and 3 does not use up the full company profits of €150,000. They use up €82,000 and €43,000 respectively. Crucially as these company contributions are not viewed as being a Benefit-In-Kind (BIK) for David, he doesn't have to pay any income tax, PRSI or USC in relation to them.

Pension income in retirement is subject to income tax at your highest rate on withdrawal, Universal Social Charge, PRSI (if applicable) and any other charges or levies (tax) applicable at that time.

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Checklist for Business Owners:

- ☐ Have you taken control of your pension planning?
- ☐ Pensions are flexible. Are you aware of the flexible options to suit you and your business?
- ☐ Is your company contributing to your pension plan?
- ☐ Are you reducing your company's corporation tax bill to the maximum?
- ☐ Are you on track with your expected retirement income?
- ☐ Are you aware of the variety of retirement options available to you?
- ☐ Do you take time to read your Pension Benefit Statements or keep track online?
- ☐ Are you reviewing your pension with your local Pension Adviser every year?

What happens at retirement

So what happens when your pension finally starts paying out instead of paying in? Most pension plans are designed to provide you with an income supplemented by your State Pension.

Tax free lump sum or regular income

When you retire you stop paying into your pension and the fund is closed. You then have a variety of options. Most people choose to take advantage of a retirement lump sum, of which the first €200,000 is tax free (the maximum lump sum is 25% of a fund size of €2.3 million). For company pensions your lump sum may be based on your salary and service (up to a maximum of one and a half of your annual salary but up to a limit of €200,000).

The other 75% can be re-invested a number of ways to provide you with an ongoing pension income. All pension plans allow you to buy an annuity, which will provide you with regular monthly income in retirement. Some types of plans give you further options – to invest in an ARF (Approved Retirement Fund) or AMRF, remain invested in your PRSA (vested PRSA) or take a taxable lump sum.

What is an Approved Retirement Fund (ARF)/vested PRSA?

An ARF or a vested PRSA are retirement funds that allow you flexibility with your pension income, while also allowing you the opportunity to further invest. This provides you with greater flexibility and independence, and is now available to employees as well as employers. When you retire, you can invest your retirement fund in a personal investment account called an Approved Retirement Fund. The key benefit is that you can withdraw money from the account when you need.

Warning: The income you get from this investment may go down as well as up.

What is an AMRF (Approved Minimum Retirement Fund)?

An AMRF is also an investment account for your retirement fund. If you do not have a guaranteed pension income for life of €18,000 a year (or you are not buying an annuity) you must invest €119,800 into an AMRF before you can invest in an ARF. You can only make withdrawals from the growth made on your AMRF investment before age 75. Your AMRF will become an ARF when you start to receive a guaranteed pension income of €18,000 a year from other sources or you reach age 75. Once your AMRF becomes an ARF you can then make withdrawals from the original amount invested. These limits are current as at August 2012.

Ask your local Pension Adviser for more details.

Warning: If you invest in an AMRF you will not have access to your initial investment until age 75.

Warning: The value of your investment may go down as well as up.

Warning: If you invest in this product you may lose some or all of the money you invest.

A pension plan for you

We can help you work out your personal lifestyle priorities. For instance, would you prefer a secure, regular income or a fund which you could withdraw money from as and when you need it, and which you would ultimately pass on to your dependants?

Retirement Plan Checklist

- ☐ The overall size of your pension fund.
- ☐ How much income you need (currently a single person aged 65 or over can receive up to €18,000 tax free per year).
- ☐ How do you plan on using your tax free retirement lump sum – to clear debt or save for your future needs?
- ☐ Do you have any other assets besides your retirement fund which you will rely on?
- ☐ Whether you are looking for further investment growth or security with your fund.
- ☐ Are you willing to accept the risk that the value of your ARF/vested PRSA could decrease over time due to income withdrawals and low growth rate?
- ☐ How much you want to pass on to your dependants/family.
- ☐ Your current state of health.

Irish Life – strength and experience

Irish Life has over 1 million customers and is Ireland's leading pension provider.
We provide pensions to the Irish employees of over 2,000 companies, state bodies and unions.

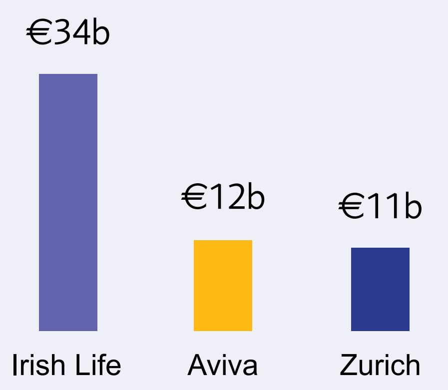
These include:

- 7 of the 10 biggest Irish companies
- 6 of the 10 biggest US companies

Irish Life Investment Managers manage most money for Irish people (over €34 billion).

The Consensus Fund, available through Irish Life pension plans, is Ireland's most popular fund with €5.2 billion invested.

Ireland's Number 1 – Assets Under Management



The chart above shows the assets under management for the investment managers companies 30/06/2012.

To discuss your retirement plan contact your Financial Broker or Adviser today.

We advise that you seek specialist pension advice as the information given is a guideline only and does not take into account your personal circumstances.

NOTES

Make sure you have a real retirement plan.

Talk to your Financial Broker or Adviser today.

ILA 9770 (NPI 09-12)