

I hope to cash in pension

Problem: KEN S, 57, is unhappy with his pension's conditions. The private scheme has protected rights and Ken, from Liverpool, likes the idea of taking the whole amount as a lump sum. It qualifies under triviality rules covering total benefits of less than £16,000.

"I would get far more use from the cash," he says. "But the terms I've been given state I have to be 60 to do this. Can this be changed?"

Solution: NO, says independent pensions expert Nicola Downs. "Ken, like everyone else, has to wait until he reaches 60."

If Ken wants or needs to start using his pension pot before then, he has only one course. "He must take a 25 per cent tax-free cash lump sum and buy an annuity with the remainder," explains Downs who warns he must include a spouse pension. Otherwise he can hang on and have a rethink when he is 60.

● *Nicola Downs: 01306 881999, www.trenthaminvest.co.uk*

If you have a problem, write to Maisha Frost, Sunday Express, The Northern & Shell Building, 10 Lower Thames Street, London EC3R 6EN or email maisha.frost@express.co.uk. It is essential you include your phone number.