

The Rt Hon. Alister Jack MP
Member of Parliament for Dumfries and Galloway



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

September 2019.

Dear Constituent,

A Response to the Pension Credit Campaign

Thank you for contacting me about the uptake of Pension Credit in Dumfries and Galloway. I am committed to ensuring that older people receive the support they are entitled to, so they can enjoy dignity and security in their retirement. That is why I am glad the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) engages with people who may be eligible to benefits at pivotal stages, such as when they claim State Pension or report a change in their circumstances.

The DWP uses a wide range of channels to communicate information about benefits to potential customers, including information on <https://gov.uk/>, in leaflets and by telephone. DWP staff in Pension Centres and Jobcentres including visiting officers are able to provide help and advice about entitlement to benefits, as are staff in Local Authorities who administer Housing Benefit. People can also use the Pension Credit calculator (<https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator>) to check if they are likely to be eligible and get an estimate of what they may receive. People wishing to claim Pension Credit can do so by calling 0800 99 1234. One of the best ways to reach eligible customers is through trusted stakeholders working in the community, which is why the DWP developed the Pension Credit toolkit as an online tool for them to use in order to encourage take-up.

It can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit>. The toolkit contains resources for anyone working with pensioners and includes guides to Pension Credit. It also contains publicity material and guidance designed to help older people understand how they could get Pension Credit and help organisations support someone applying for Pension Credit as well as ideas for encouraging take-up. The toolkit also provides links to information about disability and carers benefits.

The DWP is forecast to spend over £120 billion on benefits for pensioners in 2019/20, this includes over £99 billion of expenditure on the State Pension. The Triple Lock will stay in place for the remainder of this Parliament, guaranteeing that up to the full amounts of the basic and new State Pensions will rise by the highest of average earnings growth, price inflation, or 2.5 per cent and in 2019/20 the increase was 2.6 per cent. The full rate of the basic State Pension will be worth over £1,600 more in 2019/20 than in 2010 in cash terms - £675 more than if it had been increased only in line with earnings. From April 2019, the Standard Minimum Guarantee in Pension Credit has also been increased by earnings. This will be the equivalent of over £1,800 per year higher in cash terms for single people and over £2,700 per year higher in cash terms for couples than it was in 2010. Most recently the DWP has provided a fact sheet to relevant organisations about Pension Credit and the recent changes for mixed age couples to ensure that accurate information is available in the places where people are most likely to seek information.

I hope this reassures you of the efforts being made to encourage people to find out if they are eligible for Pension Credit, but I will continue to engage with the DWP and follow this issue very closely.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Alister Jack MP
Dumfries and Galloway constituency.

Please respond to:

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