

Pension Credit is a means tested benefit for persons of state retirement age and is administered by the Pension Service, a department set up within the Department for Work & Pensions, (DWP) previously called the Department for Social Security (DSS)

Pension Credit aims to top up any money you or your partner aged 60/65 or over have coming in, to a minimum guaranteed level set by the Government each year. It replaced the previous Income Support benefit called the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) and also now aims to pay a small benefit for people who have modest financial savings or have made modest provisions for their retirement. In calculating entitlement, both income and savings you and/or your partner are both considered. There are two parts to Pension Credit, **Guaranteed Credit** for people aged 60 or over, (similar to the old MIG) and **Savings Credit** for people aged 65 or over. You may get either or both, depending on the level of your income and savings.

The **Guarantee Credit** tops up your weekly income to a minimum level called the appropriate amount. Certain types of income, like Attendance Allowance, are not counted as income. You should be eligible to receive this credit if your applicable income is less than £132.60 per week for single, or £202.40 per week per couple and you only have savings under £10,000. These amounts are normally increased in line with inflation from April of each year. Additional amounts may be available for severe disability.

The **Savings Credit** aims to reward people for having certain types of modest savings and is paid on its own or on top of any guarantee credit you may get. The maximum weekly benefit payable for people with savings under £10,000 is around £20.52 per week if you are single and £27.09 per week for couples. You may be entitled to some pension credit even if your weekly income is up to £184 single weekly or £270 for couples. If you are disabled, have certain housing costs not covered by housing benefit (help towards any rent from the local council) like for example certain mortgage costs, you will be eligible for help even if you have more money coming in than stated above. You may get some credit if, for example, you have a state, private or works pension, a job you are paid for, or savings over £10,000 on a sliding scale. Any savings over £10,000 will be counted as income at £1.00 per week for every £500.00 or part thereof. Basically your pension credit entitlement reduces as your income/savings increases. Amounts are normally increased in April of each year and payment may also be backdated for up to a maximum of 12 months from first date of payment, subject to circumstances.

When your income or savings is considered, it can be a criminal offence not to disclose any relevant information on income or savings or to dispose of any income or savings in order to qualify, or to better qualify, for a benefit. Proof may be required of past income/savings with enquiries possibly made into any suspect transactions or expenditure. Only means tested benefits or income are considered when calculating Pension Credit so if, for example, you receive Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance, these benefits are not means tested and are not therefore taken into consideration when calculating Pension Credit entitlement.

You can apply for Pension credit in two ways, (1) by telephoning the free Application Line on 0800 99 1234, (textphone 0800 169 0133) which is open 8.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Friday and 9.00am to 1.00pm on Saturdays, or (2) by completing an application form PC1 obtainable from DWP offices, by downloading from the Website address below, or telephoning the application number, who will complete the form for you if you wish and send you the completed form to check and sign. Various original supporting documentation may be required with any application submitted. You will need to know your National Insurance number and Date of Birth when applying. Certain UK residency rules may apply.

If you receive Pension Credit, this will normally act as a trigger benefit and automatically assist you in getting further help, up to the full costs of Housing Benefit, Council Tax, travel costs to hospital or help from the Social Fund for unexpected expenses. Pension Credit may advise you on these other potential claims but if not, ensure you query or request details from the DWP, Age Concern or other appropriate source.

The amounts quoted in this Information Sheet apply from April 2010. The Pension Credit assessment can be quite complex and based on individual circumstances so the information in this sheet should only be treated as a general guide. If you have any queries you should contact the free Pension Credit application line 0800 99 1234, or contact your local DWP office, 01474 592600 or 01795 562500, visit their website at [www.pensions.gov.uk/pensioncredit](http://www.pensions.gov.uk/pensioncredit), obtain leaflet PC1L available from DWP offices or the Pension Service order line on 0845 6 065 065, or contact Age Concern Advice Office. The Pension Service may be able to visit you at your home if you require any particular assistance or are housebound.

The Pension Service may have contacted you but if not and you think you may be entitled, do contact them for further advice or enquire in the Age Concern Office. Many pensioners are still not claiming benefits that are rightfully theirs – do try to ensure that you claim what is rightfully yours!