

Eligible pensioners urged to apply for Pension Credit in new campaign

It comes as new figures show many pensioners could be missing out on Pension Credit, a vital financial boost that can be worth over £3,300 a year.

Starting this month, advertising for Pension Credit will feature in internet search results and on social media, before being expanded to national and regional newspapers.

The Department for Work and Pensions will also be distributing leaflets within local communities, while businesses can also get involved in the campaign by spreading the word to their customers using the department's digital toolkit and encouraging them to call the claim line between the hours of 8am-6pm.

All State Pension recipients will continue to receive reminders about Pension Credit in the post as part of the department's annual updating communications.

Currently, over 1.4 million pensioners in Britain receive Pension Credit. However, many are still not claiming this extra financial help and it is estimated up to £1.7bn is being left unclaimed. This is why the DWP is renewing calls for all pensioners to check if they could be eligible.

Minister for Pensions Guy Opperman said:

We recognise the challenges some pensioners will be facing with the cost of living which is why promoting Pension Credit is a priority.

That's why we're calling on everyone with retired family, friends and loved ones to check in with them and see if they can get this extra financial support.

The campaign also includes tackling some of the myths that may stop people applying, such as how having savings, a pension or owning a home are not necessarily barriers to receiving Pension Credit.

It also reminds people that even a small award can provide access to a wide range of other benefits – such as help with housing costs, council tax or heating bills. For those over 75, this includes continued entitlement to a free TV licence.

Pension Credit can be claimed by phone and online, ensuring that older people can apply safely and easily, wherever they are. The online [Pension Credit calculator](#) is also on hand to help pensioners check if they're likely to be

eligible and get an estimate of what they may receive.

Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director at Age UK, said:

Pension Credit can make a big difference if you've reached State Pension Age and haven't got much money coming in. With prices rising rapidly at the moment it's more important than ever to claim what's rightfully yours. We urge any older person who thinks they may be eligible to put in a claim and Age UK is here to provide advice and practical support to help you with the process.

Pension Credit is something of a well kept secret – many people have simply not heard of it. That's a real shame because at Age UK we see how much it helps those who actually receive it. We hope this campaign is the first step in a sustained government effort to bring Pension Credit to the older public's attention, and we warmly support it for this reason. Pension Credit is really important for older people and deserves to be much better known.

Morgan Vine, Head of Policy and Influencing at Independent Age, said:

We welcome this campaign to increase Pension Credit uptake. We know this support can be life-changing but for too long, too many people over 65 who are eligible have been missing out.

Older people have told us that before receiving Pension Credit they would skip meals, struggle with a cold home and feel isolated, as they would turn down opportunities to see people because they couldn't even afford a cup of tea in a café.

With the cost-of-living crisis making life even more harsh for people over 65, it has never been more urgent to take action on Pension Credit. Awareness campaigns are one part of the strategic approach that is needed at this critical time, so it is very positive to see the government working with local partners to deliver awareness raising materials.

We look forward to seeing the impact of this campaign, so that further, fast action can be taken to target those who are missing out.

Pension Credit is designed to help with daily living costs for people over

State Pension age and on a low income, though you do not need to be in receipt of State Pension to receive it.

It tops up a person's income to a minimum of £177.10 per week for single pensioners or £270.30 for couples. These amounts will rise to £182.60 per week for single pensioners and to £278.70 for couples from 11th April.

Further information

- Knowing that one of the best ways to reach eligible customers is through trusted stakeholders working in the community, the government has also developed the [Pension Credit toolkit](#) as an online tool for agencies and welfare rights organisations to use in order to encourage take-up.
- For more information, to use the free online calculator, to check eligibility or to claim, visit [Pension Credit](#) or call 0800 99 1234.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

Follow DWP on:

[New review launched into Vitamin D intake to help tackle health disparities](#)

- Around one in six adults in the UK have low levels of vitamin D, which can lead to rickets, bone pain and disabilities
- Call for evidence issued to the public, experts, industry and patient groups on innovative ways to boost Vitamin D levels

A new review has been launched to promote the importance of vitamin D and identify ways to improve intake across the population, including through dietary supplements and fortified food and drink.

Around one in six adults and almost 20% of children in the UK have vitamin D levels lower than government recommendations. Older people, the housebound and people from Black and South Asian communities are more likely to have lower levels of the vital vitamin.

Vitamin D deficiency is linked to rickets in children and bone pain and muscle weakness in adults.

The call for evidence, launched today by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), will kickstart a national campaign to raise awareness of the importance of vitamin D and gather views from the public, public health experts, retailers, food manufacturers and other industry bodies on ambitious ways to improve uptake and tackle disparities.

The review comes ahead of the Health Disparities White Paper due to be published later this year, which will set out action to reduce health disparities between different places and communities and address their causes, so that people's backgrounds do not dictate their prospects for a healthy life.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

"We must break the link between background and prospects for a healthy life, and I am determined to level up the health of the nation and tackle disparities.

"People from Black and Asian communities, older people and people who have limited access to the outdoors are more likely to have lower levels of vitamin D, which is essential for bone and muscle health and improving years of life lived in good health.

"I have launched this call for evidence to identify innovative ways we can encourage people to increase their vitamin D intake and help people live longer, healthier and happier lives."

In the UK, people obtain the majority of vitamin D from sunlight on their skin during the spring and summer, as dietary sources of vitamin D are limited.

Current advice is for all adults and children to consider taking a daily 10 micrograms supplement of vitamin D between October and March. Some at-risk groups are advised to consider taking a supplement throughout the year. However uptake is low with only one in six adults reporting taking a daily supplement.

The call for evidence will last for six weeks and aims to consider how we improve the population's vitamin D levels, particularly among at risk groups.

OHID will engage with representatives from major retailers, pharmacy and health organisations, patient groups and bodies representing people from at risk groups to support the national awareness campaign.

Dr Tazeem Bhatia, Interim Chief Nutritionist at OHID, said:

"I welcome this call for evidence as part of OHID's continued drive to improve health outcomes and tackle health disparities. We want to improve the dietary health of the population and this includes supporting everyone to maintain sufficient vitamin D levels to support strong and healthy bones and muscles."

As part of the Healthy Start scheme, pregnant women and new mothers who are eligible can receive free supplements, which contains folic acid, vitamin C and vitamin D. Children under the age of four who are eligible can also receive free supplements. However, estimated take-up of free vitamin supplements is extremely low.

New diagnostic centres deliver nearly three quarters of a million tests

- Up to 160 community diagnostic centres by 2025
- 73 centres already open and carrying out 30,000 extra tests a week
- From 6 April the Health and Social Care Levy will begin raising billions to tackle Covid backlogs and reform services
- £36 billion over the next three years will put health and care services on a sustainable footing

From Wednesday 6 April, the first ever dedicated Health and Social Care Levy will begin to raise billions to help tackle Covid backlogs and reform services in the UK.

Over the next three years, a record £36 billion will be invested in the health and social care system to ensure it has the long-term resource it needs while working to reduce patient waiting times and speed up diagnoses.

In England, record levels of health and social care funding will help to deliver up to 160 community diagnostic centres across the country by 2025 – including the 73 that are open already.

These centres have already delivered over 700,000 additional CT, MRI, ultrasound, endoscopy, and ultrasound tests, with around 30,000 tests a week. The latest figures, due next week, are expected to show three quarters of a million additional tests were delivered for patients in need by the end of March.

By the end of May, there will be four more community diagnostic centres open across the country, providing one stop shops for tests and checks closer to people's homes.

The pandemic put unprecedented pressure on the NHS. The number of people waiting for elective care in England is at 6 million – up from 4.4 million before the pandemic – and this is expected to rise, as up to 10 million people didn't come forward for treatment during the pandemic.

The necessary, fair and responsible Levy will enable the NHS to offer more appointments, checks, scans and operations and reform the way services are delivered so the NHS is fit for the future, rather than simply plugging the gaps.

In addition to the new community diagnostic centres, record healthcare funding will help deliver:

- 9 million checks, scans, and operations by 2025 – an increase in capacity of a quarter compared with the three years prior to the

pandemic.

- New surgical hubs – which will be added to the network of over 40 standalone hubs already operating across the country, helping to reduce waits for procedures such as cataract surgery or hip replacements.
- Expansion of operating theatres and diagnostic centres for cancer.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

From Wednesday, the Health and Social Care Levy will raise billions to improve services that really matter to the public, and help us recover and reform as we begin to live with Covid.

This is vital funding for the NHS that will clear the Covid backlogs, helping to reduce waiting times, deliver millions more checks, scans and operations, and reform the adult social care system.

This critical investment in our nation's future will be paid for by those with the broadest shoulders, whilst those on low and middle incomes are protected.

The Levy will also reform our social care system, backed by £5.4 billion. It will end the cruel lottery of social care costs, provide a limit to the cost of care for everyone in the adult social care system for the first time, and significantly increase state support. It will also invest £500 million into the social care workforce, the details of which are expected this week.

The reform will ensure that people receive the care they need no matter their background and that they will be supported to have better choice, control and independence over their care.

To ensure everyone contributes fairly, all working adults, including those over the state pension age from April 2023, will pay the Levy and the rates of dividend tax will also increase by 1.25% to help fund this package.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak said:

Investing in health and social care is a top priority for this government, and it is right that we fund that investment in a responsible and sustainable way.

The money raised by the Levy will enable us to deliver improved services for patients, cut waiting times and make social care funding more fair – all part of a better system for Health and Social Care.

The Levy will initially be based on National Insurance contributions (NICs) and from 2023 will be legislatively separate.

Every individual will contribute according to their means. Those who earn more pay more, with the highest 15% of people paying over half the revenues.

Low earners will be shielded from the Levy following action taken by the Chancellor in the Spring Statement last month. From July, the level at which people pay National Insurance on their income will rise to £12,570, saving a typical employee over £330 a year. The change does not affect the funding available to Health and Social Care.

This means that the NHS gets the vital funding it needs to clear the Covid backlogs but it's paid for by those with the broadest shoulders, whilst those on low and middle incomes are protected.

Recognising this year will be tough on household budgets, a £9.1 billion package will see most households receive £350 to help with rising energy bills, including a £150 cash grant via the Council Tax system in April, and a £200 reduction in energy bills in October with the cost smoothed over 5 years.

Before Covid, no one waited longer than 18 months for elective treatment, but now 106,000 people are. Patients will be offered more choice and information on average waiting times at the point of referral. Those waiting the longest will be contacted by the NHS to be given the opportunity to change provider to reduce their wait. The NHS will support patients with travel costs if feasible and will engage with the independent sector so all options are available. By the end of this year, all patients that have been waiting for 18 months or more will be contacted to discuss the choices they have about changing provider.

The investment will help to fund the NHS' Covid Backlog Recovery Plan and deliver on ensuring that:

- Around 30% more elective activity is delivered by 2024/25 compared to before the pandemic.
- Waits of longer than a year for elective care are eliminated by March 2025, and waits of over 18 months by April 2023.
- By July 2022, no one will wait longer than two years for an elective treatment.
- By March 2024, three quarters of patients who have been urgently referred by their GP for suspected cancer will be diagnosed, or have cancer ruled out within 28 days.
- The number of people waiting more than 62 days from an urgent cancer referral will return back to pre-pandemic levels by March 2023.

The funding raised through the Levy is in addition to the historic settlement for the NHS in 2018, which will see its budget rise by £33.9 billion a year by 2023/24.

PM call with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine: 2 April 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Ukrainian President Zelenskyy this evening.



The Prime Minister spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy again this evening.

He congratulated Ukraine's brave armed forces for successfully pushing back Russia's invading army in a number of areas, but recognised the huge challenges that remain and the immense suffering being inflicted on civilians.

The Prime Minister updated President Zelenskyy on the progress made at last week's military donor conference, convened by the UK with 35 countries, and committed to continue to step up defensive support. President Zelenskyy underscored the urgency of Ukraine's fight for its survival as a free and democratic nation and the importance of international assistance.

President Zelenskyy also updated on the status on peace negotiations and welcomed further UK involvement in these diplomatic efforts. Both leaders agreed on the importance of continuing to ratchet up sanctions to increase the economic pressure on Putin's war machine, so long as Russian troops remain on Ukrainian territory.

They committed to remain in close contact and speak again in the coming days.

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Accident involving a light aircraft in Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire – 02 April 2022

News story

The AAIB has sent a team to Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire.



An accident in Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, involving a light aircraft has been notified to the AAIB. An investigation has been launched into the accident and a team of inspectors are at the accident site gathering evidence.

[Read more about how we investigate aircraft accidents](#)

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