

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS LONDON SW1A 0AA

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Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email about the take up of Pension Credit.

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 for benefits at pivotal moments in their lives, such as when they claim State Pension or report a change in their circumstances.

Speaking with colleagues at the DWP, they assure me that they use a wide range of channels to communicate information about benefits to potential customers, including gov.uk, leaflets and telephone. DWP staff in Pension Centres and Jobcentres, including visiting officers, are able to provide help and advice about entitlement to benefits, as are Local Authority staff 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 call 0800 99 1234 or can claim online.

In February 2020, the DWP launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of Pension Credit. The aim of the campaign was to encourage those over State Pension age to check whether they are eligible. It made clear that having savings, a pension or owning a home are not automatic barriers to receiving Pension Credit, as well as explaining that even a small award of Pension Credit can provide access to a range of other benefits such as help with rent, council tax reduction schemes and heating costs.

I am also aware that letters to 11 million pensioners about increases in the State Pension now include an accompanying leaflet with specific information about Pension Credit.

of the best ways to reach eligible customers is through their community, which is why the DWP developed the Pension Credit 'toolkit' as an online resource for people in order to encourage take-up. It includes material for this year's awareness campaign, as well as resources and suggestions to assist agencies and welfare rights organisations to encourage Pension Credit take-up and help pensioners apply for Pension Credit. It can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit>.

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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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 closely.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours Sincerely
Peter Gibson

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