

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

25th September 2020

Dear Constance,

RE: PENSION CREDIT UPTAKE.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding Pension Credit and its uptake among those who need it most; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

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 & Pensions (DWP) engages with people who may be eligible for benefits at pivotal moments in their lives, such as when they claim the 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 online at gov.uk, leaflets and telephone services. 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, 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.

One 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 take-up and help pensioners apply for Pension Credit. It can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit>.

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. I will also do my best to join the event on the 14th October, as per your kind invitation.

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

With best wishes,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE