

Pension Credit

Extra money to boost
your retirement income

Advice and
support for
older age



Thank you

We would like to thank everyone who shared their experiences for this guide and those who reviewed it.

Our publications

In this guide you'll find references to our other free publications. To order them, call **0800 319 6789** or visit **independentage.org/publications**.

If you would like this information in a different format (such as large print or audio CD), call us on **0800 319 6789**.

While some information may apply across the UK, generally our guides cover England.

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1. What is Pension Credit?

Pension Credit is a benefit that gives you extra money to top up your pension income.

There are two types of Pension Credit:

1. Guarantee Credit

Guarantee Credit tops up your income if it's below a minimum amount set by the government. If you qualify, you'll also be entitled to other benefits, such as free NHS dental treatment.

2. Savings Credit

Savings Credit gives you a small reward if you've saved towards your retirement. Savings Credit is being phased out and is closed to claimants who reached State Pension age ([gov.uk/calculate-state-pension](https://www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension)) on or after 6 April 2016, so this leaflet will just look at Guarantee Credit. If you want more information on Savings Credit, order our detailed factsheet **Pension Credit** or call our Helpline on **0800 319 6789**.



2. Who can get it?

You can get Guarantee Credit if you're over State Pension age and your income and savings are below the minimum level set by the government.

So how much is that?

The standard amount is £167.25 a week for a single person or £255.25 a week for a couple. However, if you have a higher income than that, you may still qualify. Your minimum income level could be higher if you're a carer, disabled, or have certain housing costs.

What's my State Pension age?

The State Pension age is now the same for all genders and is gradually increasing. You can check your State Pension age at [gov.uk/state-pension-age](https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age) or by calling the Future Pension Centre on **0800 731 0175**.



What about my savings?

You can still get Guarantee Credit if you have savings, although savings or investments over £10,000 will reduce the amount you can get. For every £500 (or part of £500) you have over £10,000, it's assumed you have an extra £1 of weekly income.



My partner is under State Pension age

If your partner is under State Pension age, from 15 May 2019 you may need to claim Universal Credit instead of Pension Credit. If you think this might affect you, call Citizens Advice on **08444 111 444** or the Pension Service on **0800 731 7898**.



Pension Credit is changing for mixed-age couples from 15 May 2019. If you or your partner are above State Pension age, make sure you check whether you qualify for Pension Credit now. Otherwise you could miss out on extra money.

3. How much could I get?



The amount you get will depend on your circumstances. It's worked out by taking your income figure away from the minimum amount the government says you need to live on.

Standard weekly rates

£167.25 a week for a single person or £255.25 for a couple.

Elsie lives on just £2 a week less than the government's recommended minimum. She told us: "It's not worth applying for the price of a coffee every week." We told her that once she gets Guarantee Pension Credit, she's in line for many other benefits. It's like belonging to a special club with many perks.

The minimum amount isn't the same for everyone. You might be entitled to a higher rate. For example:

Carer's Addition

If you're entitled to Carer's Allowance, you can get a Carer's Addition of £36.85 a week added to the minimum level of income you're entitled to. For more information on Carer's Allowance, order our factsheet **Carer's Allowance** or call our Helpline on **0800 319 6789**.

Severe Disability Addition

You may be able to get a Severe Disability Addition of £65.85 a week if you're claiming one of these disability benefits:

- Attendance Allowance
- the middle or high rate care components of Disability Living Allowance
- the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment
- Armed Forces Independence Payment.

You won't qualify if someone is being paid Carer's Allowance for looking after you.

You'll only qualify if you live alone or with someone who isn't counted for these calculations – for example if they're blind, severely sight-impaired or claiming certain disability benefits. These rules are complex, so call our Helpline on **0800 319 6789** for more information.

To see how much you could be entitled to, try our online benefits calculator at independentage.org/benefit-calculator or call our Helpline on **0800 319 6789** to arrange a free benefits check.

4. What else can I get?

If you qualify for Pension Guarantee Credit, extra income isn't the only thing you'll get. For example, you'll also qualify for:

- help with NHS costs, including free dental treatment and check-ups, and travel costs to hospital for NHS treatment
- free sight tests and vouchers towards glasses or contact lenses.

Depending on your circumstances, you may also qualify for full-rate Housing Benefit and to have your Council Tax paid in full or reduced.

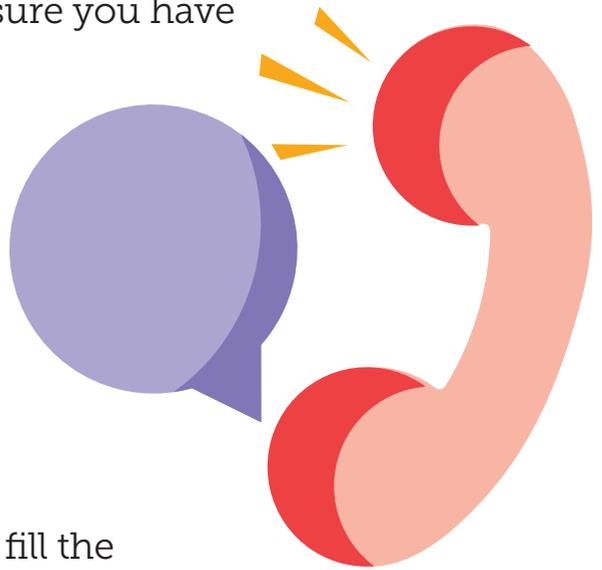


5. How do I claim?

The quickest way to apply is to call the Pension Credit claim line on **0800 99 1234**. If you can't apply by phone, contact a local voluntary organisation (eg Citizens Advice) or ask someone to call the Pension Service to request a paper form for you.

Before you ring, make sure you have a note of:

- your income, savings and investments
- your National Insurance number
- your bank details
- your partner's details, if you have a partner.



The claim line staff will fill the application form in over the phone with you.

You can apply for Pension Credit from four months before you reach the qualifying age. You can apply at any time after you reach the qualifying age, but your claim can only be backdated by three months.

6. Myth buster

My savings are too high, so I can't get Pension Credit

This may not be true. There's no upper savings limit. If you have savings over £10,000, this can reduce the amount you can get, but you could still be entitled to something.

It isn't worth claiming – I'd only get a few pounds

Remember, Guarantee Credit is your passport to a range of other benefits. You may only receive a few pounds of extra income, but you'll also get help with other costs, including NHS health costs and fuel costs. And have you checked whether you qualify for any of the additional amounts with your Guarantee Credit? You might get more than you think.

It's too complicated to apply

Pension Credit is one of the simplest benefits to apply for. You won't have a long form to fill in on your own; it only takes one free phone call.



Graham's story

Graham is 81. He told us, "I am a full-time carer for my wife who is paralysed down her right-hand side. I gave up my work in marketing to look after her and bring up our three children, because of a lack of other support.



“ Now, as pensioners, Guarantee Pension Credit is a lifeline to us and tops up our State Pensions. We don't have any private pensions and couldn't manage without it. I feel strongly that people should find out if they are entitled to Guarantee Pension Credit. Some people might think of it as charity but it's not. It's a vital part of our State Pension system.

I would urge everyone to see if they are entitled to Guarantee Pension Credit. It brings other excellent benefits with it, such as free dental treatment, vouchers for glasses, the Cold Weather Payment, Council Tax Support and full Housing Benefit. Just claiming it can open all these doors.



About Independent Age

Whatever happens as we get older, we all want to remain independent and live life on our own terms. That's why, as well as offering regular friendly contact and a strong campaigning voice, Independent Age can provide you and your family with clear, free and impartial advice on the issues that matter: care and support, money and benefits, health and mobility.

A charity founded over 150 years ago, we're independent so you can be.

For more information, visit our website
independentage.org

Call us for information or to arrange free, impartial advice from an adviser. Lines are open 8.30am–6.30pm Monday to Friday and 9am–1pm Saturday. Freephone **0800 319 6789** or email **advice@independentage.org**



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