



Concessions for Older People (April 2006)

Ref IS/3

This information sheet is aimed at people over 60 and refers to the situation in England. Those living in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland may wish to contact:

Age Concern Scotland, Causewayside House, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR, tel: 0845 125 9732 (local call rate), website: www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk;

Age Concern Cymru, Ty John Pathy, Units 13 & 14 Neptune Court, Vanguard Way, Cardiff CF24 5PJ, tel: 029 2043 1555 (national call rate); website: www.accymru.org.uk;

Age Concern Northern Ireland, 3 Lower Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NR, tel: 028 9032 5055 (national call rate) Monday to Friday 9.30am - 1pm.

Thank you for your request for information about concessions for older people. Most concessions are 'discretionary', so you will need to ask about them and they may be limited to people with particular circumstances. Contact your local council to find out what it can provide. Your local Age Concern group should also be able to give you information about what is available in your area.

The following details may be of assistance to you:

Health

Prescriptions and eye tests are free to people of 60 or over, regardless of income or savings. NHS hearing aids are available on free loan; replacements and batteries are also free. Primary Care Trusts have criteria that they use to decide who is eligible for free NHS chiropody services. Unfortunately there is no automatic entitlement for pensioners to free dental treatment, or help with the cost of glasses, wigs and fabric supports, or travel costs to hospital, unless the person is in receipt of the guarantee part of Pension Credit or Income Support. People who are not getting these benefits but have a low income may be able to get some help towards the cost of these items from the NHS low income scheme.

The Department of Health leaflet HC 11 explains entitlement to help with health costs.

Money matters

Pensions and money benefits are not 'concessions' but older people do become entitled to increases in tax allowances at age 65. People over 60 may be entitled to Pension Credit so it is worth checking entitlement occasionally. Further information about the range of money benefits for older people can be found on Age Concern's Factsheet 18, *A brief guide to money benefits*.

Heating

Energy efficiency Government grants may be available for householders aged 60 or over who receive income related benefits. Eligible households are those in receipt of one or more of the following: Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or income based Job Seeker's Allowance. Central heating systems will be offered in certain circumstances and these installations will be accompanied by insulation measures. Some households will be offered replacement energy efficient boilers or repairs. The maximum amount for a Warm Front grant is £2700 (£4000 for oil fired central heating systems). The grants are targeted to eligible owner occupiers and tenants in private rented accommodation.

Other households where someone gets certain disability benefits may also be able to claim one of these grants.

A £200 winter fuel payment will be made to all pensioner households in winter of 2006-2007. An additional £100 will be paid where someone in the household is 80 or over.

The 'cold weather' payment (currently £8.50) is automatically made to qualifying individuals, who must receive Pension Credit or Income Support, with certain disability premiums, in the winter months between November and April, when the temperature is at 0° or below for a period of seven consecutive days. Further information can be found on Age Concern's Factsheet 1, *Help with Heating*.

Telephones

There is no specific concession for older people wanting to have a telephone installed, or towards use of a telephone. Social Services are required (under the *Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970*) to help with installation costs in certain circumstances; some local authorities also help to pay towards rental. British Telecom itself offers no concessions, although it has a Light User Scheme for people who make very few calls in any quarter. For further information see Age Concern's Information sheet IS/22, *Information about telephones*.

Television

There is a very limited television licence concessions scheme which grants a £5 licence to retired people of pension age, disabled people, or mentally ill or people with learning difficulties provided that they live in a 'home'. All the people living in the home must qualify under these criteria, and there are strict definitions of what constitutes a home. This concession is not available to older people living on their own or with a partner in their own home. For further details see Age Concern's Factsheet 3, *Television Licence Concessions*.

Households with someone of 75 or over have been entitled to a free TV licence since November 2000.

Education and Leisure

Concessions on adult education classes and the use of leisure facilities are generally available but vary from 25% to 100% depending on the local provider. Some councils have 'Leisure Passports' which entitle the user to a whole range of services at a discount. Museums and galleries usually have free entry and places of entertainment, such as theatres, may offer reduced admission especially for matinees. Some libraries have free internet access. Hairdressers and barbers often offer special rates for older people at certain times of the week. Organisations such as the 'National Trust' provide reduced subscriptions. Some restaurant chains and public houses provide meals at a discount for older people. Further information can be found on Age Concern's Factsheet 30, *Leisure and Learning*.

Travel

There are two main types of travel concessions for older people. The first is provided by the operators themselves - the best known is the Senior Railcard. This can be bought at main railway stations; is available for all older people aged 60 and over; and currently costs £20. It entitles the holder to a third off most railway fares anywhere within Great Britain. Senior Railcard holders can also buy a Rail Europ Senior Card for £12 for savings of up to 25% on cross boarder rail travel in Europe.

The second type of concession is provided by local authorities. These may be a bus (or bus and train) pass entitling the holder to free or reduced fare travel, or tokens to a set value which can be exchanged for journeys.

From April 2006 there will be free off peak bus travel for disabled people and those aged over 60, throughout England.

More information can be found on Age Concern's Factsheet 26, *Travel and transport*.

Passports

Every British Citizen born on or before 2 September 1929 is now entitled to a free passport. Those eligible can apply for their free passport through the normal application route.

If you would like to receive this information in large print phone 0800 00 99 66 (free call) or write to Age Concern FREEPOST (SWB 30375), Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7ZZ.

Find out more about Age Concern England online at www.ageconcern.org.uk

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