



Marie Rimmer CBE, MP
Member of Parliament for St. Helens
South & Whiston
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 4847/01744 752075

Single Pensioners and the State Pension:

Over the past year and a half, food prices, energy bills and other costs have risen by levels not seen in a generation. In my view, this increase in the cost of living shows the importance of Pension Credit, which is intended to provide support for pensioners on very modest incomes, most of the people claiming Pension Credit are single pensioners.

I note that the Government has now announced that the value of both Pension Credit and the State Pension will rise by 8.5% in the financial year 2024/25. Pension Credit provides single pensioners with more than couples claiming it receive individually. With regard to Cost-of-Living Payments, Ministers have now confirmed that they have no plans to provide further payments after the end of the current financial year in March 2024. These were also flat payments, which benefited single pensioners. I recognise that the decision to end Cost of Living Payments will disappoint some constituents and I hope that the Government will respond to the concerns that campaigning organisations for pensioners have raised.

I remain concerned that the Government is failing to encourage sufficient take-up of Pension Credit. In my view it is telling that a former Pensions Minister, speaking in October 2022 while in post, conceded that take up of Pension Credit has been too low. The financial consequences of not claiming it are very serious. This includes the non-payment of tens of millions of pounds-worth of support, such as a reduction in heating bills through the Warm Homes Discount, and a continued entitlement to a free TV licence, funded by the BBC, for those aged over 75.

I believe it is wrong that so many pensioners on lower incomes are missing out on this vital financial help. I know that Ministers cite a £1.2 million public awareness campaign, but I fear it is still failing to achieve sufficient success.

In addition, I know that research from Loughborough University suggests that the failure to deliver Pension Credit to all those who are entitled to it is resulting in £4 billion a year of increased NHS and social care spending. This highlights how the non-take-up of Pension Credit can impose large additional costs elsewhere.

For all these reasons, I call on Ministers to do much more to make people aware of Pension Credit and to encourage far greater take-up of it. A clear action plan to do this is needed as quickly as possible.

Marie Rimmer CBE, MP

Constituency Office:

Marie Rimmer CBE, MP, 2nd Floor, Century House, Hardshaw Street, St. Helens WA10 1QU, 01744 752075,
marie.rimmer.mp@parliament.uk
Website: www.marierimmer.co.uk