

# Ageing well in Telford and Wrekin



Senior Citizens' Forum

An active voice for older people

# Introduction

This booklet is a source of information regarding most aspects of life as you get older. There are ample opportunities in Telford for the older person to take up new careers, begin studies, join volunteer organisations or generally enjoy life while maintaining health and independence. You will find contact details for relevant organisations as well as some ideas that you may find useful when planning to stay active in older life.

The publication's printing and distribution costs have been funded by the Council but the dialogue and contact details have been written by volunteers from the Senior Citizens' Forum (Telford and Wrekin). As well as giving ideas and advice the booklet also acts as a directory of contacts.

We hope you find it interesting and useful.

**Brian Begley**

Senior Citizens' Forum

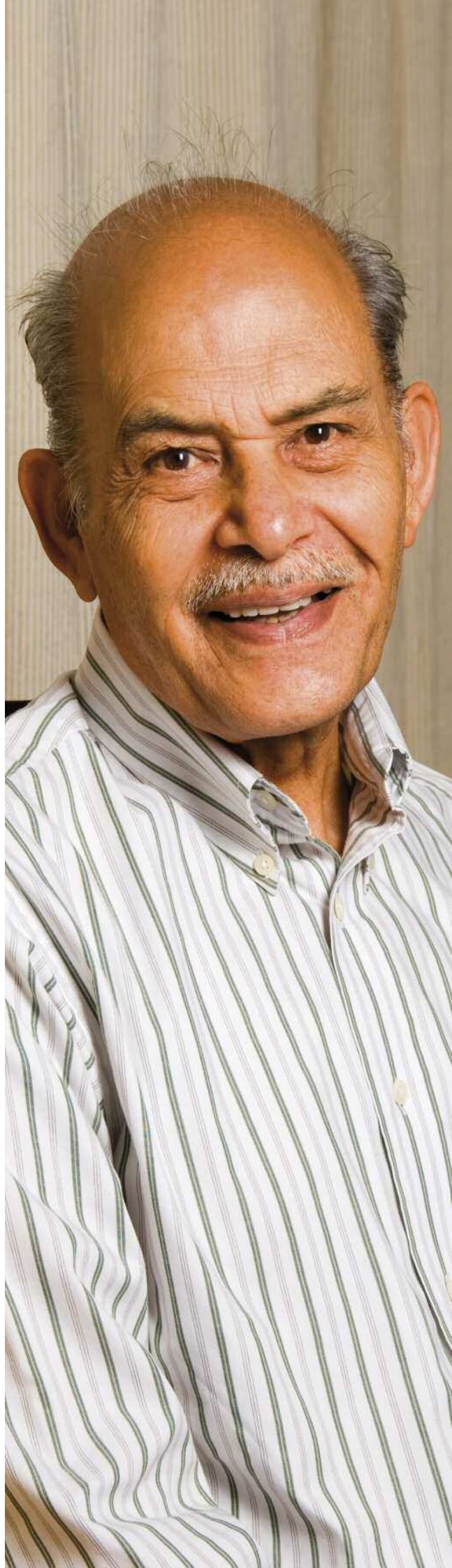
**Bob Jago**

Senior Citizens' Forum

















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Throughout the compilation of this document we have had support and assistance from Telford & Wrekin Council.

We would like to record our thanks to the Telford & Wrekin Council Readers Group for their helpful suggestions when producing this document.



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## Contacts

### Seated Exercise

All classes are run by tutors who have been trained by exercise professionals from the NHS Telford & Wrekin and there is a small charge. Phone 01952 686310 for more information.

### Home Improvement Agency

For Homesafe check and Homefix, phone 01952 381855

### Community alarms

**WATCH alarms** 01952 217156

**Age Concern** 01952 587749

**Sevenside Housing** 0845 234 2424

### Trader Register

The Trader Register offers help in finding reliable tradesmen who can provide gardeners, plumbers, electricians, carpenters or decorators 0845 6789023

### Community Meals Service

01952 381280

### British Red Cross

01952 209840

### Senior Citizens' Forum

01952 211410 or <http://tandwseniors.org.uk>

### Flex Card

To get a Flex Card for free swimming and cheaper physical activities see [http://www.telford.gov.uk/Leisure+culture+and+tourism/Leisure+centres/Flex/FlexCard\(LeisureDiscountCard\).htm](http://www.telford.gov.uk/Leisure+culture+and+tourism/Leisure+centres/Flex/FlexCard(LeisureDiscountCard).htm) or enquire at a local leisure centre.

### Walkabout Wrekin

01952 686332

### Library Service

01952 382915 (general enquiries)

01952 382918 (information desk)

# A positive attitude

## Making the most of life's opportunities

### Stay positive

Your attitude to life influences everything you do and it can influence how you cope with the things life throws at you. Take time and effort to do the things *you* enjoy. Try to keep active and make the most of life. We can't stop getting older or turn the clock back but, with retirement, there is now more time to find new things to do.

### Benefits that come with retirement

Let us focus on finance for a while and list some benefits that people over 60 can enjoy.

- Free prescriptions and eye tests.

Norman, aged 63 and still working, complained to his friend that prescription charges for his medicines were very expensive. He was shocked and surprised when his friend told him that prescriptions were free for anyone aged 60 and over. He had assumed age 65 would be the qualifying age. Be aware of your entitlements or it can be costly.

- An increase in personal tax allowances (when 65).
- Winter fuel payments – tax free.
- Free bus pass for all local bus services throughout England.
- Reduced-cost railcard – (see page 29) You can have a free bus pass and pay for a reduced-cost rail-card.

- Telford & Wrekin Flex Card (no charge) giving free swimming sessions and reduced costs for education classes and fitness centres (some of these are free).

### What's going on around here?

The free booklet produced by the Senior Citizens' Forum in conjunction with the NHS Telford and Wrekin called "Active Healthy Lives" is a good source of information. It lists leisure, social and educational activities available throughout Telford and Wrekin. Apart from these group activities there are many other things to do including visiting local parks, gardens, walking, libraries, etc – all free and now you're retired you have time to make the most of these opportunities. By keeping physically and mentally active you will feel happier and fitter. Use your newly found free time positively – you don't need to join in group activities if you don't want to but whatever you do, enjoy it.

**Go on – don't just sit there – do something!**

# Safety in the home

## Falls prevention

Increasing age brings an increase in the risk of falling. Falling over an object or tripping on the stairs are the most common causes. It is important in the first instance to check loose carpets and mats that you may trip on. Try keeping the stairwell lit during the night. If you do have a fall then inform your GP or nurse, because the fall could be due to dizziness from a combination of prescription drugs or medicines or problems with your vision. Importantly, have an action plan of what to do should you fall while alone.

## Keeping your home safe

A few simple precautionary measures can reduce the risk of falling. Keep clutter off the floor and stairs and keep everyday utensils within easy reach. Ensure your home is well lit. Make sure you have a clear space to put down hot pans in the kitchen. There are also some adaptations within the home that could reduce the risk of falling. Simple aids such as a hand rail over the bath or along the stairs can be obtained and fitted by the Home Improvement Agency under their Home-fix scheme – ring them for details. They also have a range of modern digital aids and alarms that can be fitted in the home. Items such as “reminder” alarms alert you that you are near steep steps or stairwells. The list of available items is expanding all the time. Call the Home Improvement Agency for an assessment of your needs and news of what is available. Check out costs at the same time: some fitments are free, others are not. The local fire service will test and fit smoke

alarms: contact details are on page 14. The Home Improvement Agency also offers to carry out a full free home safety check (Home Safe) and, if you have been burgled will provide and fit free replacement door and window locks.

## Minimise risks further

Being fit and healthy will maintain muscle and strength. Eating a healthy balanced diet, doing regular exercise and wearing “sensible” footwear will help. Make sure you get help when lifting or carrying heavy loads and try not to change light bulbs or climb step ladders while on your own.

## Alarm pendants

You could consider wearing an alarm pendant or bracelet so that you can automatically summon help should you fall. Contact details are on page 4. Check on costs before you make your choice of supplier.



# Help with shopping, gardening and household tasks

## Shopping online, ready-meal deliveries

Shopping “online” is a good option if you are without transport or are housebound but have access to a computer. Most major supermarkets offer the service. Items are selected from an easy-to-read menu which includes any special offers. Goods are delivered at a time suitable to the shopper and payment is usually by secure transfer from credit or debit card details. Delivery drivers do not accept money.

Meals on Wheels can be available from the Community Meals Service following a care assessment. Don't forget that there are commercial firms who will deliver frozen meals ready for cooking in a microwave or conventional oven. Again delivery can be arranged at a convenient time. The selection of meals is quite extensive and they can cater for special diets.

If you require help with the garden the Home Improvement Agency has a register of “approved” gardeners. They will take on most tasks in any size garden, but you may have to negotiate rates yourself. The Home Improvement Agency can also help older people with minor repairs and jobs around the home, at a reasonable cost, eg tap washers, hanging curtains, assembling flat-pack furniture (Homefix scheme).

A range of equipment to help improve safety and independence is available, for example stair-lifts, bathroom rails, etc. Some of these

are available from the council though most of them come from commercial firms. More details are given on page 26.

**British Red Cross** may be able to offer some short-term help at home:

- Assist people recently discharged from hospital to return to their daily routines.
- Enable you to go home from hospital sooner or visit friends by borrowing a wheelchair or commode.
- Transport people with mobility difficulties who have no access to appropriate transport.
- Support people at a time of crisis
- Assist people to remain living in their own homes.

For more information phone 01952 209840.



## Contacts

Shropdoc  
0845 408 8000

### NHS Direct

You can obtain 24-hour general medical advice by telephoning 0845 46 47

### Choose and Book

To arrange appointments please contact the appointments desk at the hospital of your choice or at your GP surgery.

### Problems finding an NHS dentist

If you have any problems finding an NHS dentist in Telford and Wrekin call 01743 261354.

Society of Chiropractors and  
Podiatrists  
0845 450 3720

### Walk-In doctors, surgeries

**Princess Royal Hospital** 01952 457414  
**Telford Town Centre** 01952 293258

A list of doctors, surgeries can be found on the internet at <http://www.telford.nhs.uk>

# Taking care of your health

## Your GP

You should be registered with a GP practice near to where you live. Most GP practices usually provide a bookable surgery appointment on weekdays with “out-of-hours” contacts for overnight, weekends and bank holidays. NHS Direct and Shropdoc are contactable 24 hours per day. Your GP can also refer you to community health services such as a district nurse, physiotherapist or other medical specialists.

## Knowing and storing your medicines

Nowadays many people, both young and old, rely on medicines to help them stay fit and well. If you are taking a number of different medicines remember what each one is for and when to take it. An aid to this is a pill dispenser, clearly marked with each day of the week and the periods of the day. These pill holders are readily available for purchase at most medical outlets and pharmacies. In fact a pharmacist is often the best person to advise on your needs and can suggest ways to make things easier to store and take your medicines. Always check the expiry dates of your medicines and return any “out-of-date” items to the pharmacy for free and safe disposal. If you take prescription medicines on repeat prescriptions or you suffer from a long-term illness you ought to have a review once or twice a year. Speak to your GP or pharmacist.

## Dental health

Regular dental checks are important in order to identify poor teeth and badly fitting



dentures. However, always check on the cost of treatment in advance, it can be expensive. People on low income or in receipt of certain benefits may qualify for free treatment. People over 60 are eligible for free eye tests from an optician of their choice. After the test you will be given a prescription for the lenses you need. Again, you may take this to an optician of your choice to have your spectacles made. Shop around, costs can vary, there may be special offers available and, if on benefits, you may get help with costs.

## Foot care

This is an important aspect of personal healthcare. If you experience pain then something is wrong. Seek help, particularly if you are diabetic. Diabetics have poor circulation and lose sensation in their feet. Your GP can refer you to NHS Podiatry services in Telford or you can privately visit a state registered podiatrist or chiropodist near you. Contact the Society of Chiropodist and Podiatrists: 0845 450 3720.



## Contacts

### Message in a Bottle

Bottles can be obtained from Lions Clubs International, Ironbridge Branch on 0845 833 9516 or Age Concern on 01952 587749, or ask your local pharmacist.

### Choose and Book

To arrange appointments please contact the appointments desk at the hospital of your choice or at your GP surgery.

### Health Through Warmth

01952 381864

### Home Improvement Agency

01952 381855

### Energy Efficiency Advice Centre

0800 512012

# Keeping warm and well

**Joan's Story.** Joan is an active 80-year-old widow, a skilled cook and gardener. She is also asthmatic and has a heart problem. One morning she suddenly felt unwell, short of breath and with palpitations. She rang 999 and an ambulance was dispatched immediately. Before it had arrived she worsened and collapsed on the floor. The paramedics got into the house and began recovery procedures but, without knowing her medications and history their task was frustrated. Just then, by a remarkable coincidence, her son-in-law called at the house on a surprise visit. He was able to tell the crew all they needed to know about her ailments and medicines. Using this knowledge Joan was treated appropriately and made a swift recovery. If her son-in-law had not arrived when he did the situation could have had a tragic outcome. Joan did not have the back-up of a "message in a bottle".

## Message in a bottle

"Message in a bottle" is a scheme, sponsored by NHS Telford & Wrekin, which you keep a small container with all details of repeat prescriptions, medical treatments, allergies, names of GP and next-of-kin in the fridge



door. A small alert sticker is stuck on the inside of the front door of the house and another is placed on the fridge door. Emergency crews can find all they need to know in the fridge! Bottles are freely available from some GP surgeries, libraries and Age Concern. They are also free from any member of your local Lions Club which is promoting the scheme. Phone 0845 833 9516. (By the way, Joan now has a "Message in a bottle" – and so has her son-in-law.)

## Keeping warm and well in winter

You can get free advice on keeping a warm home by reading the useful leaflets available from Age Concern and local organisations. In Telford the Home Improvement Agency is also a great source of help, including its Health Through Warmth scheme. Anyone over the age of 60 can have a free anti-flu jab. Since flu is particularly serious in older people take the opportunity to have an annual vaccination.

## Choose and Book

If your GP decides that you need to see a specialist for hospital treatment, then you have the right to select that hospital from a list of local ones. The GP provides a reference number for your case and you get to select the time and date of your appointment by ringing a centralised patient appointments bureau which is in contact with the hospitals on the selection list. Ask at your surgery for details.



## Contacts

### Telford & Wrekin Volunteer Centre

For more information phone 01952 291350 or contact [beverleyharris@tandwcvcs.org.uk](mailto:beverleyharris@tandwcvcs.org.uk). You will be offered a personal or telephone interview for a confidential, no-obligation informal one-to-one. Or visit their website <http://telfordvc.tandwcvcs.org.uk>

Or visit the National Volunteering Database at <http://www.do-it.org.uk>. On this website you enter your postcode, areas of interest and how far you are prepared to travel. You are then presented with a list of options. You then have the opportunity to register your interest with Telford & Wrekin Volunteer Centre.

### Senior Citizens' Forum Website

[www.tandwseniors.org.uk](http://www.tandwseniors.org.uk) has a long list of contact information for things for you to do.

### Active Healthy Lives booklet

This booklet lists, by districts, most of the social activities available in Telford. This can be obtained from 01952 211410 or can be seen on line at [www.tandwseniors.org.uk](http://www.tandwseniors.org.uk) under A – Z Leisure Guide.

### British Red Cross

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the British Red Cross. If you can give any time to help others please phone 01952 209840 for more information.

### Community and civic groups

The *Shropshire Star* has a comprehensive list of community and civic groups in your area.

### Age Concern

01952 587749/587821

# Social activities

## Social interaction

### Volunteering

It is important to make sure you do something sociable and enjoyable every day. Activities that combine mental, physical and social stimulation are the most beneficial. Keep in touch with friends and family by phone, email or a letter, go out with friends or colleagues, volunteer for something that interests you, or join a club. If you are coming up to retirement, plan how you will remain socially involved – you could start a completely new and different hobby! Local organisations such as Age Concern run day centres, drop-in centres and lunch clubs. There are many opportunities listed by district in Telford listed in the Active Healthy Lives booklet (contact details on opposite page).

Volunteering is a great way for older people to stay active after they retire, make new friends and learn new skills. People say that putting their spare time to good use is the main reason for volunteering, and friendship with people who already volunteer was one of the most important reasons for getting involved.

Volunteering is simple. It's about giving your time to do something useful, without getting paid (apart from expenses). In return you get the satisfaction of time and effort well spent. In addition, volunteering can be a great way to meet new people, learn new skills and gain useful experience. It should also be fun!

The range of opportunities is huge. Whatever skills and experience you have, there is something that you can do.

Beryl was devastated by the untimely death of her husband. She refused to leave her house or take telephone calls. Her friends became very worried about her. One of them was a member of a League of Friends group running a café at the local hospital and she persuaded Beryl to work a short volunteer shift as they were very short-staffed. Reluctantly Beryl participated. To everyone's amazement she enjoyed it so much she became a regular volunteer. Her life was changed and she soon coped better with everyday life alone.





## Contacts

### Trader Register

0845 6789023 or [www.traderregister.org.uk](http://www.traderregister.org.uk)

### Crime Prevention

01952 214830

### Police

Call Police on 0300 333 3000 to provide information on suspicious people, vehicles or activities no matter how insignificant it may seem.

### Ringmaster

01952 214796 or register to receive messages on line at [twpcm.org.uk](http://twpcm.org.uk)

### Crime Stoppers

To give information anonymously phone 0800 555 111

### Home Safe Service

This service is available from the council's Home Improvement Agency – contact 01952 381855



### Free smoke alarms

For free smoke alarms and a home fire safety check phone 01743 260298

### Severn Trent and bogus callers

Call 08457 500 500 and ask to register for a password. All authorised callers from Severn Trent will know that password.

### The Home Office

The Home Office has introduced a new self-assessment tool to help people check their home security. An online questionnaire "How Safe is Your Home" is available and takes approximately three minutes to complete. If you haven't already completed this questionnaire, please visit:

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/secureyourhome/questionnaire/form.php](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/secureyourhome/questionnaire/form.php)

# Police, Trader Register, false callers

## Bogus callers/distraction burglars

They come in all sorts of guises: gas, electricity, water, council, health authority officials, they talk and dress the part as well. Children are also known to trick their way into peoples' homes – balls in the garden, drinks of water, etc.

## What to do!

Firstly, do not open the door. Use your spy hole or nearby window, speak to the caller through the door or glass – a genuine caller won't mind. Ask what they want, look to see if they dress the part. Can you see a vehicle? Is anyone hiding by the wall? Bogus callers nearly always work in pairs. Don't be pressurised into opening your door until you are satisfied with what's being said. If you are not sure ask the caller to call back later, at a time you set, and arrange to have a neighbour, friend or relative with you for that visit.

If you are considering letting the caller into your home, check their identification. If you do not have a door chain, ask the caller to post their identification through the letterbox. Identification cards should be in good condition with a photograph of the caller, his/her name and the name of the company for whom they work. Take your time and look at the identification, make sure what they have said reads the same on the card. **"If in doubt keep them out!"** and call the police on 999.

## Trader Register

The Trader Register is not an approval scheme but aims to reassure consumers and help them to find a reliable trader. It lists

traders who are committed to honest and fair trade and providing good customer service. When disputes arise traders and Trading Standards will work with the consumer to seek a positive outcome.

## Home Safe Service

Telford & Wrekin Council offers a **free** home check service for residents aged over 60 who are disabled. We visit your home and offer advice on reducing the risk of slips, trips and falls, improving the security of your home, fire safety, energy efficiency and reducing your fuel bills and general home maintenance.

## Ringmaster

With the risk of distraction burglary, bogus callers or unwanted salespersons West Mercia Constabulary and Telford & Wrekin Council are running a free service to inform as many people as possible of these illegal activities.

Subscribers receive up-to-the-minute information about crime by email, telephone or text messages. This will enable them to be on the lookout for similar activity in their area and put them on their guard.

It can also be used to pass information to the police. It is hoped that this scheme will be effective in detecting and reducing crime.

You can sign-up for these messages at [www.twpcm.org](http://www.twpcm.org). For more information call 0300 333 3000, ext. 5996 or visit [www.safertelford.org.uk](http://www.safertelford.org.uk)



## Contacts

### Telford & Wrekin Council Social Services

Call the Principal Officer on 01952 385678 for adult protection or 01952 381910 for domestic abuse.

### Social care inspection bodies

If you have concerns about bad practices or abuse in a care home or by domiciliary care services, contact the appropriate organisation. In England, it is the Care Quality Commission, phone 03000 616161

### Action on Elder Abuse

This helpline is run by specially trained staff and volunteers, and provides confidential support and advice for people who have been abused or know someone who may be suffering abuse. Available weekdays 9am–5pm on freephone 0808 808 8141

### Age Concern Advocacy

01743 357748

# Adult abuse

Every older person has the right to live their life free from fear of harm or neglect. You have the right to feel safe. If someone you know is harming you in some way, it is important to let someone else know. You do not have to put up with something being done or said to you that you don't like.

Try to share information about abuse with someone you trust. If there is no one, there are many professional people who can offer advice. GPs and practice nurses will listen to your complaints and maintain confidentiality. You may also raise these issues with Telford & Wrekin Council's social work department, the police and, if a care home is involved, with the Care Quality Commission.

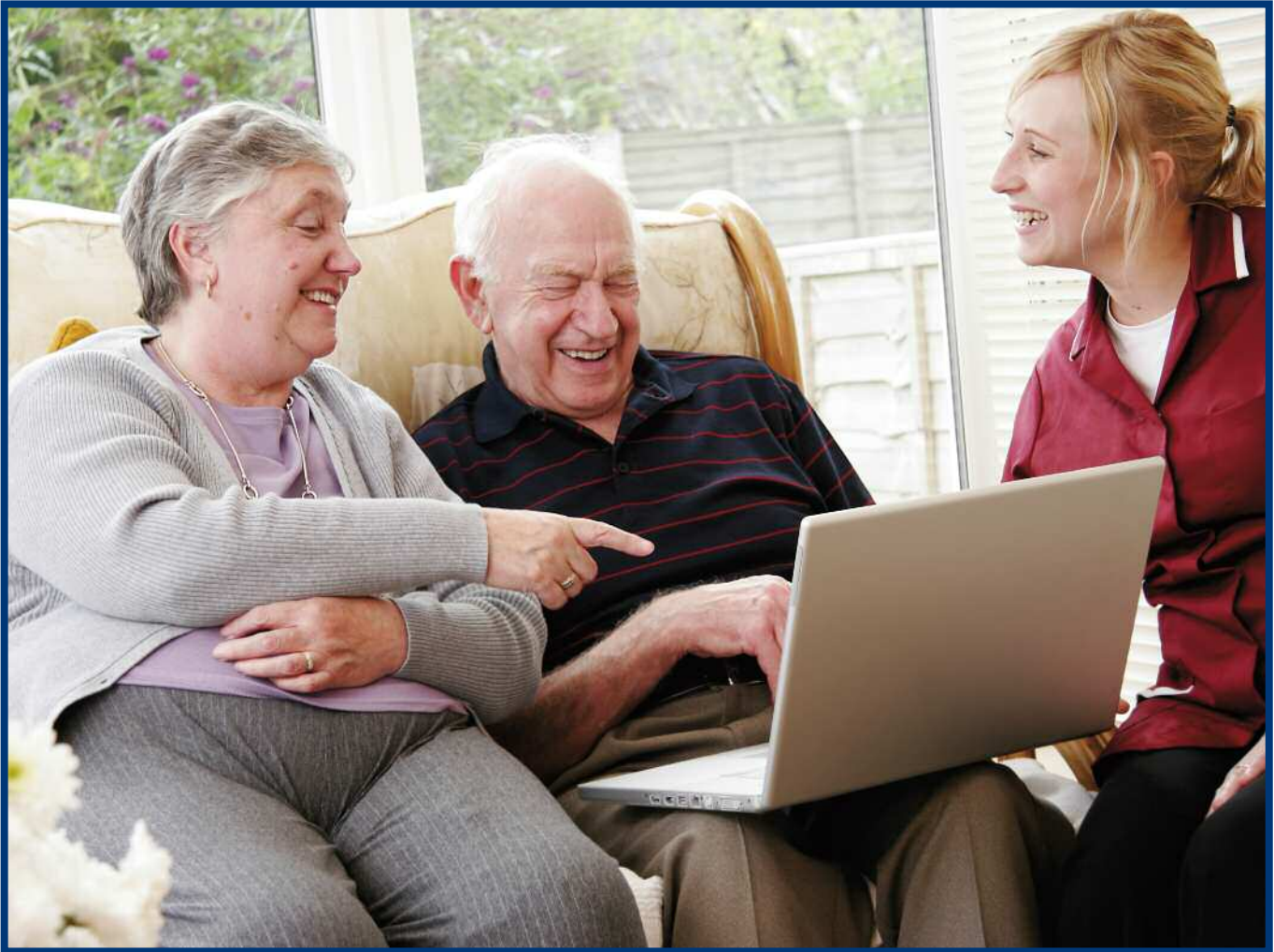
Abuse comes in many forms – physical, psychological, sexual, financial or neglect. It can occur in your own home, hospital, care home or day centre and may be caused by many different people who come into contact with an older person – a relative, carer, nurse, visitor, volunteer helper or social worker. The abuser is often well known to the person being abused.

Indications that an older person is being abused are injuries (especially if untreated), poor skin condition or hygiene, dehydration or malnourishment, loss of weight, soiled clothing or bed, signs of having been restrained, inappropriate use of medication and they may complain that they have been slapped or roughly treated. A change of

personality or demeanour may indicate abuse, especially of a sexual nature.

You need to be particularly careful about financial abuse. June was persuaded by her family to sell her house and possessions and move with them to Spain. After a short while the arrangements did not work out as planned and the family returned to the UK. However they left June at the airport to fend for herself; her family took the return flight to Spain.

Audrey needed help paying her bills and looking after her money so her son used to take her to the bank to draw out sums of money to enable him to settle her accounts. This went on for quite some time until the son decided to move house. She then started receiving letters saying she owed quite significant sums of money to the utility companies and to social services for the care they had provided. An investigation showed she owed several thousand pounds and that her son had used the money to settle his own accounts. Fortunately she had help to claim attendance allowance which was back-dated and was more than enough to pay the outstanding bills and leave a reasonable amount in her bank account. Ironically she died shortly afterwards. There was no will, and her son inherited her estate.



## Contacts

Carers Contact Centre  
01952 240209

### Carers assessments for family members

Contact The Carers Assessment Team on 01952 381246 or write to The Carers Assessment Team, PO Box 214, 4c Darby House, Telford, TF3 4LE. Carers Contact Centre can advise.

### Carers Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Disability Allowance

In the first instance contact the Benefits Enquiry Line 0800 88 22 00 or the Local Pension Service 01952 207420

Other useful contacts for family carers:

**Carers Direct hotline** (NHS) For information and advice call 0808 802 0202

**Carers UK helpline** 0808 808 7777 or [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

**Government online website:**  
[www.direct.gov.uk/Carers](http://www.direct.gov.uk/Carers)

# Care and caring

## Telford and Wrekin Carers Contact Centre

***“I didn’t know I was a carer. I just look after...”***

It can take a long time for some people to see themselves as a carer. Caring can impact on our lives at any age. A sudden stroke or the onset of Alzheimer’s can drastically change retirement plans. Taking on more responsibility for an elderly relative may affect employment or other family commitments of the middle-aged. A carer in their 70s or 80s may be worried about who will look after their adult child with learning disabilities in the future.

The Carers Contact Centre can help you to deal with some of these caring issues. Based locally they can offer information, advice and support to carers looking after an adult relative, friend or neighbour who needs help because of age, disability or long-term health needs.

Their support workers are able to listen and offer information and support to individuals. They help carers to find their way round the system and link them to other organisations who can provide specialist support. They also run support groups which meet monthly at venues in the Telford area.

Carers Contact Centre provides a free Carers Handbook and a quarterly newsletter. They administer a Carers Short Term Break Grant on behalf of the local authority and

organise events, pamper sessions and walks which provide a break from caring. They provide opportunities for carers to have a voice in planning and developing services and run courses for carers.

## Carers Allowance

Carers Allowance is available to carers who meet specific criteria. For more information contact the Benefits Enquiry Line or the Local Pension Service.

## Carers assessments

Carers have the right to have an assessment of their needs even if the person being cared for has refused an assessment or community care services. For further details contact The Carers Assessment Team on 01952 381246



## Contacts

### Cruse Bereavement Care

Cruse Bereavement Care exists to promote the well-being of bereaved people and to enable anyone bereaved to understand their grief and cope with their loss. Services are free to bereaved people. phone 0845 6066812 .

### Age Concern

Age Concern provide a useful guide 'What to Do When Someone Dies' which is also available on line at

[http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/info\\_guide\\_14.asp](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/info_guide_14.asp) or phone 01952 587749

### Age Concern volunteer visiting scheme

Phone 01952 587749 for more information. Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair. Phone 01952 256161

### Cinnamon Trust

01736 757900 or on line at [www.cinnamon.org.uk](http://www.cinnamon.org.uk).

### RSPCA Pet Rehoming

0300 123 0753

### Telford & Wrekin Council

**Contact centre** 01952 383838

### Citizens' Advice Bureau

0845 146 1554

### Registrar's office

01952 382444



# Dealing with life changes – bereavement, befriending

Sometimes the people who help most are not the obvious ones – sometimes someone you are not that close to is the one who helps you through the bleak times. And there are befriending or other support services for bereaved people in many areas – ask at your place of worship, if you have one, or your doctor's surgery, day centre or public library. Some of the organisations listed opposite can also put you in touch with local groups.

Try not to hurry the healing process; take it at your own pace. Try not to hide your feelings; talk about the person you have lost with your family, a close friend or a sympathetic group. And if you ever feel you need to talk to someone, but have nowhere to turn, get in touch with Cruse Bereavement Care or the Samaritans who can provide a listening ear. If you get Pension Credit, Income Support, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Working Tax Credit (with a disability element), or Child Tax Credit, you may qualify for a funeral payment from the Social Fund to help pay for the funeral. You must make your claim within three months of the funeral. The Pension Service, your funeral director, your local social security office or the Citizens' Advice Bureau can help you to claim.

If there is no money to pay for the funeral, the local council should arrange and pay for a simple funeral (or sometimes the hospital will do so if the person died there). This will be a dignified funeral followed by cremation or burial, and is not like the old 'pauper's' funeral. If you don't have the money to pay

for a funeral, talk to the council (or hospital) as soon as possible – don't make any arrangements before you do this. You might find it helpful to get advice and support from your local Citizens' Advice Bureau if you are in this position.

Age Concern Volunteer Visiting Scheme visit older people in their own homes, providing friendship and support. Visits take place at times to suit both volunteer and service user and can vary from once a week to once a month. For more details, contact Age Concern at the Telford office.

## Who will look after your pet?

For many older people living on their own, their pets are their reason for living. Much anxiety can be caused to pet owners wondering about the fate of a faithful companion should they die, fall ill or have to move to residential accommodation.

The Cinnamon Trust will work in partnership with owners and their pets to overcome any difficulties that might arise. It has a national network of volunteers to provide practical help when any aspect of day-to-day care poses a problem – for example walking the dog for a housebound owner or taking the pet to the vet. The trust also provides short or long-term care because the owner is in care, and the owner is kept in touch with their pet. Contact details on the opposite page. The RSPCA will also offer to rehome your pet.



## Contacts

Home Improvement Agency  
For Homesafe check phone 01952 381855.

Health Through Warmth  
Contact the Home Improvement Agency on  
01952 381855.

Trader Register  
The Trader Register offers help to find reliable  
tradesmen who can provide gardeners,  
plumbers, electricians, carpenters or  
decorators, phone 0845 6789023.

Energy Efficiency Advice Centre  
0800 512012

Park Home Residents Action  
Alliance  
01902 373462

Independent Park Home Advisory  
Service  
0800 612 8938

National Association of Park Home  
Residents  
01492 535677

Telford & Wrekin Council  
01952 383838

ExtraCare Charitable Trust  
02476 506011

# Housing

## Staying in your own home

You may be happy staying in your own home as you get older or you may want to move into a smaller house, nearer to friends and family. Where you live affects your quality of life, so consider the options carefully. Your own home may need some repairs or modifications to make it more comfortable and easier to maintain. Home owners are responsible for these matters. Lists of approved tradesmen are available from Trading Standards and the Home Improvement Agency in Telford. Grants or loans to help with costs may be available. Contact the council for information. Age Concern also has helpful factsheets (See Page 32).

## A warm home

Housing insulation grants are available from the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre Offices for all people over 60; free insulation is there for anyone over 70. If any occupant is suffering from an illness or complaint that could be helped by having a warm home, the Health Through Warmth scheme, run by the Home Improvement Agency, will assess their needs. If a need is identified the scheme will modify that house at a reduced cost.

## Changes within the home

A major change to your home to help retain your independence, such as fitting a shower or stair-lift, may attract a grant from the council. Information is available from the Home Improvement Agency and local tradesmen.

## Park homes

The prospect of living in a park home often appeals to older people. Residents are often restricted to those aged 55 and over so the sites have the feel of “retirement villages”. Furthermore, incoming residents are vetted by the site owner before they can purchase a park home. However, there are site rents to pay and any subsequent sale of a home will usually require the seller to pay commission to the site owner. Another risk is that the existing site owner may sell the site to a new owner who may impose different rents and sale conditions. Always weigh up all possible scenarios before investing in this way of living. Information is available from the Park Home Residents Action Alliance (PHRAA) and other agencies listed on the opposite page.

## ExtraCare Housing

If you feel that you need to move into a care home you could approach the ExtraCare Charitable Trust.





## Contacts

### Department of Work and Pensions Pensions forecast

You should contact The Future Pension Centre, The Pension Service, Tyneview Park, Whitley Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE98 1BA and ask for a form which you return to them. You can call them on 0845 300 0168 and they will fill in the form with you over the telephone. You can print a copy of the form on line at <http://www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/br19/home.asp> and send it to them or fill in the form online.

### Attendance allowance

0800 88 22 00 or 01952 207420

### Carers allowance

01253 856123 for a claim form or contact Carers' Contact Centre on 01952 240209.

### Pension credit

0800 99 1234 or <http://www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk> where you can do an online calculation.

### Telford & Wrekin Council

#### Council tax

Phone the contact centre on 01952 383838.

### Housing benefit

Phone the contact centre on 01952 383838. You may arrange a home visit when you first apply for one of the above benefits so that you can have help to fill in the forms. You can check if you are entitled to any of the above benefits by using the calculator on the internet at <http://www.telford.gov.uk/apps/calculator/index.htm>. You do not have to be getting pension credit to be entitled to these benefits.

### Solicitors for the elderly

Phone 0870 0670282 to ask for names of solicitors in the Telford area who take part in the scheme.

### Enduring power of attorney

Information is available online at [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Over50s/HomeAndCommunity/Carers/DG\\_10026855](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Over50s/HomeAndCommunity/Carers/DG_10026855)

### Age Concern

Age Concern offer a free 15 minute session of legal advice with a solicitor phone 01743 357748 for more information.

### TV licence

You are entitled to a free TV licence if you are over 75 years.

# Pensions, tax and benefits

## Equity release, wills and advocacy

### Housing and council tax benefit

If you pay council tax and/or rent then you may qualify for council tax benefit and/or housing benefit if you are on a low income and/or you have savings of less than £16,000 (although this capital limit does not apply if you receive Pension Credit Guarantee Credit). The council will come to your home to complete the application form so you don't need to worry about doing this yourself.

### Second adult rebate

If your income or capital is above the level to qualify for council tax benefit and another adult who is not your spouse or partner is living with you and they are on a low income you could qualify for a second adult rebate.

### Council tax discounts and disregards

Your council tax bill is calculated based on two people, aged 18 or over, living in the property. If you live on your own then the charge is reduced by 25 percent. In certain circumstances you may still be entitled to the 25 percent discount because others living in the property are disregarded. For example, someone who is caring for another person who is not their partner/spouse and people who are classed as severely mentally impaired.

If your income is low you may be entitled to pension credit. If you have difficulty coping with everyday life because of some disability you may be entitled to attendance allowance – this does not mean that you will need to

find a carer. This is not a means-tested allowance and may be used in any way you wish to get some help. A winter fuel payment is an annual payment to help people aged 60 and over with the costs of keeping warm this winter and will be paid automatically.

These benefits have been paid for by you during your working life and are yours as a right, so make sure you claim.

Equity release schemes offer lump sums and/or regular income and they all work on the same principle: they lend you a part of your home's value in return for a share of the proceeds when you die. Equity release plans can be complicated products and are a major step for many people. Your house is almost certainly the most expensive asset you own; it is also your home. Good advice is essential so the advice of a reliable financial advisor is recommended.

It is important to make a will, no matter how much you own, because if you die without a will there are certain rules which dictate how the money, property or possessions should be allocated. This may not be the way that you would have wished your money and possessions to be distributed.

If you are in any doubt as to whether or not you should make a will, you should consult a solicitor or professional adviser.



## Contacts

### Adaptations (private homes)

Phone Telford & Wrekin Council on 01952 381855.

### Adaptations (social housing/tenants)

Contact your landlord.

### Home Improvement Agency

Home Improvement Agency can help with adaptations and repairs. For more information see <http://www.telford.gov.uk/HIA> or phone 01952 381855.

### Occupational Therapy team

01952 381380

### Blue Badge scheme

You can obtain an application form by telephoning us on 01952 383838 or fill-in the form online at [www.telford.gov.uk](http://www.telford.gov.uk)

### British Red Cross

For more information phone 01952 209840.

### ShopMobility

01952 238005

# Staying mobile

## Mobility matters, aids and adaptations

Whatever your age, staying mobile to enable you to enjoy safe physical activity is an essential part of maintaining a healthy way of life. Being more active will strengthen your heart, help lower your blood pressure, help control your weight, improve your circulation, help lower your blood cholesterol levels and help reduce stress levels. If you enjoy doing things by yourself you could try walking, cycling or swimming. There are many local clubs and organisations that you can join if you enjoy the company of like-minded people.

Even if you have very limited mobility there are classes for seated exercise and specialist clubs for people who have heart disease or arthritis, or have suffered a stroke.

But as you get older tasks as simple as turning on taps, holding cutlery, getting in and out of the bath or climbing the stairs can become more difficult. However, there are lots of aids and adaptations which can make things easier. Adaptations can range from simply installing grab rails or a stairlift, to making a home suitable for someone who uses a wheelchair.

You may be able to get the aids you need following an assessment by an occupational therapist from the local council. You may be able to get a grant from the council to adapt your home.

The **British Red Cross** can loan you a wheelchair or a commode for a short time and has range of independent living products

for sale on its website at <http://www.redcross.org.uk/shop/subsection.asp?id=93309&entrypoint=shop>.



### Blue Badge scheme

If you are disabled you may be entitled to a Blue Badge which offers parking concessions.

### ShopMobility

You may borrow a wheelchair or scooter to help you shop independently in Telford town centre and from the multi-storey car park in Shrewsbury.

### Disabled band relief

If anyone living in your property uses a wheelchair to get around inside the home or the property has special facilities designed to meet the needs of a disabled person you may qualify for disabled band relief – this will reduce your council tax bill by one band.



## Contacts

Bus passes  
01952 200005

Reduced-price railcard  
01952 200005

Railcards  
National enquiry bureau 0845 7484950

Dial-a-Ride  
01952 211477

Blue Badge scheme  
01952 383838

# Mobility and transport

## Free bus pass

Everyone aged 60 and over is entitled to free travel on local buses throughout England. Free transport in Telford is available between 9am and 11pm on weekdays and at any time on weekends and bank holidays. Forms are available from Telford & Wrekin Council offices, phone 01952 200005.

## Railcards

Anyone aged 60 and over is entitled to a standard Senior Citizens Railcard, valid for one year from the date of purchase. The card allows at least one-third reduction on most leisure fares. Apply via the National Rail Enquiry Bureau, 0845 748 4950. Furthermore, a reduced-cost railcard is available for anyone not wishing to have a bus pass – contact 01952 200005.

## Dial-a-Ride

This system in Telford is meant to provide door-to-door transport for anyone who has difficulty using ordinary bus services. Once registered on the system a user can book transport via telephone. Some notice is required because the system does not respond on an immediate basis. Details can be obtained from the central office on 01952 200005.



## Blue Badge scheme

This provides car parking concessions for anyone with health problems which prevent them walking certain distances but who might drive a car or travel as a passenger with another driver. The badge is issued to an individual and can be used in any vehicle in which that person travels. It can help registered blind people gain direct access to facilities. Applications can be made to Telford & Wrekin Council, PO Box 215, Civic Offices, Telford TF3 4LP; phone 01952 383838.

## Contacts

### Leisure centres

Details of all activities at leisure centres can be seen at <http://www.telford.gov.uk/Leisure+culture+and+tourism/Leisure+centres>.

To get a Flex Card for free swimming and cheaper physical activities see [http://www.telford.gov.uk/Leisure+culture+and+tourism/Leisure+centres/Flex/FlexCard\(LeisureDiscountCard\).htm](http://www.telford.gov.uk/Leisure+culture+and+tourism/Leisure+centres/Flex/FlexCard(LeisureDiscountCard).htm) or enquire at a local leisure centre.

Information on many local activities is available at <http://tandwseniors.org.uk/things-you-can-do>.

### Telford College of Arts & Technology

Telford College of Arts & Technology, Student Services, Haybridge Rd, Wellington, 01952 642237. Details on website <http://www.tcat.ac.uk/course>

### New College

New College, King Street, Wellington, 01952 641892. Website <http://www.schoolsnet.com/uk-schools/school-details-reviews/telford-wrekin/new-college-telford/16180339/0/221547.html?actionFlag=contact>.

### Open University

Open University, PO Box 197, Milton Keynes MK7 6BJ, 0845 300 60 90. Website <http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/index.htm>

### Learn Direct

Learn Direct, PO Box 900, Leicester LE1 6ER 0800 101 901.

**Website** <http://www.learndirect.co.uk/contact/>



### WEA (Workers' Educational Association)

Classes throughout Telford. Interpreters available in some areas. Contact 01952 583886 or 01952 501218.

### Donnington LifeLong Learning Centre

01952 382202 or 382201.

### U3A (University of the Third Age)

U3A is for people not in full-time employment who want to keep their minds active. These are self-help groups to share knowledge, skill and experience. The aim is to provide social as well as intellectual activities and no expertise is required. Contact the secretary – 01952 586449, details are available on the website <http://www.wrekinu3a.org.uk>

### British Red Cross

To enquire about first-aid training call 01952 209840. Your local library can offer you free access to the internet and help to use the computers provided in the library.

# Leisure and learning

Learning new skills can be very satisfying, raise your self-esteem and make you feel better about yourself.

These days you can do pretty much anything from your PC or laptop.

Sitting in your living room, you can book a summer holiday abroad, download your favourite music, operate your own business, study classical history, research your family tree back hundreds of years, and even do this week's grocery shopping! You can chat with friends and relatives anywhere, even on the other side of the world and see live pictures of them (watch the grandchildren grow up), manage your bank accounts, order repeat prescriptions, tax the car and renew the television licence.

Computer-based facilities will become more extensive over the next few years and may be incorporated into televisions when digital television arrives in 2011. We are already using many computer chip-based devices – telephones, mobiles, DVD players, cameras, etc. If you can't use a computer join a class – basic training is available for older people and you can use the computers at local libraries.

Older people say that learning helps to keep their brains active. They say that learning stimulates their intellect and gives them pleasure. They also say that continuing to learn helps them to understand and to cope with constant change in society and some

believe that the therapeutic value of learning is a way of ensuring good health. Learning does not only take place on a formal course – why not set up a group of friends who can learn from each other?

Why not consider a first-aid course?



What would you like to do?

There are many opportunities – contacts are listed on the opposite page.

# Age Concern fact sheets

Arranging for others to make decisions about your finances or welfare - FS22  
Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance - FS34  
Brief guide to money benefits - FS18  
Buying retirement housing - FS2  
Dealing with someone's estate - FS14  
Dental care - FS5  
Direct payments from social services - FS24  
Disability and ageing: your rights to social services - FS32  
Disability equipment and how to get it - FS42  
Finding care home accommodation - FS29  
Finding help at home - FS6  
Help with heating - Factsheet FS1  
Hospital discharge arrangements - FS37  
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit - FS17  
Income Tax - FS15  
Local authority assessment for community care services - FS41  
Local authority charging procedures for care homes - FS10  
Looking for rented housing - FS8  
Making your will - FS7  
NHS continuing health care, NHS-funded nursing care and intermediate care - FS20  
Older home owners: financial help with repairs and adaptations - FS13  
Paying for care and support at home - FS46  
Paying for care in a care home if you have a partner - FS39  
Pension Credit - FS48  
Planning for a funeral - FS27  
Raising income or capital from your home - FS12  
The State Pension - FS19  
Staying healthy in later life - FS45  
Social Fund and other sources of financial help - FS49  
Television licence concessions - FS3  
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Transfer of assets and paying for care in a care home - FS40  
Treatment of the former home as capital for people in care homes - FS38

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# Notes



**For further information:**

**Senior Citizens Forum**  
The Poplars, Lightmoor,  
Telford TF4 3QN