

7. Money

Retire or continue to work

Most women retire at 60 and men at 65. This is also the age women and men can start drawing their state pension, regardless of whether they are still in employment or not. If you have the choice to continue working or to retire, there are a few factors you may want to consider before deciding.

Choosing retirement

Many people spend their whole lives working towards retirement. Once you retire you will have more time to spend with your partner, your family and friends. You can pick up old hobbies and interests or take up new ones. You will have more time to travel. You can catch up with old friends and make new ones. It is a time when you can finally relax and do what you want to do.

However, retirement is a time of change. Your income will probably drop; you might question your self-identity and self-worth. You and your partner might find it difficult spending more time together. Also, if you haven't planned for retirement properly, and don't keep mentally and physically active you can find yourself with hours to fill, feeling bored, and possibly depressed.

Continuing to work

From 1st October 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) regulations said employers must consider a request for someone to work beyond 65. It is unlawful to discriminate against an employee or job seeker based on age alone. For information call:

- Agepositive, Tel: 0113 2324444 or visit www.agepositive.gov.uk

Even if you have retired from your job, you might want to find another one with fewer hours and less responsibility.

Organisations exist that can give you help and advice to find jobs. You might have been out of work because you have been caring for an elderly relative or have been on benefits for six months or more.

New Deal 50 plus offers a wide range of practical help to overcome the barriers to finding work. They offer advice and guidance on education and training for work.

- New Deal Tel: 01484 228000 or visit www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Action for Carers and Employment (ACE) can offer advice, support and guidance to carers wanting to train, work or take part in educational opportunities.

For information contact:

- Kirklees Council Carers Gateway, Tel: 01484 226050, email carers.gateway@kirklees.gov.uk or visit www.kirklees.gov.uk/carers

Looking after your money

We all want to have a good standard of living in retirement but our income is likely to be less than it was before. Even if you have a reasonable income from your pensions and other investments a period of adjustment might be necessary.

You can make your money go further by looking for the best deals in what you buy, taking advantage of any benefits or concessions you can get and looking at how you might otherwise increase your income.

Age Concern Calderdale and Kirklees have an advice and information team. They visit customers in their homes and provide information on welfare benefits and how to maximise income. They offer informed choices on housing issues, money advice and much more. They also have a worker who specialises in working with the black and minority ethnic community. They run advice surgeries across Kirklees.

Age Concern will give you tips and information about some of the things you can do to make the most of your money.

- You can download their free information guide from www.ageconcern.org.uk or call Freephone Information Line, Tel: 0800 00 99 66
- Or contact Age Concern Calderdale and Kirklees, Advice and Information Service on 01274 871328 for advice and information
- Age Concern Calderdale and Kirklees are an accredited office for the DWP

The pension service can also give you a full benefit check.

- Pension Credit, Tel: 0845 60 60 265

How to make the most of your money

Citizens Advice offer individual support, face-to-face. They also produce an advice guide, which contains practical, reliable and up-to-date information on a range of topics, including finance.

- Citizen Advice, Tel: 0844 8487970, visit www.adviceguide.org.uk

For general financial help and information, contact the Financial Assistance Scheme.

- Financial Assistance Scheme, Tel: 0845 6019941, visit www.dwp.gov.uk/fas

Benefits

To find out if you are entitled to any benefits, it's a good idea to check your position by getting specialist advice. You might be able to claim, even if you have savings.

If you are entitled to benefits it is your right to claim them.

Pension Service

The pension service has a local service team that operate within the community. They have a confidential service for people over 60 who have difficulty getting benefits through normal channels.

- The Pension Service, Tel: 0845 60 60 265, local rate number – open Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm and Saturday 8am to 1pm, textphone 0845 6060 285 or visit www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

They identify full benefit entitlements in one go and complete all pensioner related benefit application forms. The Pension Service is part of the Department for Work and Pensions. It was set up to improve the service for people aged 60 and over.

- Other information is available from the Pension Service entitled "Are you over 50" which is a useful guide to advice, support and services.

You might also find the Financial Services Authority (FSA) a good point of contact for easy-to-understand advice on pensions and personal finance.

- The Financial Services Authority (FSA) Tel: 0845 6061234, visit www.fsa.gov.uk
- The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS) can help you with most aspects of occupational, personal and stakeholder pensions.

- The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS)
Tel: 0845 601 2923, email
enquiries@pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk

For more information about your tax situation when you reach 65, see the Pensioners' guide. This gives more information on various entitlements you might be able to get in retirement. It covers leisure opportunities, housing and home improvements, legal services and dealing with crime. For your free copy call:

- Tel: 0845 6065 065, textphone 0845 6064 064, visit
www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

UK state pension age

UK state pension age is 65 for men and 60 for women. But over a 10-year period from 6 April 2010, UK state pension age for women will change from 60 to age 65. This means:

- women born on or before 5 April 1950 will reach state pension age at age 60
- women born on or after 6 April 1955 will reach state pension age at age 65
- women born on or after 5 April 1950 and on or before 6 April 1955 will reach state pension age at 60 plus one month for every month or part month their date of birth is after 5 April 1950. For these women, state pension will always be awarded from the sixth of the same month.

Kirklees Benefit Advice Service (KBAS) - advice on benefits

Most people think they cannot get benefits. However, we all claim benefits at least once in our lifetime, for example child benefit or pension. When unplanned things happen to us, such as illness or caring responsibilities, it is important you seek advice to find out what financial help you could be getting.

Kirklees Benefit Advice Service provides free benefit and tax credit advice to anyone living in Kirklees. They can give full benefit checks, advocacy, support and assistance with all benefit issues.

- Kirklees Benefit Advice Service (KBAS)
 - Advice Centre Team South Kirklees
Standard House, Half Moon Street,
Huddersfield, HD1 1JF
Tel: 01484 223950
 - Advice Centre Team North Kirklees
Empire House, Dewsbury, WDF12 8DJ;
Town Hall, Cleckheaton, BD19 3RH;
Town Hall Annexe, Batley, WF17 5DT
Tel: 01924 326010

Care in the Community Team (under 16's and over 60's with social support only, plus any carers and terminally ill customers. All clients are visited at home) Deighton Centre, Deighton Road, Huddersfield, HD2 1JP.
Access by: referral only.
Fax: 01484 416960
Contact Kirklees Benefit Advice Service by email:
Benefit.AdviceService@kirklees.gov.uk
Please note we do not have direct public access at our offices other than by appointment. All the offices offer home visits.



Organisations work together to provide information when you most need it.

Council tax and rent bills

Depending on your personal situation and circumstances, the Kirklees Revenues & Benefits Service might be able to reduce your council tax bill, and if you pay it, your rent too.

Cut your council tax

Regardless of your financial situation you can pay a reduced council tax bill in Kirklees if you:

- are aged 65 or over and
- are not receiving council tax benefit

The council tax reduction will apply from the April following your 65th birthday.

Just complete a simple application form and send it to us. You can apply online at www.kirklees.gov.uk/over65 or contact us.

Kirklees Council's Revenues and Benefits Service
Tel: 01484 414900
Email: council.tax@kirklees.gov.uk
Visit: www.kirklees.gov.uk/counciltax

Housing benefit and council tax benefit

If you have a low income and few savings you might qualify for help with your council tax bill and, if you pay it, your rent too.

The amount of the reduction depends on your income and savings. Unfortunately you will not qualify for help through this scheme if you have savings of over £16,000, unless you are receiving the guaranteed pension element of Pension Credit.

As a guide:

- A couple, with the oldest aged 60-64, and a £1,068 a year council tax bill, can have a weekly income of £301 and still get a reduction.
- A couple, with the oldest aged over 65 and a £1,068 a year council tax bill, can have a weekly income of £328 and still get a reduction.
- A single person aged over 65 with a £1,068 council tax bill, can have a weekly income of £228 and still get a reduction.

You can get an estimate of how much help you could receive by using our online benefit calculator at www.kirklees.gov.uk/benefitcalculator

To claim the money you're entitled to you must complete an application form which you can download at www.kirklees.gov.uk/benefitclaimform, or contact us and we'll send you one. We offer a home visiting service to help you with the paperwork and check your circumstances.

Just think what you could do with the extra money. Make sure you don't miss out.

Kirklees Council's Revenues and Benefits Service
Tel: 01484 414950
Email: council.benefits@kirklees.gov.uk
Visit: www.kirklees.gov.uk/claimbenefit

Other benefits include:

- Carer's Allowance
Carer's allowance is a benefit given to help people who look after someone else who is disabled. You do not have to be related or live with the person you care for.

Claiming Carer's Allowance can affect other benefits, allowances, pensions and entitlements you, or the person you care for receive.

- Tel: 01253 857123 or visit www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/discare

Disability allowances

The Disability and Carers Service provides a benefit helpline for people with disabilities and their carers. It's called the Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL). BEL is part of the Department for Work and Pensions.

Besides giving advice they can send out leaflets and claim packs. BEL also provides help to complete certain disability-related claim packs over the telephone.

- The Benefit Enquiry Line, Tel: 0800 882200, textphone 0800 243355, email: BEL-Customer-Services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk visit www.dwp.gov.uk
Benefits advice is also available from the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Citizen Advice, Tel: 0844 8487970, visit www.adviceguide.org.uk



Help with heating costs

Most people aged 60 or over will automatically get a winter fuel payment to help with winter heating bills.

Kirklees Passport

The Kirklees Passport is a council-run discount scheme.

The Kirklees Passport is available to Kirklees residents who are:

- aged three and over, who receive or who are directly dependent on someone who receives certain benefits
- aged three and over, who are registered blind, or partially sighted, or deaf, or who are named on the wheelchair users' database
- aged 16 and over, who are a full-time student

There are two types of Kirklees Passport – Priority and Access. The Kirklees passport can help you save money on adult education classes, swimming, sports activities, car parking and much more.

- Kirklees Passport, Tel: 01484 234056
Visit www.kirklees.gov.uk/passport

Direct debit

Many companies offer a small discount if you arrange to pay your bills by direct debit from your bank account. Direct debit is a safe and convenient way of making sure your services are paid for.

Money advice

National Debtline provides free confidential and independent advice on how to deal with debt problems and money worries.

- National Debtline, Tel: 0808 808 4000, visit www.nationaldebtline.co.uk



Making a will

Writing a will can help save your family's worry and upset wondering whether your wishes are met.

Even if you feel you do not have much to leave, it is important what you do have is left to those you care about in the way you would wish. If you do not make a will, this means you die 'intestate'. Your spouse or civil partner will inherit unless stated otherwise. If you are not married to your partner they will not automatically inherit and this can cause major problems. You should consider including a lasting power of attorney in your will.

Lasting power of attorney (LPA)

Unfortunately in later life, some people are unable to make important decisions themselves. Information on what you can do now to choose somebody you trust to make decisions on your behalf, such as about your property and affairs or your personal welfare can be found at:

- Public Guardian, Tel: 0845 3302900 or visit www.publicguardian.gov.uk

An LPA is a legal document that you make using a special form. It allows you to choose someone now that you trust to make decisions on your behalf. It will be used at a time in the future when you no longer wish to make those decisions or you might lack the mental capacity to make those decisions yourself.

An LPA is a very important and powerful document. You might want to seek advice from someone with experience in preparing them, such as a solicitor.

Some solicitors have funding schemes such as legal help. Remember to check what fees they charge before committing to anything.

Making your wishes known

Age Concern has a document that you can write on to express your wishes for funeral arrangements. It has spaces where you can fill in information so your family and friends understand your wishes after your death. This document should be given to a trusted family member for safe keeping. It cannot be used as a will.

- Call freephone 0800 00 99 66 and ask for the form headed 'to my family, friends and executors'.

Living will

A living will, also known as an 'Advance Directive' can also be used. This is a document which usually takes the form of a written statement.

This sets out what types of medical treatment the maker of the will does or does not want in specific circumstances should they be incapable of giving or refusing consent. It must be signed whilst the maker is mentally able to do so. Forms to produce a living will can be obtained from Age Concern. This does not need a solicitor.

- Age Concern, Tel: 0800 009966, visit www.ageconcern.org.uk

Age Concern Enterprises has a new "legal service". They have produced a guide to legal services.

For a copy of the booklet call:

- Age Concern Enterprises, Tel: 0845 685 1078 quoting reference LEG006

Or:

- Age Concern Calderdale and Kirklees, Tel: 01274 871328
- The Law Society have a website - www.lawsociety.org.uk

Partnership rights

If you and your partner are not married or in a formalized 'civil partnership' you should seek advice because different rules apply around:

- bereavement and registration of death
- inheritance
- 'next of kin' status and incapacity
- pensions
- tenancy
- wills and intestacy (if you die without leaving a will)

Pre-paid funeral plans

There are many companies who offer a prepaid funeral arranging service. It is a simple way to plan for your funeral in advance.

Organ donation

If you wish to become an organ donor call:

- The NHS Organ Donor Line on 0845 60 60 400 from 7am to 11pm.

Information sheets are available from Age Concern on all of the topics mentioned above.

- Age Concern, Tel: 0800 009966, visit www.ageconcern.org.uk

You might also want to call:

- The Law Society, Tel. 020 7242 1222
- Citizens Advice Bureau, Tel: 0844 8487970, visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk

