



OLDER PEOPLE'S ADVOCATE NEWSLETTER

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OLDER PERSON ADVISOR COURSE

The Older Person Adviser Course (OPAC) has been developed by Advice NI in partnership with Age Concern Help the Aged NI and Access to Benefits. The course was developed to improve the quality and quantity of advice provision to older people in Northern Ireland enabling them to access their rights and entitlements. It was developed following comprehensive consultation and needs analysis within the age sector.

The course is aimed at those who work in an advisory capacity with older people, and other groups who are working on age sector issues. It is designed to enable learners to specialise in their own area and also allows learners to develop their knowledge, skills and experiences in areas that they may be less knowledgeable about, giving a holistic view of the issues facing older people. This enables learners to increase their knowledge base and their professional development.

The course consists of 6 modules which include:

- Age Awareness & Working with Older People
- Introduction to Older People's Benefits
- Understanding State Retirement Pension
- Health Rights & Services for Older People
- Community Care & Older People
- Housing & Older People



It is offered as a whole course or on an individual module basis.

The course is accredited with Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCNNI) at level 3 (comparable to NVQ3, A Level, AS Level and AVCE). Learners can obtain accreditation for individual modules or for the whole course.

The OPAC is currently available through face-to-face learning (2 days per module) and is being developed for e-learning. It has been successfully piloted with extremely positive feedback from course participants, for example "I knew I would use this information but I didn't realise I'd be able to put it to use so quickly".

The next run of the course will begin in February 2010. If you would like to participate in the course or specific modules, or if you require further information about the course, please contact Emma Murphy at Advice NI (emma@adviceni.net) or Tel: 028 90645919).



April 2010 – Reforming pensionsSecuring futures

Over the next few years changes are being introduced to State Pension.

From 6 April 2010 State Pension age for women is being gradually increased to 65 so that by 2020 it will be equal to men's. This reflects women's changed role in the workplace in recent years, and the fact that people are living longer on average. Further changes will make State Pension more generous and widely available.



Changes to State Pension Do they affect me?

Changes to State Pension will start to take effect from April 2010. These changes will affect everyone reaching State Pension age from 6 April 2010 and a small number of people who have reached State Pension age before that date.

What are the changes?

The main changes to the State Pension are:

- Men and women reaching State Pension age on or after 6 April 2010 will only need 30 years of National Insurance contributions or credits to get the full basic State Pension entitlement. This is a lot less than previously required.
- Those reaching State Pension age on or after 6 April 2010, and who have fewer than 30 qualifying years, will be entitled to at least some basic State Pension for each qualifying year they have built up.
- From April 2010, State Pension age for women will gradually rise from 60 to 65 to match that of men.
- From 2024 to 2046, State Pension age for both men and women will gradually rise from 65 to 68. This means, for example, a woman born on 3 March 1953 will now reach State Pension age on 6 January 2016 – previously this would have been 6 January 2013. A man born on 12 December 1970 will reach State Pension age on 12 December 2037, rather than 12 December 2035 under the earlier rules.
- The age for getting some benefits will rise in line with the increase to women's State Pension age. These changes may affect the benefits people are already getting.





This means that:

- the age at which an individual may be entitled to some working-age benefits, such as Income Support, will be extended; and pensioner benefits, such as Pension Credit, will not be available until later.

Find out how this affects you by logging on to nidirect.gov.uk/better future.

From April 2010 the introduction of a weekly National Insurance credit will help parents and carers build State Pension entitlement.

Mail shots were issued in April, July and October 2009 to approximately 10,000 women affected by the equalisation of State Pension age informing them of the changes. A number of further mail shots are planned on a regular basis until January 2012, to the remaining 50,000 women.



How will people find out about the change to their State Pension?

The Pension Service has already done a lot of work in preparation for the changes to State Pension and to ensure that Northern Ireland citizens will receive clear and comprehensive information before they are affected.

How to get further information

For further information about the changes to State Pensions, please visit our website at nidirect.gov.uk/betterfuture

You can also contact the Pension Service using the numbers shown below:

Pensions Reform Customer Enquiry Line:

0800 678 1132

State Pension Claim Line:

Freephone: 0808 100 2658

Textphone: 0808 100 2198 (free call)

State Pension Credit Application Line:

Freephone: 0808 100 6165

Textphone: 0808 100 1165 (free call)

Lines are open: Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm



Aims and Objectives of the
Older People's Advocate

The Older People's Advocate
will:

- **Facilitate** public consultation events on the proposed role, remit and powers of an Older People's Commissioner;
- **Provide** a focus for individual older people and representative groups from the voluntary and community sector to highlight issues that are of concern for older people;
- **Bring** these issues and concerns to the attention of the Junior Ministers in the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister;
- **Provide** Junior ministers with analysis based on the views of the voluntary and community sector of the impact and practical out workings of policies and strategies aimed at older people.

Sainsbury's

Home Delivery and Telephone Orders

After some recent communication with the leading supermarkets I am glad to report that Sainsbury's have now got an order line, here they have a dedicated team to process your grocery order and they will deliver it to your door for a small fee or free of charge over £50.

Some places are still outside the delivery range but it does seem that some very rural areas are still able to access home delivery. This is a great service for those still uncertain about shopping online and it also means you get to speak to a person who can help you with any enquiries you may have.

For delivery information or to process a grocery order call the following number free of charge.

0800 328 1700

Cognitive Health and Wellbeing across the life span

There is a full day conference to be held in The Great Hall, Queens University Belfast showcasing the evidence gathered relevant to Older People completed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and work by the Cogworks Research Network on the determinants of cognitive health, carers, the built environment and adaptive technology. Speakers will include: Dame Joan Harbison chair of the Cogworks Steering Group.

If you would like to register for the conference email: cap@qub.ac.uk
(This event is free to attend)

The logo for CogWorks features the word "CogWorks" in a sans-serif font. The letter "o" in "Cog" and the letter "o" in "Works" are replaced by green gear icons. The background behind the text is a light grey globe.

Promoting healthy ageing and independence in later life

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