

Charity discovers millions in unclaimed benefits

The charity for older people Age Scotland says it identified £1,577,341.81 of unclaimed benefits payable to older people who contacted them on their helpline last year.

The national body says this amount is just “the tip of the iceberg” and many more older people could still be due financial support.

Among the benefits available to older people in need are Pension Credit, available to people over State Pension age on low income or with modest savings, to help with the cost of living, and Attendance Allowance, a payment for people over State Pension age who have a physical or mental disability.

Anyone over the age of 50 can call the Age Scotland national helpline on 0800 12 44 222.

Katherine Crawford, Age Scotland’s chief executive, said: “Many of the callers to our helpline are facing severe financial hardship, in part due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. For the tens of thousands of pensioners in Scotland on low and middle incomes, claiming the full range of benefits to which they are entitled can be the difference between heating their home or not and being able to eat well.

“Our helpline advisers, who carry out benefits checks, have also noticed an increase in the number of over 50s inquiring

about working age benefits, such as Universal Credit, as the impact of the cost of living crisis continues to bite.

“However we still believe that this is only the tip of the iceberg and that there are millions of pounds of benefits for older people which are not being claimed.

Unfortunately there is a real lack of awareness around what support is available and a strong feeling that the application processes are too hard. Around a third of over 50s say they don't claim what they are entitled to because they feel guilty doing so or that someone else would be more deserving. We must change this as far too many go without the help they have earned.

“We would encourage more older people in Scotland to call our helpline for a free benefits check. Our expert advisers can help callers navigate the complex benefits system – and the results could be life changing.”