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NEWS RELEASE

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The Just Group State Benefit Index: 'freebies' far better known than more valuable State Benefits

- Just Group State Benefits Index reveals near-universal knowledge among over 65s about popular 'freebie' benefits like the bus pass, free prescriptions and Winter Fuel Payments
- But a fifth are in the dark on Pension Credit – a valuable Benefit specifically designed to support pensioners on lower incomes
- Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Disability Living Allowance also less well known but worth far more than the 'freebies'

When it comes to claiming State Benefits in retirement do you know your bus pass from Disability Living Allowance? Your free prescriptions from Pension Credit?

Did you know that the average weekly Pension Credit payment could pay for your annual medical prescription season ticket 26 times over? Or that the annual value of the higher band of Attendance Allowance would fund 30 yearly TV licences?

The **Just Group State Benefits Index** reveals that over 65s in the UK know far more about 'freebie' benefits such as the free bus pass or free prescriptions despite them being worth much less on average than State Benefits like Pension Credit.

The group of 'freebie' benefits offered to many pensioners – the bus pass, free prescriptions, winter fuel payments and the free TV licence – are known by nearly all over-65s in the UK according to the research from **Just Group, the retirement specialist**†.

Levels of awareness of 'freebie' benefits

	Bus pass (1)	Free prescriptions (2)	Winter fuel payments (3)	Free TV licence (4)
Weekly amount (£)	18.03 (Av.)	2.08 (Season ticket)	5.77	3.06
% of over 65s who know about it	99%	98%	98%	95%

Despite being so well known by over 65s these 'freebie' benefits are worth between £2.08 and £18.03 per week each. In contrast, one in five (19%) did not know about Pension Credit – the main benefit created for pensioners who are struggling on low incomes – even though the benefit is worth more than £59 a week on average and tops up weekly income to £177.10.

One in 10 (10%) also said they did not know about Housing Benefit which provides help with rent payments.

The latest government statistics reveal that around a million pensioners who are eligible for Pension Credit are not claiming the benefit while an estimated 200,000 eligible pensioner households are failing to claim Housing Benefit*.

Levels of awareness of more financially valuable benefits

	Pension Credit (5)	Council Tax Reduction (7)	Attendance Allowance (9)	P.I.P. (11)
Weekly amount (£)	59 (average)	9.11 (average)	89.60 (higher band)	89.60 (Daily Living)
% of over 65s who know about it	81%	88%	77%	66%
	Housing Benefit (6)	Disability Living Allowance (8)	Employment Allowance (10)	
Weekly amount (£)	131.98 (Private rental)	89.60 (higher band)	114.1 (Support group)	
% of over 65s who know about it	90%	80%	59%	

Other benefits that could provide valuable financial help to pensioners such as Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance were even less well known among over 65s, despite the higher bands of each benefit being worth £89.60 a week, or £4,659 a year.

Stephen Lowe, group communications director at retirement specialist Just Group, said that the figures demonstrated that pensioners needed to ensure they do not miss out on their benefit entitlement when approaching retirement.

“When we reach State Pension Age our eligibility for a wider range of benefits is likely to increase, so it is important that people check that they are not missing out on their entitlement to extra benefit income.

“For many people, the idea of checking to see if they are eligible for benefits will not have been a high priority during their working lives, but as people reduce their paid work then the State Pension and associated benefits can become increasingly important,” he said.

“The State Pension alone will not provide a comfortable standard of living so checking your entitlement for other State Benefits should be as much a part of planning for retirement as understanding what your private pension and other savings will provide.

“The social and cultural reference to ‘freebie’ benefits means nearly all over 65s know about them but their financial value is dwarfed by other benefits which are less well known.

“Billions of pounds a year of State support aimed at pensioners, particularly those struggling for income, goes unclaimed every year. We’d urge everyone approaching retirement to check whether they are entitled to extra income from State benefits.”

There are a range of resources available to provide information and guidance for those planning for retirement or struggling for income in retirement:

- The government provides a free, independent and impartial guidance service called Pension Wise
- The government highlights free, independent third-party benefit calculators at <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators>
- Local councils provide information on financial help to pay rent or Council Tax
- Organisations such as the Money Advice Service and charities such as Citizens Advice and Age UK can be good sources of assistance.
- Professional advisers will charge but can provide regulated advice alongside information about benefit eligibility.

Enquiries

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Notes to Editors:

† A survey conducted by Opinium on behalf of Just Group among 1,003 UK adults aged 65+ between 15-20th April 2021

* https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/money-matters/benefit_take-up_and_older_people_may-2021.pdf

Freebie benefits

1. Average bus pass: <https://www.stagecoachgroup.com/media/news-releases/2020/2020-02-13.aspx#:~:text=The%20survey%20found%20that%20the,%C2%A317.76%3B%20First%20%C2%A318.9>
2. Prescription season ticket: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/prescriptions-and-pharmacies/nhs-prescription-charges/>
3. Winter fuel payment: <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>
4. TV Licence: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/pay-for-your-tv-licence/ways-to-pay#:~:text=From%201%20April%202021%2C%20a,a%20TV%20Licensing%20payment%20card.>

Other Benefits

5. Pension Credit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit/pension-credit-toolkit-advice-and-guidance-for-stakeholders>
6. Housing Benefit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-benefits-statistics-august-2021/dwp-benefits-statistics-august-2021>
7. Council Tax Reduction: <https://www.cipfa.org/about-cipfa/press-office/latest-press-releases/average-council-tax-in-england>
8. Disability Living Allowance: <https://www.gov.uk/dla-disability-living-allowance-benefit/DLA-rates>
9. Attendance Allowance: <https://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/what-youll-get>
10. Employment & Support Allowance: <https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/what-youll-get#:~:text=You'll%20get%3A,re%20in%20the%20support%20group>
11. PIP: <https://www.gov.uk/pip/what-youll-get#:~:text=The%20weekly%20rate%20for%20the%20mobility%20part%20of%20PIP,%C2%A323.70%20or%20%C2%A362.55.>

About Just

Just (Just Group plc) is a FTSE-listed specialist UK financial services company.

A leader in the individual retirement income, care and defined benefit de-risking markets, Just has completed over 200 transactions, including more than 50 buy-outs and repeat transactions with over 30 schemes, securing the benefits of over 40,000 pension scheme members, since we launched our defined benefit de-risking proposition in 2012.

Just has been trusted to manage over £23 billion of customers' retirement savings and has helped customers release £5.8 billion from their properties. Just provides a wide range of products, advice and

professional services to individual customers, financial intermediaries, corporate clients and pension scheme trustees.

Marketed Products

- De-risking solutions for pension scheme trustees who want to remove the financial uncertainty of operating defined benefit pension schemes;
- Individually underwritten retirement income products delivering a guaranteed income for life;
- Long term care plans that provide those people moving into residential care with peace of mind by knowing a regular payment will be made to the care provider for the rest of their life;
- Lifetime mortgages for people who want to safely release some of the value from their home.

Professional services

- Regulated financial advice and guidance services for individuals wanting help in using their pension savings and/or releasing some of the value from their home; and
- A range of business services tailored for our corporate clients, ranging from consultancy and software development to fully outsourced customer service delivery and marketing services.

The companies within Just Group are authorised and regulated in the United Kingdom by the Financial Conduct Authority and / or the Prudential Regulation Authority.

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