

East Sussex Seniors Association Newsletter

Autumn 2024



Have your say on the East Sussex funding gap consultations

Most local authorities have significant funding gaps for next year. East Sussex County Council is facing a funding gap of £55 million. As local authorities have a legal responsibility to set a balanced budget, this means making some difficult decisions about how the Council spends its money in future.

Every department at the Council will need to find savings to close the funding gap. Some of the savings proposals were considered by the Council's Cabinet in September, including the Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) proposals that require consultations. More savings proposals for ASCH and the other departments will be discussed at a future Cabinet meeting.

There are 11 proposals for ASCH that we are consulting about. The consultations started on 3 October and close on 28 November 2024. Decisions are expected to be made about all of these proposals by Members in February 2025.

The consultations cover the following services:

- Community Support Services Hookstead and St Nicholas day services
- Housing Support Service
- Linden Court and Beeching Park day services
- Mental Health Community Outreach Service
- Milton Grange day service
- Phoenix Centre day service
- Recovery services for drug and alcohol misuse
- Steps to Work service
- Supported accommodation provision for vulnerable adults – adults service
- Supported accommodation provision for adults with mental health needs

People can find more information about the proposals and take part in the

consultation by visiting our website: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/funding-gap-asch](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/funding-gap-<u>asch</u>).

For those who don't have internet access or need the survey in a different format or language, you can get in touch by emailing consultationASC@eastsussex.gov.uk. You can also call us between 10am-4pm Monday-Thursday on: 01273 481242. If you aren't able to call between these times, you can still call us on this number, but please leave a message and we will call you back.

Your Forums have attended meetings with Adult Social Care and would encourage you to take part in this consultation.

Helping Hand Scheme

If you would like a little extra help when using the bus the **Helping Hand Scheme** is designed to give bus passengers a helping hand and is a simple way to help the drivers help you.

A credit card sized information card, which is yellow, has been produced which can hold a brief written instruction for the driver, the passenger simply shows the card to the driver when they board the bus. The driver is therefore made aware of the passenger's needs or requirements quickly, directly and discreetly without the passenger having to verbally communicate it. For example "please wait until seated" for passengers that may be unsteady on their feet.

Most bus companies across Sussex are joining in this scheme and applications can be made to **Helping Hand Scheme, 43 Conway Street, Hove, BN3 3LT or apply online at www.buses.co.uk or phone 01273 886200.**

Some of the examples of Helping Hand messages: Speak loudly and clearly, Please lower the step, Please face me, I lip read, Please be patient if I am confused, and many more.

Message from Lewes District Council 1/10/24

Hundreds of eligible pension age households in East Sussex are missing out on Pension Credit. Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with living costs if you are over state pension age and on a low income. Pension credit doesn't just top up your income, it could also help you get other benefits including help with health and housing costs, plus over 75 a free TV licence and due to recent government changes—winter fuel allowance.

Eligibility

You must live in England, Scotland or Wales and have reached State Pension age to qualify for Pension Credit. You must include your partner if you have one on your application. A partner is either husband, wife or civil partner if you live with them. Or someone you live with, without being married or in a civil partnership, as a couple. When you apply for Pension Credit your income is calculated, if you have a partner your income is calculated together.

Pension Credit tops up your weekly income to £218 15 if you are single or if your joint income to £332.95 if you have a partner.

What counts as income : State Pension, other Pensions, earnings from employment and self-employment.

The following benefits do not count as income: Adult Disability Payment, Attendance Allowance, Christmas Bonus, Child Benefit, Disability Living Allowance and PIP payments. Also Winter Fuel Allowance, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. If you have ten thousand pounds or less in savings or investments this will not affect your Pension Credit claim. If you have more than ten thousand pounds every five hundred over counts as one pound a week as income. On the Government website there is a Pension Credit calculator to help check with your eligibility. Most libraries have computers if you do not have one.

You should check your eligibility up to four months before you reach State Pension age.

You can apply any time after reaching pension age but your application will only be back dated by 3 months.

You will need the following information about you and your partner if you have one. National Insurance number, information about any income, savings and investments you have. You will also need your bank account details.

Depending on how you apply you may also be asked for your bank or building society name, sort code and account number. You can apply on line or apply by phone . A friend or family member can call for you if you cannot use the phone.

Pension Credit claim line: 0800 99 1234

Textphone: 0800 169 0133

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm

To apply by post when you have filled in the claim form from on line or have called the claim line for a form. Send the claim form to : The Pension Service,FREEPOST, DWP Pensions Service 3.

You can contact a voluntary Organisation like Citizens Advice or Age UK if you need help with the form.

You can challenge a decision about your application. This is called asking for mandatory reconsideration.

As with most Government sites this is just a small part of the information given. If possible please look at GOV.UK and find the information for Pension Credit. This is not charity but is a benefit to help those who have a very low income and are struggling to manage everyday expenses.

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