



Guide to Public Services

FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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Advice and Representation

Advice

There are a range of organisations in Northern Ireland that can offer help and advice.

ADVICE NI ADVICE CENTRES

Advice NI and its members provide advice and advocacy services to older people across Northern Ireland on a range of issues, such as debt, social security and housing. It also has a number of online resources and self-help leaflets available via an online community guide for older people at **www.popni.net**

Find further information or your nearest advice centre at:
www.adviceni.net or **028 9064 5919**

CAREERS ADVICE

If you are looking for work or want to change your career, you can get professional help specifically tailored for older people. There are specialist programmes and resources available to help you find work or learn new skills.

Find out about potential jobs, putting together your CV and how to prepare for a job interview with the Government Careers Service at: **www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers**
or **0300 200 7820**

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU (CAB) NORTHERN IRELAND

Citizens Advice provides free, independent information and advice on a wide range of topics, including benefits, debt, consumer, employment, housing and other issues. You can get help and advice face to face, by telephone and by email, or on the self-help website www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Find your local CAB at: www.citizensadvice.co.uk
or **028 9023 1120**

THE CONSUMER COUNCIL

The Consumer Council is an independent consumer organisation. Their aim is to make the consumer voice heard and make it count. They also help with complaints about transport, water, energy and postal services.

Find out more at: www.consumercouncil.org.uk
or **028 9025 1600**

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Commission is an independent public body which provides information, guidance and assistance on equality and discrimination issues. Discrimination Advice Officers are available to offer free confidential advice and assistance.

You can contact the Commission at: www.equalityni.org
or **028 9050 0600**

LAW CENTRE (NI)

Law Centre (NI) provides specialist legal support to organisations and disadvantaged individuals in the areas of social security, employment, health and social care (particularly long-term care in the community, residential care, mental health and capacity). They are a not-for-profit, referral organisation and normally deal with advice queries from their member organisations.

Further information can be found at: www.lawcentreni.org
or **028 9024 4401**

LOCAL COUNCILS

Local Councils can provide advice on a range of statutory responsibilities such as noise control, waste disposal and recycling, dog control, animal welfare, food safety and building control.

Find details of your local Council at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/local-councils-in-northern-ireland

Representation

There are a number of representative bodies for older people in Northern Ireland that provide advice and support services.

AGE NI

Age NI is the leading charity for older people in Northern Ireland. They deliver care services, provide advice and advocacy, fundraise and influence our decision makers to improve later life for all. They also tackle ageism, campaign for enough money for older people to live in dignity and demand the quality of care that people in later life deserve.

More information about Age NI can be found at:

www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland

or freephone **0808 808 7575**

AGE SECTOR PLATFORM AND PENSIONER PARLIAMENT

Age Sector Platform represents a strong unified voice for older people in Northern Ireland. It is the charity responsible for the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament. Age Sector Platform has a membership of individuals and older people's groups across Northern Ireland, representing approximately 200,000 people.

You can contact them at: www.agesectorplatform.org

or **028 9031 2089**

COMMISSIONER FOR OLDER PEOPLE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND (COPNI)

The Commissioner's office (COPNI) is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister but is operationally independent. The Commissioner's principle aim is to safeguard and promote the interests of older people, which defined by legislation include those aged 60 and over, and in exceptional circumstances those aged 50 or over. The Commissioner has promotional, advisory, educational and general investigatory duties and powers.

More information regarding COPNI can be found at:
www.copni.org or **028 9089 0892**

Bereavement

Bereavement support

There are a number of groups in Northern Ireland that offer bereavement support.

CRUSE BEREAVEMENT CARE

Cruse is a leading charity for bereaved people offering support, advice and information when someone dies and works to enhance society's care of bereaved people. They offer face-to-face, telephone, email and online support.

More information can be found at:
www.cruse.org.uk/home or **0844 477 9400**

BEFRIENDING SERVICES

Befriending offers supportive, reliable relationships through volunteers who befriend people who would otherwise be socially isolated. Local befriending services run across Northern Ireland.

Find further information on your local service at:
www.volunteernow.co.uk or 028 9023 2020

WAVE TRAUMA CENTRE

WAVE is a grass roots, cross community, voluntary organisation formed in 1991 to support people bereaved of a spouse as a result of violence in Northern Ireland. It offers care and support to anyone bereaved, injured or traumatised through the civil unrest in Northern Ireland, irrespective of religious, cultural or political belief.

Details of their centres can be found at:
www.wavetraumacentre.org.uk or 028 9077 9922

BEREAVEMENT BENEFITS AND ENTITLEMENTS

After you are widowed you may be able to claim Bereavement Allowance, or Bereavement Payment. For more information, contact your local Jobs and Benefits office / Social Security Office or call the Bereavement Service.

Details of these offices can be found at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/find-your-local-jobs-and-benefits-office
or call the Bereavement Service **0800 022 4250**

Funerals and funeral plans

There is information available online to help you when someone dies.

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES

When someone dies there are many decisions and arrangements to be made and these may have to be made at a time of personal distress. Some of these things can be done by a close relative or friend; others need to be done by the executor or administrator of the estate - the people appointed to carry out the terms of a will.

More information can be found at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/what-to-do-when-someone-dies-checklist.htm

FUNERAL PAYMENTS

People on low incomes can receive help to pay for a funeral and may be able to apply for a Funeral Payment from the Social Security Agency. This might have to be repaid from the estate of the person who died. For more information, contact your local Jobs and Benefits office/Social Security Office.

Details of these offices can be found at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/find-your-local-jobs-and-benefits-office

BEREAVEMENT SERVICE

To report the death of someone receiving Social Security benefits, contact The Bereavement Service using the dedicated freephone number: **0845 085 2463**.

The Bereavement Service will record the date of death and inform any office that paid benefit to the deceased. An eligibility check will also be offered, as the caller may be entitled to claim benefits.

Benefits

Benefits and Entitlements

There are a range of benefits available as you get older.

ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE

Attendance Allowance is a tax-free benefit you may get if you are aged 65 or over and need help with personal care because you have a physical or mental disability.

Find out more: www.nidirect.gov.uk/attendance-allowance-people-with-disabilities or call **028 9090 6178**

CARER'S ALLOWANCE

Carer's Allowance is available for those aged 16 or over, who spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone who is ill or has a disability.

Find out more at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/carersallowance
or call **028 9090 6186**

BENEFIT ENTITLEMENT CHECK

To discuss your individual circumstances, a Benefit Entitlement Check can be carried out. A Benefit Adviser can help assess your potential entitlement to a wide range of benefits, services and support. They can also help you make that first step to making a claim.

Receive a check at: **0800 232 1271** or text CHECK to **66101** or textphone: **0800 232 1715**.

Caring

Help and advice is available for carers across Northern Ireland that could make caring easier.

CARER SUPPORT

If you provide a regular and substantial amount of care for someone, you have the right to receive an assessment of your own needs as a carer. A carer's assessment means social services will look at your situation and see if you are entitled to any services that could make caring easier for you.

Contact your local Health and Social Care Trust to request a carer's assessment. Find their details at www.nidirect.gov.uk/health-and-social-care-trusts. Find out more by visiting www.nidirect.gov.uk/assessments-for-carers

MEALS AT HOME SERVICES

Hot or frozen meals can be delivered to homes if older people are having problems cooking. This service is sometimes called 'meals on wheels'. This support is arranged to help people stay more independent and may be offered following an assessment of needs by local social services.

Contact details for each of the five Health and Social Care Trust areas are at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/health-and-social-care-trusts

CARING FOR SOMEONE WHO IS TERMINALLY ILL

Financial, practical and emotional support is available to people who are terminally ill and their carers. This can include financial welfare benefits, Health and Social Services assessments, support groups and respite care.

More details on these can be found at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/caring-for-someone-who-is-terminally-ill

Councillors

Councillors are responsible for making decisions on behalf of the local community.

LOCALLY ELECTED

Elections to the district councils take place every four years. The number of councillors varies from council to council depending largely on the size of the council area.

Details of the councillors elected in your area can be found at: www.eoni.org.uk/Home or by contacting your local Council, details at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/local-councils-in-northern-ireland

Disability

There are a range of groups, agencies and resources in Northern Ireland that offer support to people with disabilities – a list of these can be found at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacting-other-disabled-people-and-disability-organisations

DISABILITY RELATED BENEFITS

There are a range of disability-related benefits. To find out more contact Disability and Carers Service (part of the SSA).

Find out more at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/disability-and-carers-service or call: 028 9090 6178

DISABILITY ACTION

Disability Action works to ensure that people with disabilities attain their full rights as citizens by supporting inclusion, influencing Government policy and changing attitudes in partnership with disabled people.

They can be contacted at: www.disabilityaction.org
or **028 9029 7880** or textphone on **028 9029 7882**

CEDAR FOUNDATION

The Cedar Foundation delivers a range of services that enable people with disabilities to get the most out of life and to be fully included in their communities. Their services are centred around the individual needs of each person and are delivered throughout Northern Ireland.

More details can be found at: www.cedar-foundation.org
or **028 9066 6188**

RNIB (ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BLIND PEOPLE)

RNIB supports everyone affected by sight loss including those losing their sight, those who are blind or those who are partially sighted. They provide practical and emotional support and advice on staying in work, using technology to help do everyday tasks, or offer emotional support to help come to terms with sight loss. They also operate the Talking Newspaper.

More details can be found at:
www.rnib.org.uk/northern-ireland or **028 9032 9373**

ACTION ON HEARING LOSS (FORMERLY RNID)

This organisation works to create a world where hearing loss does not limit or label people, where tinnitus is silenced and where people value and look after their hearing. They aim to get people to acknowledge their hearing loss and take action, provide support for people with hearing loss, prevent isolation through hearing loss, get people to protect themselves against hearing loss and tinnitus and to curing hearing loss and tinnitus.

More information can be found at:

information.nireland@hearingloss.org.uk

or **028 9031 2032**

DISABILITY RIGHTS

Legislation is in place to promote civil rights for people with disabilities and to protect people with disabilities from discrimination.

More details can be found at: **[www.nidirect.gov.uk/
disabled-peoples-rights-in-everyday-life](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/disabled-peoples-rights-in-everyday-life)**

Employment and Volunteering

There is lots of help and support available to help you find employment or take up volunteering opportunities.

FINDING EMPLOYMENT

If you are looking for work or want to change your career, you can get professional help that is specifically for older people. If out of work, whether it's voluntarily or through redundancy, it can take time to find another job, regardless of your age. However, your wealth of experience in the workplace is highly valuable and you can use your knowledge and skills to find employment. There are specialist programmes and resources available for older people to help you find work or learn new skills.

Find out about potential jobs, putting together your CV and how to prepare for a job interview at the Government's Careers Service at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers or **0300 200 7820**

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The Government's Employment Service offers advice and assistance to anyone over 16 years old, seeking employment with no upper age limit. The Employment Service aims to help people prepare for, find and retain work as quickly as possible and to assist employers to fill vacancies. They assist people to identify and address barriers to work through a one to one Adviser service which includes job search support, tailored advice, referrals to specialist support when required, information on jobs available and assistance to those interested in being self-employed.

More information can be found at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/jobseekers

or **0300 200 7822**

JOBCENTRE ONLINE (JCOL)

The Jobcentre online (JCoL) is the Government's job vacancy website which supports job seekers or job changers seeking employment. It provides links to vacancies in the Republic of Ireland and the European Union and includes details of other services available from Government.

JCoL services can also be used via kiosks in Jobcentres and Jobs and Benefits offices. The service is updated on an ongoing basis as new vacancies are notified.

The website can be accessed at:

www.jobcentreonline.com

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

If your employer treats you less favourably for an unlawful reason, you may be able to take action. If your employer treats you unfairly for any other reason, this is not unlawful discrimination. There are laws against discrimination on the basis of your gender, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity leave, sexual orientation, disability, race, colour, ethnic background, nationality, religion or belief, or age. The Labour Relations Agency (LRA) offers free, confidential and impartial advice on all employment rights issues.

More information is available at:
www.lra.org.uk or **028 9032 1442**

AGE DISCRIMINATION

If you have been treated unfairly because of your age, this may be unlawful discrimination. Age discrimination applies regardless of age and only in employment and occupation, further and higher education and vocational training. If as a result of your age you are treated differently than another person in a similar situation, you can challenge the treatment under age discrimination law.

More information is available at: www.equalityni.org
or **028 9050 0600**

VOLUNTEERING

Voluntary organisations recognise that older people bring a wealth of skills and expertise to volunteering. By passing on your skills and learning, you can make a difference to people's lives. Volunteering is also a good way to make new friends and improve your health and fitness. You will need to work out how much time you can afford to give and how flexible your hours need to be.

You can search for thousands of opportunities using the Volunteer Now website at: www.volunteernow.co.uk or **028 9023 2020**

Health and Well-being

There is lots of help and advice available to help you look after your health and well-being.

STAYING ACTIVE

Keeping physically active improves your health and quality of life, and can also help you to live longer. It's never too late to start doing some exercise and enjoy the benefits of physical activity. In fact, being active is an important factor in staying healthy and keeping your independence as you get older.

More information about staying active is at: www.getalifegetactive.com/older-adults

STAYING HEALTHY

Health issues become increasingly important after you turn 50. Recognising the possible signs of illness, having regular screening tests for cancer and being aware of potential health risks will give you a start to protect yourself mentally and physically.

For more information speak to your GP.

Further details of GPs can be found at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/your-local-doctor-gp

HEALTHCARE

When in hospital, visiting your GP or meeting your social worker, you want to be treated with respect. The Northern Ireland Health Service has five standards for all staff across all services, to help patients and those who receive social care feel confident that they are being cared for with compassion and professionalism. The five standards are respect, attitude, behaviour, communication and privacy and dignity. If these are not adhered to, you can make a complaint.

A list of contact details for each Health and Social Care Trust area can be found at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/make-a-complaint-against-the-health-service

HELP WITH HEALTH COSTS

All prescriptions dispensed in Northern Ireland are free of charge for everyone. This includes medication, wigs and surgical appliances. You do not need to do anything to qualify for free prescriptions as everyone is automatically entitled.

Some people are also entitled to free dental treatment, sight tests, glasses or contact lenses and help with the costs of travel for treatment on referral by a doctor or dentist.

More information is available at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/help-with-health-costs

THE PATIENT AND CLIENT COUNCIL

The Patient and Client Council (PCC) can provide independent help and advice about the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure.

You can contact the Patient and Client Council at: **0800 917 0222**

Housing

Choice of accommodation

As you get older you may wish to reconsider your housing accommodation arrangements.

NI HOUSING EXECUTIVE OR HOUSING ASSOCIATION HOUSING

Social rented housing is provided by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and housing associations (social landlords). All social landlords aim to provide good-quality, affordable housing to people in housing need. Each social landlord is an independent organisation and can offer different services.

Details of NIHE offices are at:

www.nihe.gov.uk and a list of housing associations are at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/housing-associations-contact

SHELTERED HOUSING

In Northern Ireland, 18 housing associations provide over 10,000 sheltered flats or bungalows for older people or people with disabilities. Sheltered accommodation is a group of dwellings built under specific guidelines, designed for older people or those with disabilities and with support provided on site.

Information on these schemes can be found at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/guide-to-supported-housing-schemes-for-over-50s

CARE / NURSING HOMES

A change in your health, mobility and / or finances may mean you need support that cannot be provided in your own home. Once you make the decision to move into a care home, it is important to choose the right one. Everyone has the right to choose their care home. There are lots to choose from, but finding one that is right may take some time. It is important that the home has the right facilities, equipment and trained staff to meet your needs.

Information on care and nursing homes can be found at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/guide-to-care-homes-for-over-50s

PRIVATE RENTAL

The private rental sector offers a variety of types of housing which may suit different requirements. The law provides certain basic rights depending on what type of tenancy agreement is in place.

More information is available at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/private-renting

MOVING IN WITH FAMILY

People are living longer and many now move into their children's homes. It's a life-changing step for the parent as well as the caregiving child, and the extended family, and everyone needs to understand what's involved. More advice regarding moving in with family can be given by your local Health Trust.

Contact details for each of the five Health and Social Care Trust areas is at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/health-and-social-care-trusts

Housing

There are organisations in Northern Ireland who offer help and advice on housing and your rights.

HOUSING RIGHTS SERVICE – HOUSING ADVICE NI

The Housing Rights Service provides independent, free advice and information on a range of housing issues (e.g. homelessness, housing options, debt, repossession) to the public in Northern Ireland. It also aims to increase the availability of information on housing and to help people find the answers to their own housing concerns.

Help can be obtained at: **www.housingadviceni.org**
or **028 9024 5640**

HOMELESSNESS

Acting quickly is important if you are homeless or facing homelessness. The sooner you get help, the more likely you will be able to sort out your debts, find somewhere suitable to live, or prevent a landlord evicting you. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Housing Rights Service provide advice about homelessness free of charge.

Details of NIHE offices are at: www.nihe.gov.uk
and information on the Housing Rights Service at:
www.housingadviceni.org or **028 9024 5640**

DISABLED PERSON'S ALLOWANCE SCHEME

The Disabled Person's Allowance Scheme can provide a reduction in domestic rate bills for properties designed or adapted for people with disabilities to live there.

For more information and an application form visit
www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates or **0300 200 7801**

LONE PENSIONER ALLOWANCE

Ratepayers aged 70 or over and living alone may be entitled to a 20% reduction in their rates. In some circumstances an older ratepayer can have someone living with them (such as a carer) and still be awarded Lone Pensioner Allowance

For more information and an application form visit
www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates or **0300 200 7801**

ADAPTING YOUR HOME

If you or someone living with you has a disability, you may qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant aid. An Occupational Therapist must assess and recommend adaptations to meet your needs, before notifying your local Housing Executive (NIHE) office. The Housing Executive will then assess your income to work out whether you will have to pay for some of the work. You can start this process through your GP, social worker or occupational therapy service.

For more information on the grant, contact your local NIHE offices at: www.nihe.gov.uk/your_nearest_office

HOUSING BENEFIT

You may qualify for Housing Benefit if you pay rent or rates and your income and capital are below a certain level. It doesn't matter if you are in or out of work. If you receive Housing Benefit it doesn't affect any other benefits.

For more information visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/housing-benefit-rate-relief

HOUSING BENEFIT FOR RATES

Depending on your circumstances, you may be entitled to a reduction in your rates. Housing Benefit is a means tested benefit so household income and savings will affect your entitlement. When you apply for Housing Benefit you are automatically assessed for rates relief. This ensures that if you do not qualify for Housing Benefit, or only receive partial help, you may still qualify for rates relief.

For more information and an application form visit
www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates or **0300 200 7801**

TELEPHONE SUPPORT SERVICE /GOOD MORNING SCHEMES

Good Morning Schemes are a free, community based telephone support service for older and vulnerable people, supporting them to stay independent in their own homes. It provides daily phone calls, alerting others if a call is not answered. This provides service users and their families with peace of mind.

In addition, the service provides telephone support, enabling users to share worries and concerns and connecting them with local community activities and services.

Details of your local scheme are at:
www.goodmorningni.org or **028 9075 1070**

Heating your home

Help and advice is available on heating your home and avoiding ill health by being exposed to the cold for long periods of time.

THE AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCHEME

All local councils target households identified as eligible for energy efficiency improvement work under this scheme. Areas considered most in need of energy efficiency measures will be contacted first.

Check your eligibility at: **0300 200 7874**

WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

This is a benefit paid to older people to help them keep warm in winter. The amount of Winter Fuel Payment received each winter can vary according to personal circumstances. The applicant's age or other people living with them can affect the amount they receive.

For more information or to apply, contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre at: **0345 915 1515**

THE BOILER REPLACEMENT SCHEME

This scheme which is available in Northern Ireland only, helps owner occupiers to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. The scheme has been extended and is open to owner occupiers whose household income is less than £40,000 and who have an inefficient boiler of at least 15 years old.

More information can be obtained from: **0300 200 7874**

COLD WEATHER PAYMENTS

These are available to people who are receiving certain benefits and will be made each week that there is very cold weather in the area. A period of very cold weather is when the average daily temperature over seven consecutive days is forecasted or recorded as 0°C or below. Payments should be made automatically but for more information contact your local Jobs and Benefits office / Social Security Office.

Details of these offices can be found at
www.nidirect.gov.uk/find-your-local-jobs-and-benefits-office

Utilities

Help is available in the event of a power cut or a burst pipe.

CUSTOMER CARE REGISTERS

All electricity and gas suppliers in Northern Ireland must keep a Customer Care Register with the details and special needs of customers who are of pensionable age, disabled (by virtue of being blind, partially sighted, deaf or hearing impaired) or chronically ill. Suppliers can provide free assistance and services to customers who register their details with them. These services include bills in different formats such as large print or Braille and password schemes to help identify representatives from a service provider. The Consumer Council has compiled a list of the services offered by the different companies.

More information can be found at:

www.consumercouncil.org.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND WATER

Northern Ireland Water is a government owned company set up to provide the water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland.

Any concerns over burst pipes or water supply should be reported to either: Waterline **0345 744 0088** or Leakline **0800 028 2011**

ELECTRICITY

Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) owns and maintains Northern Ireland's electricity networks.

In the event of a power cut you should contact the customer helpline at: **03457 643 643**

Home Safety and Security

Several organisations offer advice on staying safe in your home..

POLICE

The Police operate two numbers. The emergency number is 999 and the number for non-emergencies is 101. The purpose of the Police is to make Northern Ireland safer for everyone through professional and progressive policing.

More information on the Police Service can be found at: www.psni.police.uk

POLICE OMBUDSMAN OF NORTHERN IRELAND

The Police Ombudsman of Northern Ireland (PONI) is responsible for recording and dealing with complaints made against the police.

A complaint about the conduct of a Police Officer can be made to: complaints@policeombudsman.org or **028 9082 8600** or out of hours **0845 601 2931** or at www.policeombudsman.org

CRIME PREVENTION

It is important to prevent crime and feel safe at home. A Crime Prevention Officer can provide specific advice and support regarding your property.

Contact a Crime Prevention Officer:
the non-emergency number **101**

CRIMESTOPPERS

Crimestoppers is an independent charity helping law enforcement to locate criminals and help solve crimes. They have an anonymous 24/7 phone number, 0800 555 111, that people can call to pass on information about crime. You do not need to provide your name or any personal details.

You can find out more at: **www.crimestoppers-uk.org**

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Neighbourhood Watch is an initiative which offers you the opportunity to influence the safety of your neighbourhood and to reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour in your area.

More information on Neighbourhood Watch can be found at: **www.nidirect.gov.uk/neighbourhood-watch**

IDENTIFY FRAUD

Identity fraud and identity theft is when somebody steals your personal details and pretends to be you. They may do this to buy things in your name and charge them to your bank account.

Find out how to protect your personal details and prevent identity fraud at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/identity-fraud

FINANCIAL SECURITY

Scams aim to fool you into parting with your cash. You usually get nothing in return and lose your money. Scams are getting more sophisticated and difficult to spot so it's important to know what to look for.

Find out how to be aware of and avoid scams at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/beware-of-scams.htm

SAFETY WITHIN THE HOME

There are things around the home that can be dangerous if care is not taken. Trips and falls account for a large amount of injuries within the home.

Practical advice on keeping you and your family safe is available at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/how-to-reduce-trips-and-falls

FIRE AND FIRE PREVENTION

Following simple steps can make your home safer from fire and help you and those you live with to get out quickly and safely if a fire does occur. Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) offer a free Home Fire Safety Check. Firefighters will visit your home to help you spot any potential fire hazards and show you what to do to reduce or prevent the risk of fire. They can also advise you on an escape plan if there is a fire and will check if your smoke alarms are working.

More information can be found at www.nifrs.org/fire-safety or **028 9260 0477**

VIOLENCE IN THE HOME

If you are living in an abusive relationship and are worried about your safety you are entitled to help. In an emergency, for example, if you are being threatened with violence or attacked, or are in fear of this, you should call the police on 999 immediately. Domestic violence is treated very seriously by the police and the courts.

There is a 24 hour domestic and sexual violence helpline at: **0808 802 1414** (freephone) or 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org or text 'support' to **07797 805 839**

Legal Advice and information

There are several organisations that offer advice and information on a range of legal issues.

WILLS

By making a will you can decide what happens to your property and possessions after your death. Although you do not have to make one by law, it is the best way to make sure your estate is passed on to family and friends exactly as you wish. If you die without a will, your assets may be distributed according to the law rather than your wishes.

More information can be found at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/probate-and-wills

WILL AID

Will Aid is a special partnership between the legal profession and nine UK charities. Every November, participating solicitors waive their fee for writing a basic will. Instead, they invite their clients to make a donation to Will Aid. Each year, thousands of people use the Will Aid scheme.

More information can be found at: www.willaid.org.uk

POWER OF ATTORNEY

A Power of Attorney is a legal document giving someone else the authority to take actions or make decisions on your behalf. It enables you to choose a person/ or people (called an attorney) to deal with your property and affairs.

It is important to remember that mental incapacity can happen to anyone at anytime, for example - by accident or through illness.

To become effective, all Enduring Powers of Attorney need to be registered with the High Court but registration is not required until the point where your attorney believes you are no longer capable of managing your affairs.

You should seek legal advice as careful consideration should be given to the range of powers you wish to give your attorney.

More information is available at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/managing-your-affairs-and-enduring-power-of-attorney

CONSUMER RIGHTS

The law protects consumer rights when you buy goods or services. In Northern Ireland you can make a complaint against a trader, report fraud or ask about your consumer rights.

More information regarding your rights is at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/consumerline

or by contacting Consumerline at: **0300 123 6262**

TRADING STANDARDS

The role of the Trading Standards is to promote and maintain fair trading, protect consumers and enable reputable businesses to thrive within Northern Ireland. They enforce a wide range of consumer legislation in order to protect consumers and honest businesses. They also give advice to businesses in order to help them comply with the law.

More information is available at: **0300 1236 262**

LEGAL AID

Legal Aid allows people who would not otherwise be able to afford it, to get help for their legal problems. The Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland provides funding to help people who qualify, to get legal advice and representation in the event of a case going to court. A solicitor will be able to advise whether you would qualify for a grant of legal aid in light of all the circumstances relating to the case.

More information can be found at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/legal-aid

Leisure and lifestyle

There are lots of activities to enjoy and places to visit in Northern Ireland.

GETTING ONLINE

If you are not online, you are missing out on the benefits of the Internet. Going online can save time and money. For example, email can be a great way of staying in touch with family and friends, even if they are on the other side of the world, price comparison websites can identify savings on household bills, banking online can save queuing on the high street and shopping can be delivered if you are unable to leave the house.

To learn more about getting online and how to access training, visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/go-on
You can access computers and Wi-Fi at your local library which can be found at: www.librariesni.org.uk
or **028 3752 0738**.

Details of your local Further Education College is at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/metropolitan-and-regional-colleges

Hobbies, activities and clubs

There are a range of hobbies, activities and clubs available for older people in Northern Ireland. More details can be found at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/leisure

MUSEUM AND HERITAGE CENTRES

For a day out that is educational and fun, consider a visit to a heritage centre, museum or gallery. From local history to modern art and dinosaurs to space rockets, there are a range of displays, exhibitions and monuments to see.

More details can be found at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/family-history-heritage-and-museums

TV LICENSING

Many people enjoy watching TV. Over 75 year olds are entitled to a free television licence. Concessions may also be available for those registered blind or under certain conditions, if you live in nursing or residential care or in sheltered accommodation.

More information can be found at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/free-tv-licences or **0300 790 6131**

LIBRARIES

It is free to join your local library and borrow books (including talking books, large print books and ebooks) and to use the computers and Wi-Fi. If you are not confident using computers, Libraries NI can provide free GOT IT sessions to get you started. There are also reading groups, author events and local history services as well as events for children.

Further information or your local library can be found at:
www.librariesni.org.uk or **028 3752 0738**

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND (PRONI)

PRONI provides access to both public and private archives which can be used for undertaking local, family, personal and academic research. There is also a wide programme of events, talks and exhibitions during the course of the year.

Find out more at: **www.proni.gov.uk**

LEISURE CENTRES

Leisure Centres offer a range of indoor and outdoor activities including swimming pools, fitness gyms and classes. These are generally run by local Councils.

To find out more information on your local centre, contact your local Council at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/local-councils-in-northern-ireland

SPORT

Sport is not just for children and young people, it is a lifelong experience that brings many health, mental health, cultural and social benefits to all its participants. A key aim of government is 'a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport'. Underpinning this aim is a specific target, to increase the rate of participation in sport and physical recreation among older people. This provides an opportunity for many to become involved in a favourite sport or recreational pastime that will help to keep them active, fit and healthy in body and mind. Don't let your age be a barrier to having an active and even competitive lifestyle.

For details on how to become involved, contact Sport Northern Ireland at: www.sportni.net or **028 9038 1222**

DAY CENTRES

For those living in their own home, the opportunity of meeting people and making new friends at a Day Centre may be welcomed. It can mean a fuller social life, mixing with other day centre members and staff, taking part in any of the activities on offer, or just having a chat and a cup of tea. This also gives relatives or carers the chance to relax for a while themselves, knowing that they are in the safe care of trained staff.

Contact details for each of the five Health and Social Care Trust areas are at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/health-and-social-care-trusts. They should be able to assist with identifying your local Day Centre.

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Learning does not have to be formal or for a qualification. It can be fun and a great way to relax and socialise. It might be to develop an existing interest or learn something new. Your local Further Education College can advise on what courses are available.

Find your local College at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/metropolitan-and-regional-colleges

HOLIDAYING

You may use some free time to visit places in your local area, explore the UK or travel abroad. Information regarding travel is useful, including details of what you are entitled to such as concessions on passport fees, accommodation or travel insurance.

Find out what you need to know about travelling and what's available when you reach retirement age at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/travel-at-home-and-abroad

Members of the Legislative Assembly

MLAs are elected by, and represent the people of, Northern Ireland.

REGIONAL ELECTIONS

Elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly take place every four years. Each of the 18 Northern Ireland constituencies elects six Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) so there are a total of 108 MLAs.

Details of MLAs can be found at:

www.niassembly.gov.uk/your-mlas

or **028 9052 1137**

Money Matters

Income and Tax

As you get older, it is important to maximise your income by learning more about claiming benefits, boosting your income and budgeting your money.

TAX

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is a non-ministerial department of the UK Government responsible for the collection of taxes, the payment of some forms of state support, and the administration of other regulatory regimes including the national minimum wage. They will be able to provide advice on a range of tax matters including your Personal Allowance, Inheritance Tax, Married Couple's Allowance and Marriage Allowance.

More information is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs or **0300 200 3300**

Information on tax and appropriate calculators can be accessed at: **www.gov.uk/browse/tax**

TAX ADVICE NI

Tax Advice NI provides provides information and advice on HMRC products and services including tax, tax credits, PAYE and self-assessment.

For further information please contact **0800 988 2377** or email **tax@adviceni.net**

DEBT

If you are worried about debt, it is best to act quickly.

For free help and advice, please contact Debt Action NI **www.debtaction-ni.net** Freephone **0800 917 4607** or you can text **'ACTION' to 81025**

BUDGETING

Good money management can mean many things – from living within your means and saving for short and long-term goals, to having a realistic plan to pay off your debts and planning for the future. If you want to get on top of your finances, a budget is a really good way to start. It is a record of money you have coming in (from things like your salary or wages, pensions or benefits) and payments that you make (such as your rent or mortgage, insurance and rates as well as living expenses and regular and irregular spending).

Access an online budget planner at:
www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner

Pensions

Your State Pension is based on your National Insurance record and is paid when you reach State Pension age.

STATE PENSION

The State Pension is a regular income paid by the Government to people who have reached State Pension age. The State Pension is intended to ensure that everyone has a basic amount of money to support them in their old age. State Pensions are funded by your National Insurance contributions or credits. For men who are born on or after 6 April 1951 or women born on or after 6 April 1953, the new State Pension will replace the current State Pension system on 6 April 2016.

For information and assistance, contact the Northern Ireland Pension Centre on: **0300 123 3014** or visit **www.nidirect.gov.uk/state-pension**

STATE PENSION AGE

The State Pension age is increasing for both men and women.

For further information or to calculate your State Pension age please visit: **www.nidirect.gov.uk/calculate-your-state-pension-age**

STATE PENSIONS AND MOVING ABROAD

To claim your State Pension if you live outside the UK, contact the International Pension Centre and make a telephone claim or ask for an International State Pension claim form.

Contact the International Pension Centre at:

tvp.internationalqueries@thepensionservice.gsi.gov.uk

or **+44 1912 187 777** or textphone **+44 1912 187 280**

PENSION CREDIT

Pension Credit is an income related benefit for pensioners. There are two elements. Guarantee Credit is for people who have reached State Pension age. Savings Credit is for those aged 65 and over. No new claims for Savings Credit will be accepted after 5 April 2016

For out more at: **www.nidirect.gov.uk/pension-credit**

or call **0300 123 301**

Travel

There are a range of schemes to help you get around as you get older.

DRIVING

Whether you passed your driving test in your teens or more recently, there are things you need to think about when driving as you get older.

Find out more at:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/guide-to-driving-and-mobility

MOTABILITY SCHEME

Buying and adapting a car can be expensive. The Motability Scheme gives people with disabilities the opportunity to lease a new car, scooter or powered wheelchair using their government funded mobility allowance.

Information can be found at: www.motability.co.uk
or **0300 4564 566** or minicom: **0300 0370 100**

BLUE BADGE SCHEME

The Blue Badge Scheme is an important service for people with severe mobility problems, which enables badge holders to park close to where they need to go. It provides on-street parking concessions for badge holders who travel either as drivers or passengers. The scheme operates throughout the UK, and is administered in Northern Ireland by TransportNI.

Find out more about the Blue Badge Scheme and how to apply at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/the-blue-badge-scheme or bluebadges@drdni.gov.uk or **0300 200 7818**

SHOPMOBILITY

Shopmobility schemes hire out or lend manual wheelchairs, powered wheelchairs and powered scooters to anyone who needs help with mobility to get around. You do not need to be registered disabled or have a blue badge to use the equipment. Shopmobility centres are usually located in a town centre or shopping centre, enabling people to go shopping and to visit leisure and commercial facilities.

Details of schemes in Northern Ireland are at: www.shopmobilityni.org or **07934 190 242**

BUS AND TRAIN FARES

If you are over 60 you are entitled to free bus and rail travel in Northern Ireland.

If you are over 65 you are entitled to free bus and rail travel in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

Application forms can be obtained from any manned Translink bus or rail station or at:
0845 600 0049 or textphone **028 9038 7505**
or email **smartpass@translink.co.uk**

COMMUNITY / RURAL TRANSPORT SCHEME

Some areas have community transport services for people who have difficulty using public transport. Every community transport organisation operates on a not-for-profit basis, is a registered charity and is managed by a board of local volunteer trustees. The majority of drivers are volunteers.

Details of your local schemes can be accessed at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/rural-community-transport-partnerships

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An Agency within the Department for

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Development**

www.dsdni.gov.uk

All contact details correct at time of going to print [DATE]

For the most recent contact details for organisations listed in this booklet please view online at: [nidirect/?https://www.dsdni.gov.uk/publications](https://www.dsdni.gov.uk/publications)