

*Translated from Russian*

## **Information from the Russian Federation on upholding the rights of older people**

The basic positions of Government policy regarding older people in the Russian Federation are enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the fundamental principles of Russian legislation on protection of the health of citizens, the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, the Family Code of the Russian Federation, and in the federal laws on the foundations of social services for the population in the Russian Federation, on social services for older and disabled citizens, on social protection for the disabled in the Russian Federation, on veterans, on voluntary associations, on charitable activities and charitable organizations, and so forth.

The main thrusts of Government policy concerning older people are:

- Developing the pension system;
- Improving health services, broadening the range and scope and increasing the quality of available social and rehabilitative services;
- Establishing conditions and arrangements under which effective use can be made of the social and labour potential of older people.

At its session in October 2010 the Presidium of the State Council of the Russian Federation examined social policy issues relating to older people and improvement of their quality of life. There was wide-ranging discussion of questions of material security, medical assistance and prescription benefits, social services and employment for older people; co-financing of social programmes assisting older people; and State support for non-profit and charitable organizations serving older citizens.

Currently the federal executive authorities and the executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation have been assigned various tasks by the President of the Russian Federation based on the conclusions of the Presidium of the State Council.

These include:

- Creating conditions and arrangements to retain and reintegrate older people in their professional activities;
- Improving the prescription benefits system for older citizens;
- Modernizing the regulatory and legal foundations of social services;
- Improving the social services infrastructure for older citizens;
- Involving businesses and non-profit organizations in the provision of social services for older citizens;
- Improving older people's access to information;
- Enlarging the role of voluntary associations.

**Material security for older people****Pension security for older people**

The basic mechanism for ensuring income security for older people is through the provision of Government pensions.

Under the federal law on retirement pensions in the Russian Federation, the following types of retirement pensions exist in the Russian Federation: old-age pensions, disability pensions and survivor's pensions.

Men aged 60 and over and women aged 55 and over who have had employment insurance for a period of five years or more are entitled to an old-age pension.

As at 1 January 2010, there were 39.2 million pensioners registered with the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation and its regional offices. Of those, 36.2 million receive retirement pensions, 31.8 million of which are old-age pensions. The amount payable for old-age pensions also varies depending on the pensioner's place of residence.

Citizens who for whatever reason are not entitled to a retirement pension are eligible for a social pension on conditions specified in the federal law on State pension security in the Russian Federation.

Persons reaching the age of 80 are eligible for an increase in the fixed base amount of the insurance component of the retirement pension.

Thanks to the index-linking of retirement pensions, by 2012 the average amount of a retirement pension should be 1.61 times the minimum subsistence level for a pensioner.

**Social support for pensioners**

An important component of the older population's income consists of legislated social support measures: subsidies and supplementary payments that go hand-in-hand with pensions, benefits and social services. These are granted based on a citizen's membership in a category carrying special legal status.

Under the law on Government social assistance, as from 1 January 2005 older people receiving federal benefits have been eligible for a monthly cash payment and granted Government social assistance in the form of a range of social services.

Under that same law, social support for those older people in the beneficiary category, besides monthly cash payments, encompasses a defined set of social services, including additional free medical assistance, which covers necessary medications and health resort treatments, and also free local and inter-city travel to and from treatments.

**Social support for housing and utility payments**

Older citizens may receive social assistance with payments for housing and utilities (heating, hot and cold water, gas and electricity).

### **Social services and older people**

Under the federal law on the foundations of social services for the population in the Russian Federation, social services are offered in the form of social support measures; the provision of social welfare, medical, psychological, educational and legal services and material assistance; and the organization of social adaptation and rehabilitation for citizens living in difficult circumstances.

Men and women living alone with partial loss of ability to care for themselves by reason of old age, illness or disability are eligible for home help in the form of social welfare and medical services and other assistance.

Social services may be supplied free or for a fee. Arrangements for free social services are determined by the State authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Paid social services in the State social services system are provided by arrangement with the State authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. The conditions and procedure for payment for social services provided by non-State or private services are established by the latter independently.

Social services are currently offered to citizens on an in-home, day-care or in-facility basis.

The Russian Federation has about 4,000 social institutions of various types for older and disabled people, assisting more than 15 million citizens with social needs annually.

Social services are provided on an in-home and day-care basis in 2,220 social services centres established in entities of the Russian Federation.

In response to the need for education felt by active older people, so-called universities of the third age are being set up in centres for social services, with departments of law, health care, political and economic studies, psychology, agricultural methods, and culture. Here older people are offered:

- Legal classes on issues of estate law, gift transfer, wills, and property matters;
- Medical and healthy living classes;
- Psychology classes on preparing for retirement and adapting to the individual ageing process, building relationships with children, relatives, friends and others.

The work of such universities helps keep older people socially active and fosters a positive image of them in society at large. Outside the social services system, similar universities are being established within cultural institutions.

In view of the need of older people today to keep themselves informed, classes (or groups) in computer literacy are being organized within social institutions for older people, and also telephone helplines and hotlines.

One of the areas being addressed by social assistance centres is the organization of services for older people at home. Home social services are the form of social services most in demand, the most responsive to citizens' needs and at the same time the most advantageous economically.

In particular, in various regions a home social services model has been created to offer older people a range of services:

- Delivery of hot meals, medicines, groceries, and so forth;
- Provision of personal and domestic services (hygiene, shopping, dressing, helping in and out of bed, and so forth);
- Providing services supporting older people's social ties with their former places of work;
- Offering medical and preventive care assistance in health centres and clinics, transport services and leisure activities.

The introduction of various types of mobile social services has made it possible to provide a variety of home social services for older people living in remote rural areas.

The mobile teams are entrusted with furnishing social and individual medical services that can be provided where older people live. The staff of mobile teams includes various specialists working in social services centres, health-care institutions, the Pension Fund, and so forth.

Alongside in-home and day-care services for the elderly there is a functioning regional system of institutions providing social services on a permanent residential basis.

In the Russian Federation, as at 1 January 2010, there was a total of 1,500 adult residential social services institutions, with a capacity of 247,900 places and currently accommodating 242,100 people. These include 481 mental institutions with places for 138,100, currently housing 136,600 older and disabled people, and 29 nursing homes with 7,200 places, currently housing 7,900 people.

The organization of social and medical services for older people living in the countryside, particularly in remote and sparsely populated villages, continues to be a serious problem for the social services.

The range of social services that social workers provide to the rural population differs significantly from those required by urban dwellers. The assistance of social services institutions in rural areas is needed for tasks specific to those areas (digging vegetable gardens, delivering fuel, chopping wood, and so forth).

Social protection is the area where market relations are the least advanced. The skills and methods for attracting private companies to this area are still being developed. The entire country possesses only a handful of private residential institutions.

### **Employment of older people**

At the present time the number of pensioners engaged in the country's economy is around 12.04 million, comprising about 30.7 per cent of the total number of people receiving pensions (39.2 million).

Under the law on employment of the population of the Russian Federation, the executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation responsible for employment assistance (henceforth "employment agencies") provide Government employment services both to pre-pensionable citizens (for the two years before they reach pensionable age, including those eligible for early retirement) and to those already of pensionable age.

Pre-pensionable and pensionable citizens have the right to assistance in choosing suitable work, free consultation, free information and vocational guidance services in employment agencies to help them in selecting an area of activity (or profession), job placement and the possibility of vocational training.

On the recommendation of the employment agencies, where there are no job placement possibilities for unemployed citizens under retirement age who are discharged as a result of an organization's closure, or through staff cuts or the downsizing of an organization, with their consent they may begin receiving a pension early (two years ahead of retirement age, including early retirement age).

When citizens of pre-pensionable age apply to the State employment authorities in their community and are registered as unemployed, they are guaranteed social support, including free vocational training, retraining and further training, under the guidance of employment agencies, and participation in volunteer work.

Under the legislation governing the employment of pre-pensionable persons, persons categorized as experiencing difficulty finding work are entitled to the provision of additional guarantees of employment through the development and implementation of employment assistance programmes, the creation of additional jobs and specialized organizations, the conduct of special training programmes and other measures. On registering as unemployed, such persons also receive Government assistance in the form of temporary job placements for unemployed persons experiencing difficulty finding work.

#### **State support for non-profit and charitable organizations serving older people**

The enactment of the federal law amending legislative acts of the Russian Federation on support for socially oriented non-profit organizations has been an important step in developing a system for promoting the development of non-profit and charitable organizations providing the population with social support.

In particular, the law establishes the authority of central State agencies and local authorities to support socially oriented non-profit organizations, and also to support charitable activity and volunteer work.

#### **Participation in political life**

Under article 32 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, citizens of the Russian Federation have the right to participate in the Government of their State both directly and through their representatives. Citizens of the Russian Federation have the right to elect and be elected to federal and local Government organs and to participate in referendums.

Older citizens have traditionally been active participants in elections in Russia. The legislation defines the procedure for older people's participation in elections, allowing for individual health limitations and protection of their freedom of expression.

The law places no limits on older people's social and political activity. Older people join the ranks of various political parties, organize their own political movements and associations, participate in social and cultural events and take an

active part in educational and awareness-raising programmes and the patriotic upbringing of the younger generation.

Under current legislation the contribution made by older people over their working life to the development of society and the State may be recognized by awarding them additional pension statuses that carry additional social benefits. Those in such categories are eligible for additional guarantees in the area of medical services, income support, including through pension payments, supplements and subsidies. The system of additional social statuses, as reflected in the current legislation, is relatively broad and differentiated in accordance with Government preferences.

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