

Rosaleen: Worrying about money

[Belfast, Northern Ireland]

Rosaleen: My name is Miss Rosaleen Hughes. And I'm a pensioner, 75 years of age. I live in the middle of the Ormeau Road and I have been here for a number of years.

I have worked all my life. I have never known a day that I was ...

[Still of Rosaleen with MBE letter]

... off. I became a nurse in a city hospital. And then ...

[Still of Rosaleen as a nurse with two colleagues]

I was out in the community nursing. And then I was a councillor in Castlereagh for about 15 years.

[On retirement, Rosaleen had expected to be able to manage on her state pension supplemented by a small occupational pension.]

I have one of those gas things, just in case the electric went off.

I was always kind of a luscious person. You know I always enjoyed having the best of stuff – you know that type of thing.

I would have thought it would be that I would have enough money to keep me going. You know, that I wouldn't be worrying about money. But now I have to worry about money because of my finance being so low.

I find it hard sometimes if I want to get something extra. My heat and my food, they are my priorities.

The choices that I would have to do without would be, I couldn't go to the pictures and entertainments like that because I would be worrying about my money. Just in case I needed it tomorrow.

I economise in a small little kettle like this and it's more economical. I can just put enough water there for two cups of tea. And then that's the wee toaster and that does lovely wee toast. But you have to make sure that you

get thin bread, you know, that it's not too thick cos it's a small toaster – an economical one. And there is my little cooker.

I have a cut out a lot of meats stuffs, which I used to enjoy.

And I would use cuppa soups. I think cuppa soups are more economical and at least you're getting something hot into you.

So all those things are, you know, for to save electric really and to save me in my pocket as well.

Well, it's skimping, probably skimping the whole way, you know, in your life.

I love living here. I find that it was a very lucky house when I got it and I still want to hold on as long as I can. Even though I find it very difficult at the minute with my pains and my aches and going up and down the stairs.

I was going into bed. I was in my bare feet. And my carpet was soaking. And I thought to myself, 'Oh my God I wonder what has happened?' First of all I blamed the cat.

And then I looked behind and saw that all the back was wet as well.

You either look after yourself or you have to look after your house. And because of the damp that's in my house I'm just worried, in case that I wouldn't have that type of money for to get the damp fixed. Because it's very costly.

I mean I got up here this morning. And I had to put on the heat in there because it was so cold. And if your house is damp your whole body is damp. But I just want it to be comfortable rather than to be uncomfortable. And that is what I have always liked, to be just comfortable.

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