

Campaign!

The NPC's monthly bulletin for activists in the pensioners' movement

Standing up for pensioners' rights

Pensioners from groups across the country gathered at Westminster on Wednesday 27 November for the NPC's annual lobby of Parliament.

A packed rally heard speakers from Unison deal with the issue of social care, the Hands Off campaign talk about universal benefits and the Public Service Pensioners'

Council highlight the problems caused by the new single-tier state pension.

The group 38 Degrees also raised the threats posed to democracy by the new lobbying Bill.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "At a time when groups like the NPC need to speak out, the government is trying to gag us."



Campaigners called for a series of basic rights in retirement to be

placed in party manifestoes ahead of the 2015 general election to

take low pensions, poor care, fuel poverty and loneliness.

Campaigners gather outside Parliament for the NPC's annual lobby of MPs
© NPC

Scandal as winter deaths rise by 29%

The NPC has described the latest excess winter death figures amongst pensioners as a "national scandal" and called on the government to take urgent action.

The provisional figures show there were 31,100 deaths between December 2012 and March 2013 from cold related illnesses - a massive 29 per cent increase on last

year's figure and equal to 260 deaths per day.

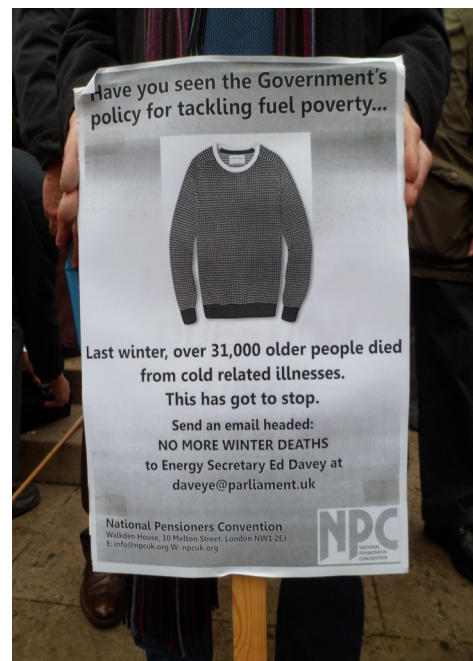
The NPC points out that the cold claims more lives in UK than in Sweden where temperatures regularly plunge to -30C.

As a proportion, excess winter deaths account for 4.61 per cent of all UK deaths, compared with 3.76 per cent in Sweden.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "The govern-

ment needs to roll out a more effective programme to insulate homes, build more suitable properties for older people, raise the winter fuel allowance and tackle the excessive profits of the big six energy companies."

The NPC is calling on supporters to inundate energy secretary Ed Davey with emails and letters on the issue over the next few days.



Supporters are being asked to email energy secretary, Ed Davey at daveye@parliament.uk to call for action on winter deaths
© NPC



National Pensioners Convention

Walkden House,
10 Melton Street,
London NW1 2EJ
T: 020-7383-0388
E: admin@npcuk.org
W: npcuk.org

Campaign Dates

National Dignity Action Day
1 February 2014, organised by the Social Care Institute of Excellence. The NPC intends to mount nationwide activities to coincide with this day as a way of promoting the Convention's Dignity Code. Activities are planned across the NPC's 18 UK regions and include community choirs, public meetings, street stalls and demos outside hospitals/care homes. Details to follow.

NPC Pensioners' Parliament
17-19 June 2014, Winter Gardens, Blackpool. The event will open with a march and rally and involve three days of sessions and workshops with a range of guest speakers on all the major topics of concern. Tickets priced £6 will be available from the NPC office from January 2014.

UK pension worst in developed world

Britain's state pension is one of the least generous in the developed world, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The average Briton will replace only a third of their working income with their state pension, compared to Australia and France where pensioners get over half their working wage in

state pension, and Italy where the figure is 70 per cent.

Only in Mexico do workers retire with a worse deal than those in Britain.

A right-wing think-tank, Civitas has joined the debate by calling for the state pension to be means-tested and for national insurance payments to be abolished.

Norman Jemison, NPC vice president said:

"Rather than scrapping the state pension and going back to the 1930s, we need to do more to improve it for both existing and future generations of pensioners."

The NPC is lobbying politicians over the proposed single-tier state pension to ensure that all pensioners benefit and state pensions increase every year in line with the best of prices, wages or 2.5%.

Care home residents die from thirst

More than 1000 care home residents have died from thirst or dehydration according to research by journalists at the *Daily Telegraph*.

Figures obtained under a freedom of information request reveal that 1158 care home residents suffered dehydration-related deaths between 2003 and 2012.

Some 318 residents were also found to have died

of starvation or malnourishment during the same period, while 2815 deaths were linked to bed sores.

Jan Shortt, NPC vice president said: "This information is absolutely shocking and needs urgent action from government."

"The social care system has now collapsed in many parts of the country, and the chronic lack of funding and poor standards of pay and

training amongst staff is now starting to have a terrible impact on the lives of older people."

The NPC is spearheading a major campaign on 1 February 2014 as part of Dignity Action Day, which will be calling on all local authorities, GPs, hospitals and care homes to adopt the Convention's Dignity Code.

Details of events in every region of the UK will be issued shortly.

Longevity starts to fall

Politicians often like to argue that an ageing population is one of the main reasons why the state pension age must rise, but the latest official figures show that life expectancy is actually falling.

In 2009, men aged 65 were predicted to live a further 19 years and for women, 21.3 years.

However, the 2013 data from the Office for National Statistics now shows the figures have fallen to 18.3 years and 20.6 years respectively.

Whilst longevity has improved over the last few decades, many

older people still have major illnesses with which to contend.

Over a quarter of over 65s have difficulty seeing, and over half are deaf or hard of hearing.

Peter Rayner, NPC vice president said: "Just because we can keep people alive longer doesn't mean we should make them work longer."

You can now keep up to date with all the NPC's activities by following us on Twitter @NPCUK.