

# Campaign!

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

## Starting gun fired for 2015 election

**P**rime Minister, David Cameron started the new year with an announcement that a future Conservative government would retain the 'triple lock' on the basic state pension for the lifetime of the next parliament.

The lock links future annual increases in the state pension to the higher of earnings, the Consumer Price Index or 2.5%.

But at the same time, Mr Cameron refused to give support for maintaining existing universal pensioner benefits such as the bus pass and winter fuel allowance, and instead confirmed the Conservatives would explain what they intended to do in their election manifesto.

Whilst the pledge is welcome, critics argue that it still does little to address the UK's historically low

state pension.

Even guaranteeing a 2.5% increase only amounts to £2.75 extra on the current pension of £110 a week.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "One of the main reasons why the UK has additional benefits for pensioners such as the winter fuel allowance is because our state pension is completely inadequate."

Whilst the PM's

announcement marked the start of electioneering for the 'grey vote', it also raised the issue of conflict between younger and older generations.

Mr Douglas said: "Trying to divide the generations, by claiming that one group is benefiting at the expense of another is extremely dangerous."

"The only ones doing well out of austerity are the rich - and that's

where the real division in society lies."

The NPC is seeking to organise a major event later in the year which will bring together pensioners and younger people to discuss a number of issues about which they are both concerned.

"If the Prime Minister thinks he can buy our votes with the promise of an extra £2.75 a week, he needs to think again," Mr Douglas added.

## Let's make Dignity Action Day a success

**T**he NPC is planning a series of over 50 events across the UK on 1 February 2014, to mark National Dignity Action Day.

The aim will be to promote the Convention's Dignity Code and to promote it amongst the public, local officials and health professionals.

Events will include musical con-

certs with community choirs, public meetings, street stalls, petition signings and demonstrations outside hospitals and care homes.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "Every week the media reveals another horror story about how older people are being denied dignity in care."

"That's why we

need all GPs, hospitals, care homes and local authorities to adopt the Dignity Code and put it into practice."

Details of all the events will be listed on the NPC website [npcuk.org](http://npcuk.org) a week before the date.

Please do your best to support events which are closest to your area.

**Dignity Action Day**  
It's time for care to change!

Every week, we come across examples of how older people have been let down by the care system and treated badly. Whether in hospital, a nursing home or their own home - it's time we started treating older people with dignity.

Britain's biggest older people's campaigning group, the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) has produced a Dignity Code which lays out in a very clear and concise way how we should treat those who can no longer look after themselves.

**What can be done?**

- Care staff must be properly trained and paid accordingly
- Services should be more rigorously monitored, inspected and regulated
- Local authorities should adopt the Dignity Code and ensure it is part of their contracts with those organisations providing care in their area
- Local health services should ensure the Dignity Code is part of their health and well-being strategies

**What can you do to help?**

- Contact the NPC and get hold of a copy of the Dignity Code
- Get in touch with your local MP, council, GP and hospital and ask them to support the Dignity Code
- Let us know what is happening in your area and find out how you can get involved

National Pensioners Convention  
Web: [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)  
Email: [info@npcuk.org](mailto:info@npcuk.org)  
Post: Walkden House, 10 Melton St, London NW1 2EJ

**NPC**  
NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

Tens of thousands of campaign leaflets will be handed out across the UK by the NPC on 1 February 2014  
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## National Pensioners Convention

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10 Melton Street,  
London NW1 2EJ  
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## 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.

# Autumn Statement brings little cheer

**O**n 5 December 2013, the Chancellor George Osborne delivered his Autumn Statement.

He confirmed that the Basic State Pension would rise in April to £113.10 a week in line with the CPI figure of 2.7%, giving an increase of £2.95 a week and £1.80 for many women who receive a pension based on their husband's contributions.

He also announced that from October 2015, all those who reach pension age before the introduction of the single-tier state pension in April 2016 (including existing pensioners), will be eligible to buy extra National Insurance contributions as a way of boosting their state pension.

But there was no change to the level of the winter fuel allowance or the freeze on per-

sonal tax allowances.

The main issue to catch the headlines was the Chancellor's decision to raise the pension age to 68 by 2035, affecting all those currently under 46.

This policy is however at odds with the latest figures which show that life expectancy is falling, with the number of years after 65 now standing at 18.3 for men and 20.6 for women.

# Time to defend our universal benefits

The NPC is supporting a new UK-wide campaign called Hands Off which seeks to defend universal pensioner benefits. You can help by:

- Visiting the [www.handsoff.org.uk](http://www.handsoff.org.uk) website
- Signing the online e-petition
- Writing an e-mail or letter to your local MP
- Following the campaign on Twitter [@supporthandsoff](https://twitter.com/supporthandsoff)
- Pledging your organisation/group's official support for the campaign by emailing [info@handsoff.org.uk](mailto:info@handsoff.org.uk)
- Promoting the campaign amongst your family and friends (anyone of any age can support the campaign!)



# Hands Off!

# Unpaid childcare helps out

**N**early seven million grandparents provide regular childcare for their grandchildren aged under 16, with the most popular reason being to allow the child's parents to work, according to new research from the TUC.

The YouGov poll – published as part of the TUC's *Age Immaterial* investigation reveals that 63% of working grandparents and 55% of retired grandparents look after their grandchildren and thus help the economy.

The findings contradict the current suggestions that older people are a burden on society that it can no longer afford.

Marion Wilson, NPC vice president said: "Without the support of grandparents providing unpaid childcare, the economy would come to a standstill."

"It's time the value of older people started to be recognised rather than criticised."

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