

Campaign!

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

On UN Older People's Day let's say: "Pensioners are an asset not burden"

On October 1st, the NPC will be promoting the value that older people add to society as part of the United Nation's day of older people.

The key message on the day will be that older people should be seen as an asset to society, particularly because every year they provide £45bn in taxation, help many local charities and groups through volunteering and give many hours of unpaid childcare.

In many cases support through universal benefits such as the bus pass and free prescriptions are needed in order to enable pensioners to keep making a

contribution to their local communities.

But every week there are attacks on these benefits.

The latest has come from the Taxpayers Alliance, who wish to see the introduction of costly and ineffective means-testing.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "One of the main reasons why these important benefits exist is because the UK's state pension is so inadequate, with around 2m living below the official poverty line."

NPC supporters will take part in events around the UK on the day, so contact NPC for details.

**Older People's Day
We're an asset not a burden!**

Every week, a politician, think-tank or media commentator suggests that the country can no longer afford its older generation. They claim that pensioners have escaped the austerity and cuts and should now lose their universal benefits - free bus travel, winter fuel allowance, TV licences for the over 75s and free prescriptions. But this attack must be resisted.

What contribution do pensioners make to society?

- Every year, pensioners add £40bn more to the economy than they receive in pensions, care and benefits.
- All pensioners pay tax, either on their income or indirectly
- Many charities would not exist without older volunteers
- Millions of young families rely on grandparents to provide unpaid childcare, and many older people also look after their spouses without any additional financial support

Why are universal benefits so important?

- They save money through prevention of problems eg. free bus travel cuts down on loneliness
- They enable older people to play an active role in society
- The UK's state pension system is so poor that universal benefits are needed
- Everyone who needs help, gets it. A means-test would stop some from claiming
- The tax system can always be used to claw back money from very wealthy pensioners, rather than a costly means-test
- They show support for the welfare state

Hands Off our Universal Benefits!

NPC
NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONFEDERATION

A copy of the leaflet the NPC and its supporters will be issuing around the country on 1 October
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Pensioners' Manifesto Lobby on 5 November

The NPC plans to publicly launch its Pensioners' Manifesto at a lobby of Parliament on Wednesday, 5 November.

Campaigners will gather at 12noon by the George V statue on Old Palace Yard opposite

the House of Lords, before going into the Commons for a rally at 1pm in committee room 14.

Speakers have yet to be confirmed, but this will be the last time the NPC meets MPs before the general election.

Organisers hope pen-

sioner representatives from across the UK will turn out to raise important concerns surrounding the state pension, social care and universal benefits.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "All the major parties need

to realise that they cannot take the pensioner vote for granted."

"We need to see cast iron pledges from politicians that properly address the concerns we have, before we give them our votes."

More details to follow.



National Pensioners Convention

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Campaign Dates

NPC Transport Conference
18 September, St Pancras Church Hall, London. Tickets priced £5 include lunch and refreshments. Booking forms available from the NPC office on request. Space limited, so book early for this popular event

Older People's Day
1 October: The NPC will be organising events across the country to promote the value of universal pensioner benefits. Contact the NPC office for details

STOP PRESS

NHS England is rolling out Personal Health Budgets to 5 million patients, costing £1000 a patient, at a total cost £5bn. The claim is that this will reduce hospital admissions, so why aren't they doing a trial to see if that's true?

Court rules on care home funding

A High Court judgement covering the rate that local authorities are allowed to pay for social care in nursing homes is likely to add to the growing pressures on a overwhelmed care system.

The case in Newcastle revealed that the city council wasn't paying a fair rate for the care it bought on behalf of older people in two Abbeyfield homes.

There are around 145,000 people in England with few assets and low incomes who currently have their care places funded by local councils.

But for years people paying for their own care have complained that they pay more than local authorities do for the places they fund.

In this case, it was suggested that the council was paying at least 10% less

than the standard rate.

However, hundreds of local authorities are struggling to maintain support for social care, given the £1.8bn worth of cuts that they have faced from central government.

Jan Shortt, NPC vice president said: "Decent care requires decent funding, and our social care system needs urgent support before it collapses."

Is England about to get a Commissioner?

New calls for an Older People's Commissioner for England have been made by the Centre-Forum think-tank, as a way of ensuring pensioners' concerns are not "swept under the carpet".

Interestingly Labour has suggested that older people need a strong advocate, whilst the Lib Dem former care minister, Paul Burstow has backed the idea.

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales, Sarah Rochira also said older people often felt "marginalised" in society.

So far, only the Conservatives have declined to reveal their intentions.

For many years the NPC has opposed the idea of an Older People's minister inside the government because it was felt that party loyalties would always outweigh the needs

of Britain's older population.

Not only that, but there was also a feeling that issues would be side lined rather than have their profile raised.

Any proposal to give England its own commissioner would therefore need very clear terms of reference and most importantly, strong powers to intervene.

The NPC will consider the issue further as details emerge.

Fears over dementia

Older people are more fearful of developing dementia than they are of cancer, a poll has suggested.

Two thirds of people over the age of 50 fear that they will develop the condition, while just one in 10 said they were frightened about getting cancer.

The figures come from a recent survey by Saga magazine.

There are currently around 800,000 people with dementia in the UK, but as the population ages, this figure is expected to grow.

Peter Rayner, NPC vice president said: "It is completely understandable that the possibility of losing the very essence of what makes you the individual that you are is a frightening prospect."

"That's why we need more research funding into the condition as well as better support for sufferers and their carers out in the community."

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