

NUT Retired Teachers' Convention 11/10/11

Brian Sturtevant

The PSPC (Public Service Pensioners Council) the NUT is affiliated

Key PSPC priorities are to:

- Protect accrued public service pension rights and maintain the agreements concluded from 2005 onwards
- Immediately increase basic state pension to the minimum income guarantee level (£132.60) and index to the higher of prices or earnings
- By 2020, increase the basic state pension to at least the official poverty level (currently £165) a week and index to the higher of prices or earnings.
- Abolish the income limit beyond which age tax allowances are clawed back for pensioners

Brian started his presentation by describing the differences between RPI (Retail Price Index) and CPI (Consumer Price Index)

CPI is a new introduction, it breaks pre-election promises to continue to raise pensions using increases in retail prices to keep abreast of the rising cost of living. Brian said that £6 billion were to be saved from the change. A person with a £10,000 pa pension stands to lose £36,000 in a lifetime. CPI excludes housing costs.

The State Pension will be linked to CPI.

Paul Novak TUC

The £81 billion cuts in public services will affect the private as well as public sector, since the two are interdependent.

Meanwhile, Nick Clegg claims that "fairness is at the heart" of the coalition's cuts agenda. Cuts are ideologically based, on the notion that "we are all in it together" and must therefore all feel the pain.

There is no evidence that cuts are effective in improving the economy, politics and ideology are behind the cuts. Any savings made are lost by the cuts causing an expense elsewhere or, like Gove's education cuts, being used to fund coalition (Tory), policies, in Gove's case, "free" schools.

250,000 public sector jobs have been lost already this year.

Cameron has been quoted as saying that public services are "enemies of enterprise" (March this year)

Opinion poll results published on the TUC website has found that "cuts are good" and "cuts are fair" are rapidly losing public support.

"Cuts are necessary" still holds steady.

So we need to show alternative strategies for boosting the economy eg progressive taxation and investment in the infrastructure and giving the message to the public about the threats to public services affecting them and their children.

The government wants to make people pay more and work longer for a lot less. Despite hours of talks, ministers have yet to seriously negotiate.

Few understand all the detail of pensions, but the issue is simple.

Most public sector workers are modestly paid. Their pay has been frozen while the price of basics is shooting up. Now they are expected to pay an extra £3 billion a year for much worse pensions, by a government that cancelled the banker's bonus tax that raised almost the same.

It's wrong to make public sector workers pay an unfair contribution to reducing a deficit they did nothing to cause. *TUC Pensions Justice*

Neil Duncan Jordan NPC

Neil addressed the issue of rising fuel costs and fuel poverty. Death from hypothermia is now called "excess winter death rate".

80% of care provision is now in the private sector. This is run on the cheapest labour, staff are paid at a cheaper rate than a supermarket checkout worker. BUPA's staff's terms and conditions of service are similarly poor.

Neil pointed out that each generation of pensioners is fighting for the well-being of the next.

Finally he reaffirmed the non-political stance of the NPC.

Wendy Savage Keep Our NHS Public

Wendy told us of the aims of the campaign at trying to save the NHS from privatisation.

Kevin Courtney NUT (Deputy General Secretary)

The government wants to make people pay more and work longer for a lot less, Kevin said that Ministers will not shift their view, in fact Danny Alexander simply repeats the mantra that "It's more appropriate to link pensions to CPI" without elaborating.

Pensions are being used to pay off the deficit.

There is no pensions time bomb, it is a myth promoted to try to divide private and public sector workers

Tony Dutton Secretary Huntingdon Retired Section