

# Campaign!

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

## NPC code puts dignity centre stage

The NPC launched its Dignity Code on February 22 amid a flurry of publicity in the national and local media.

To promote the launch, a number of high profile signatories, including the care minister, Paul Burstow MP, the RCN, Care Quality Commission and the TUC were also asked to give it their support.

The Dignity Code

aims to set out in simple terms those practices that are unacceptable when caring for older people, alongside what standards we should expect to see.

The NPC hopes the Code will be rolled out across GP surgeries, hospital wards and care homes, and is in discussions with the Department of Health to see how this can be done.

The long-term



aim would be to see the Dignity Code enshrined in law.

Meanwhile, the

public are also being urged to support the campaign by signing the online Dignity

Code petition at : <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/27050>.

*NPC president, Frank Cooper (left) and Care Minister, Paul Burstow MP at the launch of the Dignity Code in the House of Commons © Marion Wilson The Dignity Code and a full list of signatories can be seen at npcuk.org*

**NPC Fair Care Lobby 20 March 2012  
1-3pm, Committee Room 14, House of Commons**

## Think-tank calls for cut to bus pass

A right-wing think-tank, the Social Market Foundation, has called for the bus pass to be scrapped and the winter fuel allowance and free TV licences for the over 75s to be means-tested.

The Foundation

claimed that concessionary bus travel was “a low-priority item of spending that did nothing to improve the economy.”

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary described the report as little more than “pensioner bashing”.

“Once again pensioners are being told they must pay for the mistakes of the financial industry,” she said.

“This think-tank simply don’t realise that the bus pass enables older people to get out and about and spend money in

their local area, as well as allowing them to do unpaid voluntary work that adds an estimated £40bn to our communities every year.”

“Taking the bus pass away would inevitably lead to greater levels of social isolation

that would end up costing more in terms of increased demand for care and support.”

The report also follows an earlier call by the Deputy PM, Nick Clegg to means-test the bus pass, which ministers have so far rejected.



## National Pensioners Convention

Walkden House,  
10 Melton Street,  
London NW1 2EJ  
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W: npcuk.org

## Campaign Dates

20 March 2012  
NPC Care Lobby  
Rally in Committee  
Room 14, 1-3pm  
before lobbying  
MPs as part of the  
Fair Care Cam-  
paign.

12 April 2012  
Second Annual  
Jack Jones Lecture  
The National Pen-  
sioners' Education  
and Welfare Centre  
will stage the se-  
cond Jack Jones  
lecture in the Town  
Hall, Liverpool with  
TUC general secre-  
tary Brendan Bar-  
ber. Free tickets  
available from the  
NPC office

19-21 June 2012  
NPC Pensioners'  
Parliament  
The NPC Pension-  
ers' Parliament in  
Blackpool will in-  
clude an opening  
march and rally,  
various discussion  
groups, exhibition  
stands, guest  
speakers and en-  
tertainment. Tickets  
priced £5 are avail-  
able from the NPC  
office.

# Energy bosses do well as prices rise

**T**he bosses of Britain's biggest energy suppliers have come under fire in a new joint campaign by the NPC and Greenpeace.

Research has shown that the pay of the companies' top executives has rocketed by more than 100% in under a decade.

The probe into the so-called Big Six companies shows their average top salary and

perks package in 2010 was £1.35m, compared with £637,000 in 2001.

Over the same decade, the state pension has risen by around 45% from £67.50 to just £97.65 a week.

Norman Jemison, NPC vice president said: "While thousands of pensioners are struggling to pay their bills this winter, the bosses of the Big Six are living in

the lap of luxury." "There is no justification for their whopping pay packets when their price rises mean many can't even afford to heat their homes."

The NPC continues to campaign for the winter fuel allowance to be raised to £500 for all pensioner households, an end to discounts just for those online and widening the criteria of the Warm Home Discount scheme.

# Law against ageism is delayed

**T**he government has revealed that it is to delay the implementation of the proposed ban on age discrimination in the provisions of goods and services for at least six months.

The legislation was due to come into force this April, but reports now suggest this is unlikely to happen before October 2012.

Ministers are also still consider-

ing the scope and content of any exceptions from the ban, and claim they need more time to ensure they make the right decision and allow businesses affected time to prepare and adjust to any change.

But campaigners are concerned that the delay may signal a watering down of the ban.

Pat Healy, NPC vice president said: "It's time we just accepted that

it is wrong to discriminate against someone on the grounds of their age - whether they are young or old."

"This delay means that pensioners will continue to receive unfavourable treatment when looking at financial services and in some cases be viewed as second-class consumers."

The NPC's submission to the government on this issue is available online.

# NI Fund still in surplus

**T**he latest figures from the Government Actuary reveal that the balance in the National Insurance Fund at the end of March 2012 was almost £39bn.

The longer term projections also forecast that the fund will continue to fall until 2014/15 when it is then expected to increase.

Despite what successive government ministers have argued, the Actuary's report shows that the Treasury continues to "borrow" from the fund to reduce its need to borrow elsewhere.

As a result, pensioners are effectively missing out on higher state pensions so that the government can reduce its debt.

Marion Wilson, NPC vice president said: "These latest figures show that MPs are simply wrong when they claim that there's no such thing as the NI Fund."

**If you know of anyone who would like to receive this bulletin please send their email address to the NPC**