



**Dignity Code
gets going 2**

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**Building the
NPC 8**

The Message

The paper of the National Pensioners Convention
Winter 2011. 20p.



Pensions not poverty

- **Britain already has one of the worst state pensions in Europe**
- **Future generations are told to work longer, pay more and get less**
- **Join the campaign for Fair Pensions For All**

Britain has a terrible record on pensions. Average company pensions in both the public and private sector are around £5000 a year and the basic state pension is one of the least adequate in Europe.

One in five older people live below the official poverty line and millions more are struggling to keep up with the rising costs of living.

The state pension for those who have worked all their lives is just £102.15 a week - but the poverty line is around £70 higher.

Even the means-tested Pension Credit fails to reach nearly 2m of those who are eligible to make a claim.

For years, successive governments have adopted a policy of keeping the state pension low, because many people had their retirement income supplemented by a good occupational pension.

But over the last few years this policy has been looking less and less coherent.

All the evidence shows that final salary schemes are no longer open to new entrants and millions of public sector workers are being told to pay more into their pensions schemes in order to work longer and get less in return.

The truth is that if you were low paid when you were working - you will be poor in retirement.

Since coming to power the Coalition government has already weakened our pension system by linking future rises to the lower Consumer Price Index rather than the Retail Price Index. Over a 10 year period this would cut average pensions by somewhere between 15 and 20%.

However, this is not a problem for the average company director in one of the top 100 companies, who still has an occupational pension of

around £175,000 a year.

Pension inequality is what the government should be tackling - not trying to cut the pensions of those who look after our loved ones or collect our rubbish.

Nowhere is this inequality more evident than in the government's plans to raise the retirement age.

All the evidence shows that life expectancy is linked to income.

The well respected Marmot Review into ageing found that the age gap between the richest and the poorest can be as much as 17 years.

Not only does raising the retirement age at a time when youth unemployment is at its highest for two decades look misguided, it also hurts the very poorest in society who will effectively be working till they drop.

There will also be those who try to argue that tax payers are paying for gold-plated public sector pensions, when the truth is that everyone is paying for all pensions - whether state, public or private through taxes, national insurance or the price of goods and services in the shops.

The National Pensioners Convention continues to campaign for a basic state pension that is set above the official poverty level of around £178 a week for all pensioners, as well as defending the rights of those at work to protect their occupational schemes.

It is vital therefore that those at work and those who are already retired campaign together to make the case for decent pensions for all.

The alternative will see huge numbers of future pensioners spending what little retirement they have in financial difficulty.

We must not let that happen.

NPC President Frank Cooper says:

Dear Friends

As pensioners we know the importance of having a decent income in retirement. It gives dignity and security, along with the opportunity to remain independent.

The NPC has always campaigned for a decent state pension that takes everyone out of poverty and ends the need for means-tested support, but we also recognize that millions of people pay into an occupational pension scheme.

Britain has a terrible record on pensions; whether it be presiding over one of the lowest state schemes in Europe, or having occupational schemes that pay out, on average, less than £5000 a year. Our critics will try and divide us up - but we know that our campaign must unite all state, private and public sector pensioners in the demand for Fair Pensions For All. This is the message we must make wherever we can as we head into the New Year together.



Frank Cooper, NPC President

The NPC has teamed up with PCS, Unite, NUT and UCU to produce this new pamphlet outlining the case for decent state and occupational pensions. Get a copy from the NPC (p&p only).

FAIR PENSIONS FOR ALL

