

Campaign!

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

New MPs to be tackled at annual NPC lobby

The NPC's annual lobby of Parliament comes just months after the general election and weeks after the party conference season.

It offers campaigners an excellent opportunity to meet their new MPs and tackle them over the issues that were contained in the NPC's Pensioners' Manifesto.

These include support for a basic state pension of £200 a week for all, maintenance of the triple lock, suitable homes for older people wanting to downsize, legal protection against elder abuse and protection of existing pensioner benefits such as the

winter fuel allowance and the concessionary bus pass.

Perhaps the biggest issue during the lobby will be that of the ongoing crisis in social care.

After the election the government promised a green paper to consult on how care could be funded in the future, but this represents the 12th such review in the last ten years.

Jan Shortt, NPC general secretary said: "Everyone agrees what the problems are, but successive governments have refused to act."

"A tax-funded, free at the point of delivery care service is needed more than ever."

NPC LOBBY
WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2017

- **Assemble** 11.30am Old Palace Yard (opp House of Lords)
- **Rally/Lobby** 1-3pm Committee Rm 14 (House of Commons)

During the general election, the NPC raised a number of issues as part of a Pensioners' Manifesto. This NPC Lobby now gives campaigners the opportunity to raise these issues with their new MPs:

- A state pension set above the official poverty level, around £200 a week and linked to the triple lock of the higher of earnings, prices or 2.5%
- Greater funding for the NHS, an end to privatisation in the health service and a national social care system funded from general taxation, free at the point of delivery and without means-testing
- Maintenance of universal pensioner benefits such as free bus travel, a £500 winter fuel allowance, free prescriptions and a free TV licence for the over 75s.
- More homes that are both affordable and suitable for everyone, whilst recognising the specific barriers to downsizing that older people face.
- New legal protection for older people from all forms of elder abuse, to ensure dignity and raise standards of care.
- A Brexit deal that safeguards the payment of pensions, protects EU care workers and the rights of UK pensioners living abroad.

NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION
Rights in Retirement Campaign
Decent state pensions. proper care.
For more info 07432575251 / www.npcuk.org

The lobby rally will include Shadow Pension Minister, Alex Cunningham, social care expert Dr Lydia Hayes and young worker Sian Errington from UNITE. The Pensions' Minister, Guy Opperman has also been invited to speak © NPC

UN Older People's Day - Time for action

In 1990, the UN designated 1 October as International Day of Older Persons as a way of celebrating and recognising the contribution that older people make to their societies.

This year the UN will be exploring how best to promote and strengthen the participation of older people in various aspects of social, cultural, economic and civic and political life.

For the last few years, the NPC has been using 1 October as a day of action, when local and

regional groups can talk to the public about issues of concern.

This year, our theme will be "Rights in Retirement", focusing on the three areas of pensions, care and fuel poverty.

NPC groups and affiliates around the country will be holding street stalls, taking part in local events and holding public meetings to spread the message.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "Every week, older people are accused of being responsible

for many of the country's problems - either by causing a housing crisis because they dare to have a spare bedroom or because they are the most frequent users of the NHS."

"But older people make a massive contribution to society by continuing to pay taxes, volunteering and providing unpaid care."

"All this adds up to around £70bn a year more than pensioners get back in pensions and care", Mr Douglas said.



National Pensioners Convention

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Campaign Dates

1 October UN Older People's Day

The NPC will be marking this day again with a series of activities across the country.

NPC Recruitment Week

The NPC will be staging its first major recruitment drive during the week 2-7 October.

Jack Jones Lecture

4 October, 6-8pm, RCN HQ Cavendish Square, London. Dame June Clark will speak about the crisis in social care. Tickets are free but registration required via: jackjones-lecture2017.eventbrite.co.uk

NPC Lobby of MPs

18 October, assemble 11.30am opposite House of Lords, rally from 1-3pm, Committee Room 14, House of Commons

NPC finds a new home

After months of searching and hard work, the NPC has finally moved into new premises in the heart of Bloomsbury.

The small office is situated within the Marchmont Community Centre and offers a great opportunity for networking.

In addition, the NPC has also been joined by a new full time member of staff, Nina Byrd, who as the Assistant

National Officer will be responsible for much of the NPC's social media work, as well as carrying out research and other projects.

Jan Shortt, NPC general Secretary said: "The HS2 development forced us out of our old building, but I think we have now found something that really suits us, and together with a new staff team I think the NPC is looking forward to a very positive and productive 12 months."



The NPC's new premises in Bloomsbury © NPC

UK pensions in Europe secure

British pensioners living in the EU will continue to see their state pension payments increased each year after Brexit, according to a government report.

There had been fears that millions of expats who live in Europe would see their pensions "frozen", meaning their value would be steadily eroded over time.

But an official update, confirms that the British government intends to continue increasing state pensions to expats in the EU after the UK leaves the EU in 2019.

However, as with other poli-

cy areas, the whole Brexit deal will still have to be approved by British and European parliaments and governments.

Whilst this approach is good news for those UK pensioners in Europe, it does however highlight the continued gross injustice facing around 500,000 state pensioners in countries such as Canada, Australia and South Africa, where British state pension payments are not increased each year.

Ellen Lebethe, NPC vice president said: "All of our "frozen" pensioners deserve equal treatment."

The cost of being lonely

Researchers at the London School of Economics have put a financial price on an "epidemic of loneliness" - estimating it costs £6,000 per person over the course of a decade, in health costs and pressure on local services.

But the study of older people also shows that for every £1 spent in preventing loneliness there are £3 of savings.

This could equal savings of £3.6m over five years.

Furthermore, loneliness is also linked to earlier death and higher risks of dementia.

Currently there are an estimated 1.2m older people classed as chronically lonely.

Peter Rayner, NPC vice president said: "The widespread use of technology could make people feel even more isolated in public places."

"Even going to a supermarket and using a self-service check-out could cause problems."

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