

Campaign!

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

Time for real dignity in older age

Pensioner groups across the country marked National Dignity Action Day on February 1 by promoting the idea that the care of older people needed urgent action.

Pensioners are often patronised, discriminated against and sometimes abused – something that must be acknowledged and cease.

In addition, older people also tend to have poorer housing, live alone, and have lower and reducing income.

Their access to health care can be refused solely because of their age.

Some are abused mentally or physically –

sometimes by carers, sometimes by relatives and our social care system is clearly broken.

Since 2010 there have been over £5bn worth of cuts to funding and as a result over 1.2million people no longer get the care they need.

Those who pay for their own care in a home often face higher bills than those who are supported by their local authority.

MPs have also recently suggested that 1.3 million pensioners are at risk of “withering away” in their own home because of malnutrition caused by loneliness.

Only 29,000 people



Older people need a new model for social care - one that shares the cost across society as a whole and improves access to services, as well as standards of care.

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now receive meals on wheels, down from 155,000 a decade ago.

Jan Shortt, NPC general secretary said: “Everything about the care of older people, from the quality and

standards to the funding of services needs addressing as a matter of urgency.”

“Sadly, the government’s Green Paper in the summer is likely to be too little, too late.”

UK longevity now starting to fall for some

New figures from Public Health England have revealed that life expectancy in some parts of the country has fallen by more than a year since 2011.

People in post-industrial towns and isolated rural areas are dying younger while longevity is rising in London and parts of the south east.

Economic stagnation and cuts to services such as social care

are among theories suggested for consistent falls in life expectancy of over half a decade in dozens of local authority areas.

Nationally, female life expectancy at birth is static at 82.9 years and male life expectancy stands at 79.2 years, while people in other European countries live increasingly longer.

The areas where people in Britain were dying sooner seemed to be the less “economically vi-

brant”, but they are not dying of new diseases.

In rural areas the lack of social infrastructure is significant with a lack of community groups, poor public transport and a lack of family support.

The findings also cast doubt over the government’s plan to raise the state pension age (SPA) to 68, seven years earlier than planned – affecting all those aged between 39 and 47.



National Pensioners Convention

Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont St, Bloomsbury, London WC1N 1AB
T: 020-7837-6622
E: info@npcuk.org
W: npcuk.org
Facebook: NPCUK
Twitter: @NPCUK

Campaign Dates

12-14 June 2018
NPC Pensioners' Parliament

Event includes a march, opening rally, keynote speakers on pensions, health and social care, transport, loneliness and funeral poverty. Confirmed speakers include Dr Lydia Hayes, Cardiff University and Mark Serwotka PCS general secretary. There will also be a lively exhibition area and social evening. Tickets on sale now for the 3-day event, priced £10 or day ticket £5 from the NPC office or www.npcuk.org

1 October UN Older People's Day

Every year the NPC marks this date with a series of activities and events around the country. More details to follow

Worrying fuel poverty picture

New evidence from the Energy and Utilities Alliance (EUA) reveals the scale of fuel poverty in the UK, with millions living in miserably cold homes and suffering from a range of physical and psychological issues as a result.

The research also sheds light on how insufficient policy is not only failing to help the situation of the fuel poor, but in some cases actually making it worse.

Statistics reveal that every year cold homes kill over four times as many people as road and rail accidents and nearly four times as many people as drug misuse.

Each winter, there are around 28,500 excess winter deaths the majority of which can be attributed to cold homes and this equates to an older person dying every seven minutes during the

winter months.

By recognising a range of issues such as the digital divide, off-grid households, inefficient heating systems and inability to access initiatives intended to help fuel poor households, the report offers a range of practical solutions to fuel poverty.

Despite the fact that various measures to alleviate fuel poverty have been introduced, the issue is one that is worsening in the UK, with England experiencing the second highest rates of fuel poverty in Europe (only Estonia is worse in the EU).

It is also estimated that the percentage of fuel poor households in the country currently fluctuates between 10 and 12%.

In 2014, the number of households in fuel poverty in England, was estimated at around 2.38 million.

Bus pass now ten years old

NPC campaigners intend to mark the tenth anniversary of the UK concessionary bus pass with a countrywide tour and a Westminster event; delivering a giant anniversary card to Number 10 in April.

Meanwhile, the Round-England Anniversary Tour will start from the Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool, provisionally planned for 13 June.

As the tour passes through, local NPC groups will be encouraged to greet the travellers, join them for the day or help organise a supporting event.

The organiser, Richard Worrall from Walsall is a longstanding member of the NPC's transport working party, and last organised a simi-

lar tour in 2011.

Mr Worrall said: "This is all about showing how important the bus pass is to millions of older people, by making it clear that it enables them to remain active, mobile and independent in later life."

"We also need to highlight how some older people suffer because of the distinct lack of services in their area, and this needs to be addressed as well"

The national scheme currently allows pass holders to travel in off-peak times (9.30am - 11.00pm) on local bus services throughout England.

Anyone wishing to take part should contact Richard via email: richardworrall@yahoo.com or Tel: 07522-215853.

Housing paper launched

The housing market in Britain is broken, according to a new consultation document issued by the NPC.

The document entitled *Home Sweet Home?* calls for an urgent need for reform and a large house building programme of good quality, suitable and affordable accommodation for all the generations.

The current state of older people's housing is also having a negative impact on their

independence, autonomy and health.

For example, poor housing costs the NHS £2.4 billion a year in the UK from illnesses caused by falls, coldness and poor sanitation.

The consultation paper also calls for a quota for older people's housing in any new developments, stronger rights for older tenants, an end to the right to buy policy and abolishing the 'Bedroom Tax' for all social tenants.

The paper is available on the NPC website.

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