



NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

AGEING WITHOUT CHILDREN

The National Pensioners Convention is an organisation for older people run by older people with around 1.2 million members from national and regional organisations, pensioner forums, trade unions and individuals.

Our main objective is to promote the welfare and interests of all pensioners, as a way of securing dignity, respect and financial security in retirement, now and in the future.

The NPC organises rallies and lobbies of MPs, leads delegations to parliament and makes submissions to government and other bodies on policies affecting older people.

We work with other like organisations on research and consultation on issues affecting older people to get our voices heard.

Our media profile is growing as is our social media and website activity.

- Our policies are made at our Biennial Delegate Conference (last one March this year).
- We currently have an Executive Committee and a National Council, although we will be moving to one accountable body (National Executive Council) in April 2023
- Our policy development is undertaken by our Working Parties – each of whom have terms of reference to fit their subjection matter; i.e. Housing, Health & Social Care, Digital Inclusion, Pensions & Income, Transport, Trade Union.
- There are three equality groups; women, LGBT and Minority Elders.
- Organisational Management is through the Officer Team, Finance, Structure and Standing Orders Committee.
- A review of the organisation is being undertaken and this will hopefully be concluded at a Special Delegate Conference in April 2023.
- Our Officer Team is: General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, President, 4 x Vice Presidents, Treasurer.

Our policies and campaigns are:

- A Decent State Pension for All and End Frozen Pensions

The UK State Pension is the most inadequate in Europe and most of the industrial world. The NPC is campaigning for a state pension set above poverty level at 70% of the National Living Wage (outside London), uprated by the triple lock. Today it would be worth around £245 a week. Still less than half the average earnings.

Around 500,000 ex-pats living abroad in their retirement do not receive the increase in UK state pension unless their country of residence has a 'reciprocal agreement'. Many do not have this and live on very small amounts, leading to poverty in their older age.

- National Care Service free at the point of need funded by taxation

Goodbye Cinderella – A New Settlement for Care was published and launched in June 2020. Deliberately so to further highlight the desperate state of care for the elderly through the pandemic.

We are currently participating in a consultation through the Fabian Society to build a road map to a National Care Service. AWOC should contribute to this consultation. The NPC has always raised concerns in regard to those without family members either to care for them or advocate on their behalf. Your opportunity to do this now would make a difference.

‘Goodbye Cinderella’ – or ‘Cinderella’ as it is now affectionately called is a comprehensive overview of how care became the crisis it has, what is needed to ensure that everyone can access care equally when needed, how it can be funded and gives 15 recommendations to the government.

It is the culmination of two years work and consultation with our members on what they wished to see as services for themselves and those who follow them. It is a public-facing policy that puts the individual at the heart of delivery – no post code lottery, no means-testing.

It also creates national mandatory training for care workers with

accreditation that enables care workers to have a career structure never before available to them. It requires all employed care workers to be registered. It also wants a better deal for family/unpaid carers to value them in giving up their life to care for someone who needs them.

- The NHS:

The NPC along with others made strong amendments to the new NHS Care Act. However, this Act is now implemented through 42 Integrated Care Systems/Boards and will be funded to deliver local services. However, we know that the funding will not cover the population served by the ICS/ICBs.

We have concerns around discharge to assess – sending patients home to be assessed in the community – a community already overwhelmed and short staffed. This will ultimately result in many re-admissions and the worsening of an individual's health.

The new duty placed on the Secretary of State is a huge concern. In effect, he or she can make decisions and carry them out without any consultation or reference to NHS. The NHS is no longer a universal service.

- Ending Fuel Poverty:

The NPC has been engaging with Ofgen and the government on the cost of living crisis. The intervention so far has been too little too late with older people and low income families struggling to pay bills.

Along with Fuel Poverty Action and Energy Action, the NPC held two demonstrations outside 10 Downing Street and delivered a letter demanding swift action against the huge profits of oil companies and energy providers.

With another huge increase reported for October, we hope to take our case to a lobby of parliament.

The winter fuel allowance has been frozen for around 11 years. At its inception, it paid for a third of household bills – today it goes nowhere near. The NPC is asking for VAT to be taken off energy bills – this is not a luxury. We are asking for inflationary increases to the winter fuel allowance and for the government's sustainable energy project to be put in place as a matter of urgency.

- Accessible Public Transport

The emergency powers introduced due to COVID are still being used. We are concerned at the number of bus routes and timetable changes – particularly for those in rural areas.

It is well researched that for older people, being able to get out and about, meet friends, family, visit a favourite place, keeps us physically, emotionally and mentally well.

The NPC argues for a fully integrated affordable public transport service, with national terms and conditions that will enable all citizens to travel to where they want to.

- Social and Digital Inclusion:

Everyday life now tends to be online, on an App, on some device or other.

The NPC is working with the Equalities Commission on challenging the discrimination against older people and those without the income to go online.

Closures of ticket offices, renewal of bus passes online, car parking, and a whole host of every day things that those without technology find difficult to access.

Keeping cash was a big campaign with GMB and Which? Legislation is awaited, but in the meantime, cash transactions are getting less. However, the cost of living has forced many back to cash in order to control their spending. But for older people and those without banks and credit cards, cash is key.

Cheaper deals on energy and shopping online discriminate against those unable to access them without the necessary technology.

The BT Digital Switch has been a huge campaign for the NPC. We are part of their steering group making sure that all the issues raised by the public are dealt with and mistakes put right. However, there are many other providers besides BT and most of them have not said a word to their customers.

If you are digitally excluded, then the chances are you are also socially excluded and unable to access information and services.

We have organised many webinars which are streamed on YouTube and are also on our website.

This year, we have covered:

- The Perfect Storm Behind Pensioner Poverty
- Fighting the Privatisation of the NHS
- Briefing on the Assisted Dying Bill

Still to come:

- One-day 'live' Annual Convention in Birmingham 21 September covering all aspects of Older People's Rights
- Potentially a Lobby of Parliament on the cost of living – November
- Potential for more demonstrations on the energy increases

We also continue with our other areas of work; i.e.

- ❖ Tackling ageism: challenging the services older people are asked to pay more for just because of their age; the portrayal of older people in the

media and parliament; the language in society that demeans the wealth of knowledge and value that older people still contribute to our country and society at large.

❖ A Commissioner for Older People in England: Wales and Northern Ireland have both had a Commissioner for Older People for some time, who is independent with judicial powers. The difference having a Commissioner has made to older people in Wales and Northern Ireland and how each of those nations has dealt with the pandemic, shows why one is badly needed in England.

It is time that older people had a voice in parliament and across all government bodies. Legislation to protect older people is long overdue.

❖ Defending Universal Entitlements: Engaging with all MPs to ask them to vote against any further erosion of the universal benefits still under threat; like the bus pass, winter fuel allowance and of course the triple lock on pensions. It is still not a given that the triple lock will actually be reinstated in 2023.

❖ Decent Housing: Our policy is for the government to build appropriate and affordable housing for older people. We support Age Friendly Neighbourhoods and are concerned at the increase in the numbers of older people privately renting.

We want Section 21 repealed now so that unscrupulous landlords can no longer evict tenants for no good reason.

We support the Renters Reform Coalition; Shelter and Defend Council Housing.

Our members have supported the victims of Grenfell in many different ways and will continue to do so.

❖ State Pension Retirement Age: Our members contributed to the consultation on the state pension age review. We believe the report expected in September will bring forward the rise to 68. This is something that affects everyone and is part of the overall campaign on pensions.

The challenge for us as a campaigning organisation is a non-listening government who continue to ignore the ways in which older people are treated; with no care or concern or plans to make it better.

It is also about the new Police Act which denies us (and others like us) the right to protest about the things that hurt us and our families.

As always, the NPC will keep building its profile, continue to have open debates and call the government to account on the things that affect the daily lives of older people.

The NPC is not just about the pensioners of today, but about those who aspire to follow us. As a generation, we must make sure that future retirees have a better deal.

Our work with the TUC is key in getting the workers of today to understand that they must be prepared to fight for a decent future as a pensioner – that they must do it now.



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