

Campaign!

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

NPC finally meets Minister for Pensions

After nine months of requests, the NPC has finally met the Minister of Pensions, Baroness Ros Altmann.

The Convention raised the call for existing pensioners to be included in the new state pension scheme if they would be better off by doing so.

The minister said this would cost too much, and would not be fair because existing pensioners had already been drawing their state pensions for a number of years and effectively were better off.

When asked to produce the evidence of how much such a scheme would cost, the minister said she would consider releasing the figures to the NPC.

The unfairness of the different indexation arrangements affecting the old and new state pensions was also raised, and whilst Ms Altmann understood the concern, she said it was for a future government to decide how to resolve the problem.



Interestingly, she supported the idea that older people's benefits should be protected and that pensioners generally had made a huge contribution to society and should not therefore be portrayed as a burden.

However, she was less sympathetic towards the 500,000 pensioners who lived abroad and had their state pensions frozen at the level they were when they left the UK.

The Baroness said it was their choice to leave, and there was no

legal obligation on the government to act.

When asked if there was a moral obligation to unfreeze these pensions, the minister repeated her previous answer.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "It's vitally important that ministers meet the representatives of the country's older population and I hope the minister will not take so long next time."

A report of the meeting is available on the NPC website.

Proof that it actually happened: Baroness Ros Altmann (left) with the NPC's Brian Sturtevant, Neil Duncan-Jordan, Dot Gibson and Catherine West MP, who kindly arranged the meeting
© Catherine West MP

Shadow Chancellor to speak at Blackpool

Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell is expected to announce details of Labour's Older People's Commission when he addresses the opening rally at this year's Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool.

The Commission will be looking at all aspects of older people's lives, from pensions and hous-

ing, to social care and public transport.

At this year's event, delegates will also hear from John Hilary, head of War on Want and an active campaigner against TTIP, Judy Downey from the Relatives and Residents Association who specialises in promoting dignified social care and James Mac-

Coll from the Campaign for Better Transport.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "It's important to recognise that the NPC has a unique position in helping to shape older people's policy over the next few years."

The NPC Pensioners' Parliament runs from 14-16 June.



National Pensioners Convention

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Campaign Dates

Intergenerational Fairness

You can see the NPC's evidence to the House of Commons inquiry into intergenerational fairness using this link: <http://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/91d4b39c-afab-4a04-9a78-f970888dd577?in=09:29:40>

NPC Pensioners' Parliament 2016
14-16 June: The annual 3-day event will cover, pensions, retirement, health and social care, digital exclusion, transport and housing with a range of expert speakers. Tickets priced £10. Send an email to info@npcuk.org to register.

Older People's Day
1 October: The NPC will be staging events across the UK. Details to follow.

Working longer won't make you healthier

Working longer does not make you healthier, according to new research from King's College London.

Researchers found that one in five people are now working beyond State Pension Age (SPA), but they claim it would be incorrect to assume that keeping people in paid work for longer will improve or maintain their health.

This finding has serious consequences given the government's current

review into SPA which will be published in 2017.

Recent reports have suggested that the government may accelerate the planned rise to 67 in 2028, by introducing it in earlier, alongside other plans to take the SPA to 70 and beyond for future generations.

The King's College research revealed that those most likely to work longer were those with higher levels of education, wealth, those living along and

those who have always had good health.

Unsurprisingly, those in poor health are often the ones who leave the workforce early.

Researchers are concerned that if those people are forced to continue working, their health may suffer even more.

Norman Jemison, NPC vice president said: "The poorest in our society are always the ones affected most when the SPA is increased."

Link shows cuts lead to pensioner deaths

Cuts to the pension credit have a "significant link" with a rise in death rates among older pensioners aged 85 and over, Oxford University researchers have said.

The study suggests that even seemingly small cuts to support for vulnerable older persons can have a devastating effect - possibly even costing them their lives.

The study found that, between 2007 and 2013, each 1% decline in pension credit spending per eligible person was linked to a 0.86% rise in death rates.

The authors said that while they could not show specific causes of death, financial hardship plays a role in increasing vulnerability.

For example, when the winter fuel payment was introduced in the 1990s, there was

a significant drop in death rates.

Increasing death rates could therefore be fuelled by poorer nutrition, inadequate heating, damp housing and social isolation.

Jan Shortt, NPC vice president said: "Poorer pensioners are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and a reduction of just a few pounds could make a huge difference to their income."

DNR notices reappear

Do not resuscitate (DNR) notices are still being used without the patient or their family's knowledge, according to the Royal College of Physicians.

A study of 9000 dying patients found that one in five families had not been consulted about the decision not to resuscitate their loved one.

During early 2000s, there was a growing concern that DNR notices were being applied to older people simply because of their age, rather than their medical condition.

Campaigners argue that end of life care

still needs to be improved, particularly because the quality of services varies across the country.

Peter Rayner, NPC vice president said: "Treating people with dignity at the end of their life is a basic human right that we must improve."

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