

Campaign!

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

Social care cap is "unworkable"

The government's plan for new long-term care insurance has been dismissed by academics and insurers as too costly and unworkable.

The Care Bill which is currently making its way through parliament will introduce a £72,000 cap on care costs and increase the means-test threshold for help with care from £23,500 to £118,000.

The reforms, which were set out in the Dilnot Report and will come into force in 2016, are set to help just one in eight people

with the cost of care.

However, there are concerns that not everyone will live long enough to benefit from the cap and that the cap only covers the actual cost of caring for an individual, not the 'hotel costs' – food and accommodation – that make up the largest part of the care bill.

Although there will be a sliding scale of government help, with those with assets worth under £17,500 receiving completely free old age care, there are many who will be forced to pick up

large care bills.

The government is keen for the private sector to step in and bridge this gap, most notably through a new type of care insurance, but the industry has said that the market would not be big enough and only be wealthy people would be able to afford the insurance.

Labour peer, Patricia Hollis has gone on record saying that decent social care could be paid for by scrapping pension higher-rate tax relief for employers and employees; saving £15bn, and removing the



upper earnings limit on National Insurance for higher-rate employees which would raise a further £11bn. Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary

said: "Our case for a tax funded National Care Service is both fair and affordable - and increasingly finding more and more support."

The quality and cost of social care is one of the biggest challenges society faces. The NPC, UNISON and United For All Ages have sent a "Scrap the Cap" leaflet to all Peers currently discussing the Care Bill
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Plan to end fuel poverty is ditched

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has announced it is to drop the government's statutory commitment to eradicate fuel poverty by 2016.

Experts predicted that DECC was unlikely to

meet the target, and has now acknowledged that by dropping it entirely.

The new plans also introduces a new definition of fuel poverty.

Up till now any household spending more than 10% of its income

on energy was deemed to be fuel poor.

However, under the new definition a household will be regarded as fuel-poor if "its total income is below the poverty line (taking into account energy costs) and energy costs are

higher than typical".

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "Around 3m pensioner households are fuel poor and simply getting rid of the target or changing the rules won't keep those people any warmer in the winter."



National Pensioners Convention

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Campaign Dates

TUC Fringe Meeting
NPC meeting on
Defending Univer-
salism, 9 Septem-
ber, 12.45pm,
Bournemouth Inter-
national Centre

Defend the NHS
29 September,
Manchester. TUC
organised lobby of
the Conservative
Party Conference

**NPC Dignity Code
Exhibition**
14-17 October,
House of Com-
mons. The NPC will
be tackling MPs
and Peers over the
Dignity Code

**National Dignity
Day**
1 February 2014,
organised by the
Social Care Insti-
tute of Excellence.
The NPC intends to
mount nationwide
activities to coin-
cide with this day.
Details to follow

**NPC Pensioners'
Parliament**
17-19 June 2014,
Winter Gardens,
Blackpool

Reach 105 to gain from new pension

Pensioners of the future will have to live beyond 105 years of age before they get more pension under the new proposals than they would have got under the existing system, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS).

The IFS research shows that anyone born after 1986 will get less under the proposed single-tier state pension of £146 a week than from

today's basic and second state pension.

The vast majority - 61% of those about to retire shortly after 2016 when the new scheme comes into force, will also get less than they would have otherwise done.

In addition, millions of existing pensioners, mainly women, who get considerably less than £146 a week will also be excluded from the scheme.

The NPC has

calculated that it would cost less than £2bn a year net to have them included.

Marion Wilson, NPC vice president said: "The new single-tier state pension is a con for both future and existing pensioners."

"Younger people are going to have to pay more, work longer and end up getting less when they retire."

The NPC is currently lobbying MPs as the Bill is being debated.

NPC joins *Keep Me Posted* campaign

The NPC has joined forces with the Royal Mail and a host of other organisations such as Mind and the National Consumer Federation as part of the *Keep Me Posted (KMP)* campaign.

KMP aims to give consumers the right to receive information by post rather than online.

Research demonstrates that 81% of UK adults want to choose how they receive

important information such as bills and statements.

The campaign also believes customers should not be penalised simply for preferring to receive information through paper correspondence.

This is often the case with utility companies and other large organisations that tend to give preferential rates to those who pay online.

Peter Rayner, NPC vice presi-

dent said: "Not all older people have easy access to computers or want to use them, yet more and more of our everyday business is being conducted online."

"Those who are excluded are being subject to a kind of information apartheid - and can often find themselves facing bigger bills."

The campaign has produced a number of post-cards to be sent to MPs - available from the NPC.

One in three help out

One in three baby boomers is using their own pension pot to help their adult offspring, with some forfeiting £38,500 for every child they carry on supporting in adulthood.

Parents are paying out on children aged over 18 for university, weddings, house deposits, debts and other general expenses - ultimately diverting savings that could go into supporting themselves into retirement.

The cost to a pension pot of offering help is magnified by lost investment returns, with basic rate taxpayers missing out on £38,500.

Norman Jemison, NPC vice president said: "Pensioners are often portrayed as a burden on society, when in fact many of us are helping out our families in whatever way we can."

"We need a more positive image of older people and our contribution."

You can now keep up to date with all the NPC's activities by following us on Twitter @NPCUK.