

Campaign!

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

Care white paper fudges funding issue

After months of delay, the government finally published its long awaited white paper on social care, entitled *Caring for our future*, on July 11.

What disappointed many was the lack of detail on the crucial issue of funding, apart from a commitment to make a further announcement in the spending review next autumn.

Ministers indicated they were in favour of a cap on the lifetime costs of care, and suggested that might be set between £75,000-£100,000.

However, this would still leave 90% of those in receipt of care paying for everything.

There was also a general agreement that the means-tested level at which individuals could qualify for financial help would have to be raised, but there was nothing to say

how much higher it would eventually be compared to the existing £23,250 threshold.

The white paper also proposes a universal scheme of deferred payments operated by local authorities, which would provide loans to cover care costs that could be repaid after the individual's property had been sold.

Alongside the headline announcements were also other proposals to give carers the right to have their needs assessed, greater use of direct payments in residential homes, a new website for people to compare care home costs and an initiative for helping older people share their skills with others in return for support in the home.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary was widely quoted in the national media following the government's

announcement saying: "The white paper is short on ideas to solve the care crisis. There is no attempt to end the unfair postcode lottery which allows different councils to charge different amounts for an hour's worth of care, no effort to widen access to care services for the 800,000 people who are currently excluded from the system but desperately need care, and no end to the means-test which penalises many people with small savings and a modest home."

"It's a wasted opportunity that adds to the uncertainty for millions of older people and their families."

In response to the proposals, the NPC continues to call for a National Care Service paid for through taxation.

A detailed briefing paper on the proposals is available at npcuk.org.



After months of delay, the white paper finally arrived, but crucially ducked the vital question of funding

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What's in and what's out

- **A cap on care costs, but no decision on how much that will be**
- **A deferred payment loan scheme to pay for care costs recovered from the sale of any property, but with added interest and admin charges**
- **An increase in the level at which means-tested support is made available, but no detail**
- **A nationwide eligibility criteria for accessing services which is likely to be set at a level which excludes 800,000 people with moderate care needs**
- **The right for carers to have their needs assessed, but no new money to pay for additional services**
- **A new code of conduct for staff, but no change to the postcode lottery of home care charges**



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Campaign Dates

20 October 2012
A Future That Works

A mass march and rally through central London, called by the TUC in opposition to the government's current round of austerity measures. The NPC is supporting the event and is encouraging as many pensioners and their organisations as possible to take part

31 October 2012
Hands off the Bus Pass Rally/Lobby

A protest, followed by a rally and lobby of Parliament. 11.30am demo opposite the House of Commons, 1pm rally in Committee Room 14. Put the date in your diary

NPC Pensioners' Parliament 18-20 June 2013

The dates for next year's event have been set. For a full report of this year's event visit www.npcuk.org

NPC calls lobby to defend benefits

Over the last few weeks a combination of think tanks, politicians and national newspapers have been lining up to attack universal pensioner benefits such as the winter fuel allowance and free bus travel.

Their simplistic argument often suggests that they only wish to remove these benefits from million-aire pensioners,

but the real intention is to introduce a means-test so that everyone not on Pension Credit would lose out.

The prime minister, David Cameron has been forced to say he has no intention of removing these benefits before 2015, but the issue is likely to become a major concern at the next election.

In September the NPC will release a new report in de-

fence of universal benefits, that shows how important they are in enabling older people to stay active, independent and volunteer and care for others.

A national lobby has also been called for the end of October (see below).

It is vital that MPs get the message that these benefits are essential to millions of older people.

Dignity Code gets go ahead

One of the key proposals in the new white paper on social care will be the introduction of a code of conduct for staff, based on the NPC's Dignity Code.

Whilst it is still unclear whether or not the code will be mandatory, this is a huge boost for the Convention's campaign to improve the treatment of older people in the care system.

The NPC has requested a meeting with care minister, Paul Burstow to discuss how the code can be adopted by every hospital, care home, GP surgery and local authority.

Frank Cooper, NPC president said: "The treatment of older people in the care system can sometimes be shocking, and it is essential that the Dignity Code is seen as the minimum standard that we expect all older people to receive."

HANDS OFF THE BUS PASS!!! Defend Universal Benefits

Rally & Lobby of Parliament

Wednesday 31 October 2012

11.30am Protest, George V statue, Old Palace Yard
1pm Rally/Lobby, Committee Room 14, House of Commons

In recent weeks there have been a series of attacks against universal pensioner benefits, such as free bus travel and the winter fuel allowance. Critics argue that pensioners have escaped the austerity measures at the expense of young people, when in reality the only ones who have escaped the cuts are the rich.

The headlines talk about taking benefits away from millionaire pensioners, but means-testing the benefits would end up excluding pensioners with incomes of little more than £10,000 a year.

Evidence shows that even after paying these universal benefits, pensioners contribute an extra £40bn every year to the economy in taxes, volunteering and unpaid care. What the critics don't understand is that pensioners still need these benefits because the UK has one of the least adequate state pensions in Europe.

COME ALONG AND TELL YOUR MP TO SUPPORT UNIVERSAL BENEFITS

For more information contact:

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If you know of anyone who would like to receive this bulletin please send their email address to the NPC