

# Campaign!

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

## Meagre "triple lock" now too costly

**A** leading think tank has suggested that the state pension "triple lock" is too generous and should be abolished.

The claim from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) follows last week's announcement that the basic state pension will rise next April by 2.9% in line with earnings.

Figures also showed that the Consumer Price Index for September stood at -0.1%, meaning that millions of occupational pensions and the state second pension will be frozen for a year.

The so called "triple lock" provides an increase in the basic state pension of whichever is the greater out of inflation (CPI), earnings or 2.5%.

However, even next year's increase only equates to £3.35 a week extra for someone on a full basic state pension and just £2 a week more for millions of older women who do not qualify for the full amount.

Head of the IFS, Paul Johnson said the answer in future lay in raising the state pension age to 69 and "getting private provision right", but offered no answer as to what should replace the triple lock.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "The previous government's decision to change the way in which inflation was measured continues to have a dramatic effect on older people's income."

"Whilst the 2.9% guarantee of the triple lock is welcome, it still only gives pensioners little more than £3 a week extra and the fact that the state



The IFS's call for the "triple lock" to be scrapped and the NPC's response was featured on the front page of the Daily Express © Daily Express

second pension and most occupational pensions are tied to CPI means that next year millions of older people are going to struggle with the rising costs of living."

"The reality is that our state pension is so low that 2.9% of nothing is still nothing."

## TPA: Make cuts and pensioners won't remember

**T**he research director of the Taxpayers Alliance has urged the government to cut pensioner benefits such as the winter fuel allowance and bus pass immediately.

Alex Wild made the comments at a fringe meeting during Conservative Party conference.

Mr Wild claimed that it would be possible to make the cuts because many existing pensioners would have died by the next election, and therefore couldn't vote against the government, and even if they were still alive, many wouldn't remember it was the Conservative Party that intro-

duced the cut.

The NPC described the remarks as cynical and offensive, and called on Mr Wild to apologise; something he later did.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "This is some of the most ageist nonsense I've heard in a long time."



## National Pensioners Convention

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## Campaign Dates

**For What It's Worth**  
This new NPC pamphlet explains how the new state pension system will work in 2016 and what needs to be done to make it fairer. Priced £1 plus p&p; it is essential reading, especially for those currently at work

**NPC Lobby of Parliament**  
4 November: 1-3pm, Committee Room 14, House of Commons. Rally with speakers include shadow pensions minister Nick Thomas-Symonds MP and PCS secretary, Mark Serwotka

**Comprehensive Spending Review/Winter Death Figures**  
25 November: The NPC will be marking the day the winter death figures are published by releasing black balloons across the UK

# Problem over state pension age changes

**T**he Coalition government's decision to introduce the new state pension before the equalisation of the state pension age (SPA) for men and women had been fully implemented, will create a financial problem for some women born between 6 April 1951 and 5 April 1953, the NPC has warned.

Those affected argue they have been hit particularly hard, with significant changes to their SPA

imposed with a lack of appropriate notification and with little time to make alternative plans.

Some women in this group will benefit from remaining on the old state pension system - whilst others would be better off if they were to be included in the new scheme - as will be the case for their male counterparts of the same age.

Marion Wilson, NPC vice president said: "The new state pension

system is going to create a complicated set of winners and losers, and far from simplifying things, millions of future pensioners will actually lose out as a result."

"Those that would benefit from being in the new scheme, should therefore be included."

The NPC is currently looking at a new campaign to highlight the gender-based unfairness in state and occupational pensions.

# Care now at risk due to £4bn underfunding

**L**ocal government leaders and directors of adult social care have warned that the ability of councils to provide dignified care for people in old age is at risk unless urgent steps are taken to plug the burgeoning gap in social care funding.

The current combined pressures of insufficient funding, growing demand and extra costs mean that adult social care is facing a funding

gap that is growing by at least £700 million a year, estimated to reach £2.9 billion by the end of the decade.

The failure to properly fund services has already meant councils have severely stripped back or axed services.

It also means there is less money to properly recruit, train and keep the best staff and risks essential residential and home care providers going out of

business if councils can't afford to pay the cost of the care being provided.

Councils leaders claim they are then left facing impossible decisions about the types of care services they can afford to provide.

The care regulator, the Care Quality Commission could also be facing a 40% cut in funding; making the issue of standards and quality of care even more challenging.

# Winter death demo

**T**he winter death figure for 2014/15 will be released on the same day as the Comprehensive Spending Review, the NPC has revealed.

Last year's figures showed there were 18,200 deaths between December 2013 and March 2014 from cold related illnesses - equal to over 150 deaths per day or 6 an hour - and commentators are expecting that figure to rise.

The NPC plans to mark the event by releasing black balloons all over the country at noon on the day the figures are released, to highlight the scandal of older people dying from the cold.

Jan Shortt, NPC vice president said: "Making sure older people have got a well insulated warm home and the income to pay the fuel bills is a basic requirement of what a decent society should do."

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