

Campaign!

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

Pensioners face cost of living rise of 3.75%

Despite the claim that older people have escaped austerity, new research shows that there has been a 3.75% increase in the costs of living for older people since last year.

Figures from the financial advisers, Key Retirement Solutions shows that since 2015, living costs such as clothes, food, travel and heating have all increased by up to £223 a year.

Pensioner households spend around 14% of their money on fuel and housing, which adds up to around £1,630 a year.

Another £1,560 a year is spent on food and non-alcoholic drinks.

Unsurprisingly, the cost of retirement varies widely around the UK, with Welsh pensioners needing 25% less than their counterparts in the South East of England.

In cash terms, living costs in retirement average £9,900 a year in Wales compared to £13,270 in the South East.



Older people are keen to join with younger generations to show that there is no benefit in pitching one age group against another © NPC

With the state pension amounting to just over £8,000 a year for those with a record of full National Insurance contributions or credits, it is clear that the current system is totally inadequate, and is likely to be even worse for future generations of pensioners.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "Young and old have all suffered from the policies of austerity over the last few years, and the new state pension system offers very little for anyone born

after 1970."

"This generation is going to be paying off huge debts from going to university, faces insecure employment prospects and is unlikely to be able to afford to buy their own home until much later in life."

The NPC continues with its Generations United campaign which aims to unite young and old in the defence of public services and the welfare state, including decent state pensions, universal benefits and care.

BBC reveals latest attack on TV licence for 75s

Director General, Tony Hall has announced that the BBC is considering removing the free TV licence for anyone over 75 who lives with someone who is still working.

The plan is expected to affect around 600,000 households and will raise just £100m, out of the £765m cost of running the concession.

However, such a scheme could be extremely difficult to administer; requiring detailed knowledge of the make-up of each household and any changes that might take place.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "It sounds like the BBC is going to create a huge bureaucracy in order to introduce a bizarre form of means-testing."

"George Osborne has managed to pass the responsibility and cost for this concession to the broadcaster and now they are spending licence fee payers' money to work out how they can do his dirty work for him."

"I wonder if the BBC has thought about turning this whole episode into a farce?" she added.



National Pensioners Convention

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Campaign Dates

NPC Pensioners' Parliament 2016
14-16 June: The annual 3-day event will feature Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell MP and a range of other topics and speakers. Tickets available on the door.

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

NPC Lobby
Early November: The NPC will be staging a lobby of Parliament. Details to follow.

Winter Death Demo
Late November: The NPC will be releasing black balloons to mark the scale of winter deaths among older people. Details to follow.

Dignity Day
1 February: NPC events across the country.

Lord Turner calls for state pension at 70

Former CBI boss and Pensions Commission chair, Lord Adair Turner has suggested that people in their mid-fifties could be forced to wait an extra three years to retire under proposals to raise the state pension age (SPA) to 70.

Under current projections people in their mid-fifties can expect to retire at around age 67, as the state pension age is expected to reach age 68 by 2028.

Lord Turner's views are ex-

pected to be highly influential in the current review of the SPA being undertaken by John Cridland; which are likely to result in accelerated state pension age SPA rises for people across the generations.

The Crossbench Peer claimed that he would make the state pension more generous at 70 and introduce means-tested benefits for lower-income people who've retired from 65 or 66 onwards.

It is well docu-

mented that those with lower incomes, manual occupations or stressful employment have lower life expectancies, and will be the real losers if the SPA rises again.

Thousands of women born in the early 1950s have already seen their SPA rise twice without receiving appropriate notice, and continue to put pressure on the government to offer concessions.

The NPC is backing a demo by them on 29 June in Parliament.

Serious failures over hospital discharges

The Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman has issued a damning report into unsafe discharges from hospital.

The authors state that after a stay in hospital, it should be a relief to get back to the comfort of your own home, but in some cases people have been sent home alone unable to cope.

They often end up back in hospital, or stuck in

hospital because of delays by other services in arranging support or appropriate residential placements.

The report found that patients were being discharged before they were clinically ready to leave hospital, not being assessed or consulted properly before their discharge, being discharged with no home-care plan in place or in some instances, relatives and carers not being told that

their loved one had been discharged.

Jan Shortt, NPC vice president said: "This is all the evidence you need to show that the NHS and social care system need to be part and parcel of the same service."

"The £4.6bn cuts to social care has made this situation worse and ultimately we need a tax-funded single National Health and Care Service."

Tata Steel pension changes

Ministers are considering altering the law to allow changes to the former British Steel pension scheme, in an attempt to make the Tata Steel company more attractive to a potential buyer.

Under the proposed deal, the inflation rate used to index-link pension payments could be downgraded from the Retail Price Index (RPI) to the lower Consumer Prices Index (CPI).

This would result in lower pensions for the workers involved, by as much as 15% over the coming years.

Campaigners are also concerned

that taking away benefits that have been already granted to workers would

set a dangerous precedent that could be imitated by other firms.

The NPC has warned that the government has already changed accrued state pension rights.

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