

Campaign!

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

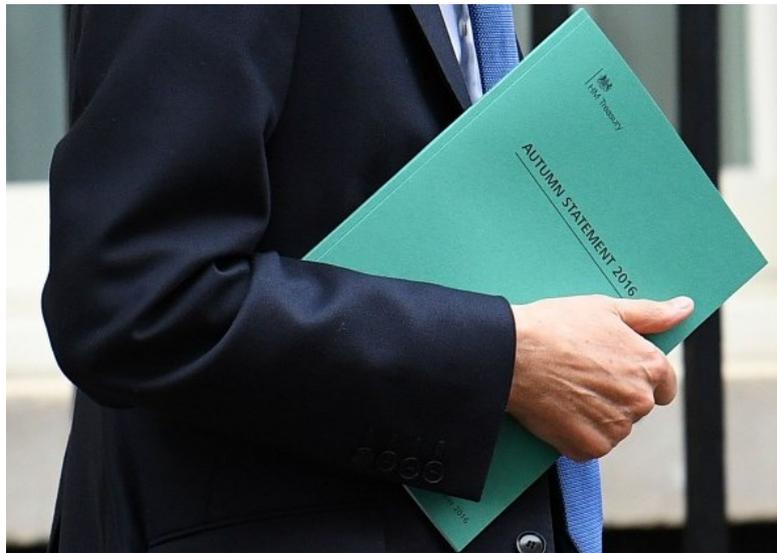
Chancellor hints at the end of the triple lock

In his first Autumn Statement as Chancellor, Philip Hammond hinted that the triple lock on the basic state pension would be reviewed after 2020 because of growing financial pressure caused by an ageing population.

His announcement came just weeks after the Work and Pensions Committee had also called for the ending of the 2.5% guaranteed annual increase in the state pension, claiming that it was unsustainable.

However, even with the triple lock in place, next April's rise in the basic state pension will only see those with a full national insurance record gain an extra £3 a week, whilst millions of women on lower pensions will get just £1.80.

Figures show that in the last five years, the triple lock has only been more generous than



Philip Hammond's economic forecasts have been described by the IFS as offering the worst decade for living standards since the 1920s
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the pre-2010 system for raising the pension on just one occasion.

False comparisons between how much wages have stagnated compared to pensions over the last few years tend to focus

on percentages, rather than the actual amount people have received.

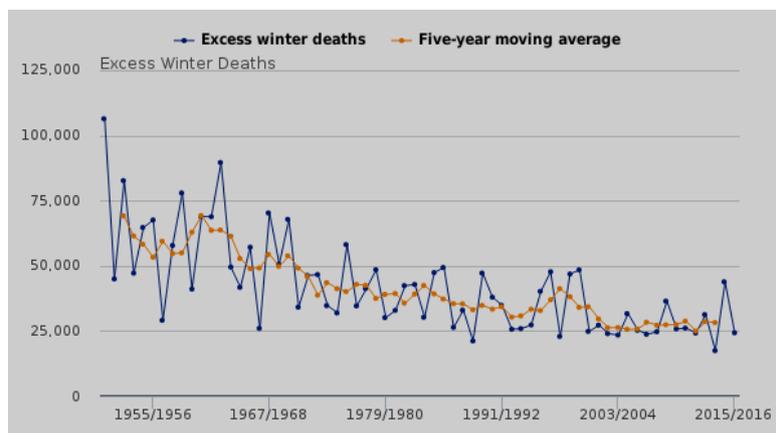
A detailed analysis of the Autumn Statement is available on the NPC's website and from the office on request.

Excess winter death figure still over 24,000

The Office for National Statistics has confirmed that 24,300 older people died of cold related illnesses during December 2015 and March 2016.

Those affected the most were older women, who make up 53% of all winter deaths.

The NPC highlighted the scandal with a black balloon release in Westminster and Coventry, and called on the government to tackle high energy bills.



Whilst the graph shows that this year's winter death figure was lower than last year, the average death rate appears to still be relatively high
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National Pensioners Convention

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Campaign Dates

Dignity Action Day
1 February: Groups around the country will be marking the day by promoting the NPC's Dignity Code and the call for a National Health and Social Care Service. More details to follow

Biennial Delegate Conference
21-22 March: Every two years the NPC elects its officers and discusses its policies for the coming period. The event is open to NPC regions and national organisations representing older people. A report will be available after the event

Annual Pensioners' Parliament
6-8 June: Tickets priced £10 for the three-day event in Blackpool are now available from the NPC office. More details of the programme will be issued shortly

Need for more social care funding ignored

One of the glaring omissions from the Chancellor's Autumn Statement was the future funding of social care.

In the weeks leading up to the statement, various health organisations, charities, think tanks and campaign groups had been calling on the government to close the funding gap.

Since 2010, social care budgets have been cut by around £5bn and experts say that next year there will be a £1.9bn shortfall which will increase to £2.3bn by 2019/20.

It is well documented that the system suffers from a postcode lottery of charges, limited access to services,

badly paid and poorly trained staff, a lack of proper regulation, low standards, inadequate "flying" 15-minute visits and a lack of dignity for both staff and residents.

As a result of the cuts to funding, well over 1m older people no longer get the help and support they need in their own home.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "Everyone knows there is a real crisis in social care, but the Chancellor didn't even mention it."

"Yet the general public know that more of the same just won't work."

"We need a new approach to social care that makes it part of the NHS and funds it through taxation."

Meals on wheels now in less than half of councils

The number of councils providing meals on wheels to vulnerable older people has now dropped for the first time to below 50%, according to the National Association of Care Catering (NACC).

Their study showed 91% of providers expected further cuts in the next 12 months, whilst only half of those providing a service do so for 365 days a year.

Health experts have also identified better nutritional care as the third largest source of cost savings to the NHS.

In 2015, malnutrition accounted for nearly £20bn of health spending, but the NACC argues that a £4.30 two course lunch could not

only tackle malnutrition but would also prevent unnecessary bed-blocking and save money, especially given that it costs an estimated £400 to keep someone in hospital for one day.

Surprisingly, meals on wheels is not regarded as a statutory service, which allows local councils to cut the provision in order to save money.

Jan Shortt, NPC vice president said: "Meals on wheels offer a lifeline to many lonely and isolated older people and a small investment in the service would show massive health and financial benefits for us all."

For further information on the campaign visit www.thenacc.co.uk.

NPC lobby makes an impact

Around 200 campaigners from across the country took part in the NPC's November lobby of Parliament.

A well attended demonstration opposite Parliament attracted considerable media interest, before campaigners made their way into the House of Commons for a rally and to lobby their MPs.

A packed committee room heard Heather Wakefield from UNISON explain the problems with the social care system and call for services to be taken back into public control, Ian Blackford MP from the SNP talked about a number of pension issues including the scandal of frozen pensions affecting UK pensioners living abroad and shadow chancellor, John McDonnell MP pledged that the Labour party would support the triple lock on the basic state pension beyond the 2020 election.

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