

Campaign!

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

UK state pension now the world's worst

Britain's state pension is now the worst in the developed world, according to the OECD's (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) latest findings.

It means a worker entering the British workforce today can expect to receive less than a third (29%) of their final working salary as a basic pension after tax – and is 40% lower than those who entered the labour market in 2002, who would have received around half of their salary in state pension.

Since the OECD study began, the UK has consistently ranked near



the bottom of the table, but this is the first time it has been last.

The OECD believes the fall is because the government replaced the earnings-related State Second Pension (S2P) with the new flat-rate pension which came into force in April 2016.

Elsewhere in the developed world the aver-

age worker can expect 63% of their salary as a state-funded pension.

For example, the pension systems in Japan, Germany, France, Italy, the United States, Canada, the Netherlands and Ireland all pay out a higher proportion of working income.

The report also acknowledges that cur-

rent poverty levels among those aged 75 and over are 18.5%, compared to 11% among the whole population and just over 10% for the age group 66-75.

Women are also most affected by old-age poverty.

A recent National Audit Office report found that 76% of people reaching retirement in 2060 will be worse off under the new state pension than if they had been on the old system.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "We need a living state pension for all, set above the poverty level at around 70% of the living wage and equivalent to £200 a week.

Despite claims that the triple-lock on state pensions is too generous, the evidence suggests the UK needs a higher state pension more than ever

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Dignity Action Day set for 1 February 2018

Over the last few years, the NPC has been organising around National Dignity Action Day on 1 February, to highlight our Dignity Code and the need for improvements in social care.

Over the last 20 years, there have been numerous commissions, research projects and inquiries into the social care system and whilst all have concluded that it is not fit for purpose, nothing has been done and thou-

sands more frail old and disabled people and their families have suffered.

Next month, NPC groups around the country will be leafleting the public, holding public meetings, getting MPs and council leaders to sign the Dignity Code and campaigning in hospitals by talking to staff and patients.

The main focus this year is to call for a National Social Care Service funded through general

taxation and free at the point of delivery like the NHS

To recognise that in order to get quality care, staff must be properly trained and paid, services should be brought into the public sector and the NPC's Dignity Code should be adopted by all local authorities, hospitals and care providers to help ensure proper standards of care.

To get involved in the campaign, please contact the NPC office for more details.



National Pensioners Convention

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Campaign Dates

1 February 2018
Dignity Action Day
Groups around the country will promote the NPC's message for a National Care Service as the best ways of improving the quality of care

April 2018
This will mark 10 years since the introduction of the concessionary bus pass. More details to follow regarding the plans for the celebration

12-14 June 2018
NPC Pensioners' Parliament
Event includes a march, opening rally, keynote speakers on pensions, health and social care, transport, loneliness and funeral poverty. Tickets on sale now for the 3-day event, priced £10 or day ticket £5 from the NPC

No new plan for care funding

The government's decision to allow local authorities in England to increase council tax by 1% in 2018 is woefully inadequate to address the funding gap facing adult social care, the NPC has warned.

It raises least funding in the areas of greatest need and is not the best solution to addressing the crisis that already exists in the sector.

By the end of this financial year, £6bn will have been cut from councils' adult social care budgets since 2010 - yet this new announcement is likely to raise just £250m a year towards that shortfall.

Meanwhile more and more older people will be rationed out of the services they need, self-funders will continue to subsidise the local councils and homes will have to be sold to pay for care.

The government has

bought itself some time by proposing that a Green Paper on future funding of social care will come out next summer - but that means even longer for residents and families to wait while the system continues to creak.

Jan Shortt, NPC general secretary said: "There is an appetite for something better than we have at the moment - a National Care Service funded through taxation and free at the point of need, like the NHS."

The latest poll by Future Care Capital found clear support for raising income tax at all levels in order to increase the amount of funding available for adult social care.

"The public are way ahead of the politicians on this issue, and would be willing to pay more tax providing they knew services would get better," Ms Shortt said.

One in five are unpaid carers

The number of over-65s acting as a carer for a relative has topped two million for the first time, according to charity Age UK.

Figures show that 2.29m people of retirement age in England provided care in the year 2015/16 - 16 per cent higher than the 1.83m who did the same five years earlier.

This suggests that more than one in five over-65s acted as a carer at some point during the year, and they provided 54m hours of unpaid care in England in 2016.

Last year, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) calculated that it would cost £56.9bn to replace these unpaid carers with paid workers.

The ONS also found that by

the age of 65, women were likely to spend 2.6 of their remaining years as unpaid carers, and 65-year-old men 2.7 years.

Analysis shows that the value of unpaid care easily outweighs the amounts spent on formal social care.

The latest figures show that NHS England spent almost £17bn on social care in 2015-16, while Wales spent £1.4bn.

Scotland spent £2.9bn in 2013-14, according to the latest figures available.

Dot Gibson, NPC deputy general secretary said: "The NPC continues to campaign to overturn the rule that prevents pensioners from also receiving the carer's allowance, especially when older carers clearly need extra financial support."

Brexit and older people

Following the decision on 23 June

2016 by the UK electorate to leave the EU by 52% to 48%, the government is now in the middle of negotiating Britain's departure

Whilst the final outcome of the negotiations is unclear, the NPC has produced a new briefing paper on the current situation covering

topics such as the state pension and the triple-lock, the NHS and social

care, protecting British citizens living in the EU, holidaying in the EU, human rights and the Irish border question and how it might affect older people.

The NPC will continue to monitor the impact of the UK's decision to leave the EU, and in particular we are keen to ensure that older people are not "blamed" for the referendum result as part of a phoney war between the generations.

The briefing is at www.npcuk.org.

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