

# Campaign!

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

## Think-tank that wants to scrap bus pass says retirement is bad for you

**T**he same think-tank that in the past has claimed that older people have yet to suffer their share of austerity, has now issued a new report arguing that retirement has a detrimental effect on both mental and physical health.

The Institute of Economic Affairs claims that retirement is bad for you because it takes away your drive to get up in the morning and the answer is to make people work longer.

This same group has previously argued that universal pensioner benefits such as the bus pass and winter fuel allowance should be scrapped.

Their intervention is now just the latest in an ongoing campaign which seeks to undermine these

benefits.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "Of course people need to stay active in later life, but there is absolutely no reason why that should mean having to work longer."

"There is a complete lack of understanding as to how different groups in society are ageing - with some simply unable to work after 65, let alone 68 and beyond."

"We also have to be clear about the rights of younger people to get into the workplace and the need to tackle unemployment."

As part of the campaign to defend universal pensioner benefits the NPC has launched an online petition, which aims to secure 100,000 signatures and force a debate in the House of Commons on the issue.

### Petition to save universal benefits

The NPC has secured the support of the Daily Express in its campaign to defend universal pensioner benefits and because we recognise that many older people do not have access to the internet, the paper has also printed copies for readers to sign. If you require a printed petition please let us know. For those who are online the petition can be signed at <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/49599>.



At the end of May the figure stood at just over 16,000, with a further 11,000 coming in the post on paper petitions which have appeared in the Daily Express.

It is clear from

statements made by the three main political parties that they will all be looking at changing the way in which universal benefits are paid to pensioners after the general election.

The NPC has agreed to launch a general election campaign that will seek pledges from candidates in 2015 to protect essential items such as the bus pass and winter fuel allowance.

*Every day, petitions in support of universal benefits flood in from pensioners across the country and are sorted by a team of volunteers*  
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## National Pensioners Convention

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## Campaign Dates

**NPC Pensioners' Parliament 2013**  
18-20 June, Winter Gardens, Blackpool. New TUC leader Frances O'Grady will address the opening rally, alongside John McDonnell MP, author Owen Jones and Prof John Ashton. In addition, sessions are being planned on pensions and universal benefits, transport, how to influence the new NHS structures, dignity in social care and life for pensioners in devolved administrations. There will also be a special session on the issues facing local groups and what can be done to assist them. The entertainment at the social evening will be provided by The Merseybeats. Tickets priced £6 (including entry into prize draw). Booking forms and initial programme are available now from the NPC office.

# Time to move on from Dilnot plan

**T**he health charity, the King's Fund has warned that as social care services become increasingly rationed, the introduction of a cap on care charges of £72,000 might become irrelevant if fewer and fewer people are eligible to receive any support.

They also argue that the growing unmet need will have a detrimental impact on individuals and their carers, as

well as placing further pressure on an NHS already under significant strain.

In line with NPC policy, the charity suggests that it is time to look beyond the report from the Dilnot Commission and start to focus on how to secure enough resources to meet current and future needs.

Richard Humphries from the King's Fund said: "Social care reforms will be challenging to imple-

ment and will involve substantial extra work for local authorities when they are facing the most severe financial challenge in their history."

"There needs to be a fresh debate about the options for funding of future care and about overcoming current divisions in health and social care funding."

The NPC continues to call for a combined tax-funded health and care service.

# Inflation of 6.2% hits the over 75s

**T**he annual living costs for Britons aged over 75 have increased by a quarter since 2008 and those in the later stages of retirement are experiencing an annual rate of inflation of 6.2% on basic living costs, according to figures produced by insurance company AXA.

Annual living costs for those aged over 75 have increased by 24.8% from

£7,852 to £9,796 since 2008.

This should be compared with increases of 5.2% for those aged 65-74 and just 0.3% for those aged 50-64.

The over-75s have also seen increases in every spending category except clothing since 2008, and this is a result of negative factors such as higher heating costs, with utility spending up £216 a year.

Spending on health has also

increased with annual costs up £231 while spending on food has increased by £268.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "It is clear that the inflation felt by pensioners is considerably higher than the figure suggested by government."

"Pensions have simply failed to keep pace with the growing costs of food, fuel and housing costs, and this has to be addressed."

# Osborne says work until 77

**C**hancellor George Osborne has sparked controversy by suggesting that the state pension age could increase by six months a year for the next 20 years – eventually raising the age to 77.

His suggestion followed the release of official figures which revealed the saving from increasing the state pension age to 67 is set to be more than £100bn.

Speaking at the Global Investment Conference in London, Mr Osborne admitted he was delighted with the money saved

by the move, which particularly penalises women.

Marion Wilson, NPC vice president said: "The idea that a civilised society should force people to work well into their 70s is absolutely wrong."

"It might be alright for MPs to keep on working, but many people are unable to work beyond 65."

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