

# Campaign!

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

## Pensioners and manifesto promises

**W**ith just days to go before the General Election, the NPC has analysed where each of the main parties stand in relation to older people.

Virtually all are committed to the triple lock, but only the Green party talks about raising the basic state pension above the official poverty level.

Both Labour and the Lib Dems stress the removal of the winter fuel allowance from pensioners on more than £42,000 a year, and both the Lib Dems and Greens pledge to reform pension tax relief on higher earners.

On health matters, all parties pledge additional funding and more staff, but only Labour and the Greens will repeal the Health and Social Care Act.

Most of the parties also support the integration of health and social care, although they differ



*The attempt by some politicians, think tanks and elements of the media to suggest there is a conflict between the generations is both inaccurate and dangerous*  
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on how best this could be achieved.

Interestingly, both UKIP and the Greens also pledge to introduce a Dignity Code (as advocated by the NPC) to protect the interests of older people in care.

Most of the parties support an insulation programme for low income households to tackle fuel poverty, and a freeze on rail

fares.

They also stress that access to high speed broadband and digital services should be extended to all, but only the Lib Dems call for all services to be online.

You can get a full copy of the analysis by visiting [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org) and looking under the What's New section on the Home Page.

## Has the triple lock been as good as the claim?

**T**he Treasury has claimed that the triple lock has given pensioners higher increases over the last five years than was previously the case, but figures from the Department for Work and Pensions show the basic state pension would actually be £1.15 a week higher this year if the government had not changed the rules on annual increases.

Up to 2010, the basic state

pension had risen in line with the higher of the Retail Price Index (RPI) or 2.5%.

In June of that year, the Chancellor announced that the RPI would be replaced by the lower Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The result meant that the basic state pension would have been higher for four years of the Parliament under the old rules, rather than using the triple lock.

By April 2015 it would have

been £117.10 a week rather than £115.95 - £58.90 a year more.

In addition, the total loss to someone receiving the full basic state pension over the five years of the triple lock has been £163.80.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "There is a view that pensioners have escaped austerity, but the change from the RPI to the CPI has cut all our pensions."



## 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's essential reading!

## General Election

7 May: The NPC has produced a comprehensive analysis of the party manifestos on a range of issues affecting older people. You can download a copy via [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)

## NPC Pensioners' Parliament 2015

16-18 June: Annual gathering in Blackpool with a range of guest speakers on various topics, plus entertainment and an exhibition area. Following the General Election, the Parliament will consider what the next five years will mean for pensions, care and universal benefits. Tickets priced £8.

# Untrained care staff seen as "dangerous"

**U**ntrained home carers are putting older people at risk of serious harm, according to a study by health union, UNISON.

The findings from 1000 staff reveal that 24% of those giving medication such as morphine and insulin received no training, while a further 27% said they were not trained to work with dementia patients.

The Alzheimer's Society described

older people as being "let down so profoundly" by the system.

One worker admitted 'when administering medicine, you often have to phone the office to ask what to do'.

The UK Homecare Association also points out that home care workers are now being asked to do tasks which previously would have been done by registered nurses.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary

said; "This is further evidence that our social care system is in crisis and needs urgent attention."

"The care sector needs to be professionalised, with better training, qualifications and pay."

"If we are serious about raising the quality of care that our loved ones receive, we have to accept that this is going to cost more - and we can no longer rely on getting care on the cheap."

# NHS's £3.5bn goes private

**N**ew research produced by the NHS Support Federation shows a dramatic rise in the contracts won by private firms to deliver NHS care.

Over the period April 2014-15, companies have won awards totaling over £3.5bn - five times higher than the amount in the previous year.

The figures also reveal that the value of NHS contracts awarded through open competition has multiplied since

the government's NHS changes.

£9.6bn of NHS clinical awards were made through tendering over the last year.

The use of the market has also escalated since the last election and several companies have amassed large portfolios of NHS contracts.

Virgin Care are one of the most successful having won NHS contracts worth over £1bn since 2010.

Care UK who run 111 and GP services also had income of £370m

from NHS contracts and overall, profit-making providers have won 65% of clinical awards over the last two years.

Since the NHS changes came into effect in April 2013, £21bn worth of opportunities have been advertised.

Jan Shortt, NPC vice president said: "The NHS has been opened up to the market and profit making providers, and it is undeniable that privatisation is happening in our health service."

# Not enough pension

**M**illions of future retirees must not be lulled into a false sense of security about the new state pension, the NPC has warned.

The Convention claims that most people will face a big gap between what they need to live on in retirement and what they will get from their state pension.

For example, someone earning £30,000 a year would need an estimated retirement income of around £20,100.

This would require a pension pot of £300,000 over and above their state pension and they

would have to be putting away up to £500 a month.

However, for many workers this is simply unrealistic.

New pensioners will also have to work longer and may be tempted to cash in their pensions before the reach pension age.

For many, this would be a mistake.

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