

Campaign!

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

NPC calls for new dignity law

The NPC is calling for greater legal protection for older people in care, amid the latest findings from the care inspector which found almost a third of care homes to be operating below standard.

As part of Dignity Action Day on 30 January, the Convention, for the second year running, will be organising activities around the country to promote the NPC Dignity Code and highlight the need for it to be included in legislation.

In its first report under new inspection criteria, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has

found that 79 out of 256 care homes either required improvement or were completely inadequate.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "We can't go on allowing a significant number of older people in care to be treated so badly."

"Animals and children have specific legislation protecting their rights and welfare, and it's time the dignity of older people was given the same legal status."

The NPC continues to call on councils, MPs, NHS Trusts, GP surgeries, care providers and professional health bodies to add their names to the Code.

Dignity Action Day
Dignity is everybody's business!

Every week, we come across examples of how older people have been let down by the care system and treated badly. Whether in hospital, a nursing home or their own home - it's time we started treating older people with dignity.

Britain's biggest older people's campaigning group, the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) has produced a Dignity Code which lays out in a very clear and concise way how we should treat those who can no longer look after themselves.

What can be done?

- Care staff must be properly trained and paid accordingly
- Services should be more rigorously monitored, inspected and regulated
- Local authorities should adopt the Dignity Code and ensure it is part of their contracts with those organisations providing care in their area
- Local health services should ensure the Dignity Code is part of their health and well-being strategies
- The Dignity Code should be enshrined in legislation

What can you do to help?

- Contact the NPC and get hold of a copy of the Dignity Code
- Get in touch with your local MP, council, GP and hospital and ask them to support the Dignity Code
- Let us know what is happening in your area and find out how you can get involved

National Pensioners Convention

Web: www.npcuk.org
Email: info@npcuk.org
Post: Walkden House, 10 Melton St, London NW1 2EJ

Tens of thousands of leaflets will be distributed across the country as part of the Dignity Action Day campaign
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Modern home care = 50 carers a year

A commission on home care chaired by former care minister, Paul Burstow, has described the current system of home care as "a scandal waiting to happen".

The report on behalf of the Local Government Information Unit claimed frail, older people were facing a conveyor belt of up to 50

different carers a year.

The commission found that at the root of the problems were a lack of funds and a demoralised and often exploited workforce.

There was also evidence that private care agencies were hiring convicted criminals to look after pensioners in their own homes.

More than 500,000

adults receive care at home through their local authority, with a further 150,000 paying for it privately.

There is also an estimated 800,000 additional people who are seeking care, but no longer qualify under the stricter criteria brought in by many local councils as a way of rationing limited services.

The commission also found that 60% of care workers were on "zero-hour" contracts, leading to a quarter of a million effectively being paid less than the minimum wage.

As a result, staff turnover was double the national average and as a result residents were seeing a new carer almost every week.



National Pensioners Convention

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Campaign Dates

Dignity Action Day
30 January: The NPC will be co-ordinating a UK-wide day of action aimed at highlighting the need for the Dignity Code to be enshrined in law to protect older people from abuse. Thousands of leaflets will be given out to the public and local authorities and MPs will add their names to the Code. More details to follow.

NPC Pensioners' Parliament 2015
16-18 June: Annual gathering in Blackpool with a range of guest speakers and sessions on various topics, plus entertainment and an exhibition area. A government minister will be invited to speak at the event and topics will include pensions, social care, dementia, loneliness, fuel poverty, public transport and the NHS. More details to follow.

Review calls for CPI to be abandoned

There is a strong case for abandoning the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as the headline measure of inflation, according to a new review conducted by the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA).

The review, headed by Paul Johnson of the Institute for Fiscal Studies suggests replacing CPI with CPIH - a measure that includes owner occupiers' housing costs.

Mr Johnson also

suggests that the government should move away from using the Retail Price Index (RPI) as soon as possible.

At the moment, RPI is still used to determine rail fares, interest on some government bonds and rises in some occupational pension schemes.

However, for millions of pensioners keeping reinstating RPI would give them a higher increase in their state pen-

sion.

In the most recent inflation figures, both CPI and CPIH stand at 1%.

By contrast, in the last three years, the basic state pension would have gone up by more each week had RPI been used rather than either CPI or the triple lock guarantee of 2.5%.

The UKSA report will now go out for consultation, but the NPC remains committed to reinstating RPI.

Meals on wheels cut by half since 2010

The number of pensioners getting meals on wheels from local councils has more than halved since 2010, according to the latest figures.

Close to 300,000 older people were receiving the council-funded or commissioned meals five years ago, but now that figure has fallen to just 109,000.

The drop has also been

matched with a 22% increase in the average price of each meal, setting back those that still receive daily meals an extra £237 a year.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "Removing this support is a false economy, because council cuts to meals on wheels services inevitably lead to individuals needing greater care and support which is more expensive."

The Local Government Associa-

tion has long been warning that the services that elderly and vulnerable people rely on, including meals on wheels and lunch clubs, are coming under increasing threat from cuts.

Mr Douglas added: "If social care continues to be inadequately funded, some services will be no longer be sustainable and vulnerable older people will be at risk of losing essential care and support."

End of the state pension?

One in six MPs believes the state pension will be extinct in 30 years' time, according to a poll conducted by private pension provider, NOW: Pensions.

It remains the case that many politicians simply don't understand the Pay-As-You-Go principle behind the state pension and continue to argue that National Insurance (NI) is a tax - rather than seeing it as social insurance that pays for the pensions of previous generations.

The balance in the NI Fund in January stood at just £14.2bn, compared to the £21.3bn that was there 12 months ago.

This year the NPC will be promoting a new campaign on the state pension ahead of changes planned for 2016, and will specifically target those who are currently at work, as well as improving the situation for existing pensioners as well.

You can now keep up to date with all the NPC's activities by following us on Twitter @NPCUK.