

Campaign!

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

Anger grows over rising fuel bills

The Prime Minister's suggestion that customers can beat the latest rises in energy bills by putting on a jumper, has been greeted with disbelief by many older people.

David Cameron's intervention in the fuel debate came as Energy Minister Ed Davey also urged consumers to switch suppliers in order to get a better deal on their gas and electricity, but critics claimed that with most of the big six energy companies increasing their prices by an average of 9%, some consumers might be going "from out of the frying pan and into the fire".

Concern has also been expressed that a number of MPs have been claiming large fuel bills on expenses, whilst at the same time voting to cut the winter fuel allowance for 11m pensioners.

Have you seen the Government's policy for tackling fuel poverty...



In 2012, over 25,000 older people died from cold related illnesses.

This has got to stop.

**Send an email headed:
NO MORE WINTER DEATHS
to Energy Secretary Ed Davey at
daveye@parliament.uk**

National Pensioners Convention
Walkden House, 10 Melton Street, London NW1 2EJ
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Recently the government replaced the old fuel poverty definition of 10% of disposable income with two factors.

To be in fuel poverty now a household would (a)

have required fuel costs above the average to keep adequately warm and (b) have a low income so that if they were to spend that amount, they would be left with an income below

the poverty line.

As a result of this new definition, the number of households in fuel poverty has decreased from 47% of pensioner households to 25%, but it still represents at least

1m older people who are struggling to keep warm and meet their energy bills.

From now until June 2014 the structure of tariffs for gas and electricity are also changing and in future there will be four payment methods: pre-payment meter, quarterly bills, direct debit and online account and for each of these there will be four tariffs.

By the end of the year, customers will be invited to consider what tariff suits them best and by June 2014, if any customer has not chosen a new tariff, the energy supplier will do so for them.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "Fuel poverty is a national scandal and the government is taking far too long to tackle it."

"Meanwhile, older people are dying from the cold."

The NPC has launched an online poster campaign, urging supporters to email Energy Minister, Ed Davey to stress that there should be no more winter deaths
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National Pensioners Convention

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Campaign Dates

NPC Lobby of Parliament
27 November, 1-3pm, Committee Room 14, House of Commons. Representatives from across the age groups will speak about pensions, care and universal benefits. See right.

National Dignity Action Day
1 February 2014, organised by the Social Care Institute of Excellence. The NPC intends to mount nationwide activities to coincide with this day. Details to follow

NPC Pensioners' Parliament
17-19 June 2014, Winter Gardens, Blackpool

STOP PRESS
The basic state pension will go up next April by 2.7% in line with the CPI - giving an extra £2.95 a week and £1.80 for many women without a full pension

“Care cap” could be as high as £134,000

Pensioners will have to spend nearly twice as much on care bills as previously thought before qualifying for any state help, according to a new study into the government's planned “care cap”.

The research, from care provider Prestige Nursing+Care found that the cost of care amounted to only 49% of an average annual bill of £28,367.

It would therefore take more than five years for a resident to reach the proposed £72,000 cap, by which time they would have also paid out £62,159 in accommodation costs.

The average spending on care home costs before the cap was triggered would therefore be £134,159.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: “People thinking that care

costs of £72,000 won't lead to them having to sell their house may have to think again.”

“It's clear that the government's plans are unravelling given that seven out of every eight pensioners will never get any support at all towards their care costs.”

The Care Bill is currently going through Parliament and the NPC is lobbying for a national care service like the NHS.

Sugar attacks Clegg

Sir Alan Sugar has criticised Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg for attacking him over the issue of universal pensioner benefits.

During one of Mr Clegg's regular radio shows, he claimed that Lord Sugar shouldn't qualify for a free bus pass or TV licence.

But the angry peer hit back saying: “I don't have a bus pass and I pay for my TV licence like everyone else because I'm 66 and only those over 75 get it free.”

Lord Sugar suggested that David Cameron should silence his deputy in case he make any further “gaffes”.

Whilst it is clear that universal pensioner benefits are going to be targeted by all the main political parties at the next election, Mr Clegg has been the most vocal of all the leaders in seeking to introduce a wide reaching means-tested system.

DON'T WAIT FOR THE ELECTION - LOBBY NOW!

NPC Lobby of Parliament
Wednesday 27 November 2013
1-3pm Rally/Lobby, Committee Room 14, House of Commons
Speakers invited: Dot Gibson (NPC), Owen Jones, Stephen Burke (United For All Ages), Esther Rantzen, Phil McEvoy (GMB), Rodney Bickerstaffe and Kelvin Hopkins MP

Come along and hear about:

- **Low state pensions and nothing in the new Pension Bill to help existing pensioners, the change from RPI to CPI and rising costs of living**
- **Expensive and poor quality care, rationing of services, lack of dignity and nothing in the Care Bill to fix a broken system**
- **Attacks on universal pensioner benefits and older people being blamed for an economic crisis they didn't create**

COME ALONG AND TELL YOUR MP ABOUT PENSIONERS' CONCERNS

For more information contact:
NPC Walkden House, 10 Melton Street, London NW1 2EJ
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www.npcuk.org



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