

Campaign!

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

Government plan to raise pension age to 68, seven years early, will impact on six million

Just 24 hours after Sir Michael Marmot's report showed that increases in life expectancy had come to a halt for the first time in a century, the government made a breath-taking announcement that the state pension age (SPA) would be going up to 68, seven years earlier than previously planned.

Under existing legislation, all those born after April 6 1978 already face a SPA of 68, but now around six million men and women born between April 6 1970 and April 5 1978 will see their SPA of 67 rise incrementally to 68.

This group is currently aged between 39 and 47.



However, officials have confirmed that the final decision on this proposed change is likely to come before Parliament in 2023.

Jan Shortt, NPC general secretary said: "All the evidence shows that the UK suffers from massive health inequalities and millions of people will find that they are too old for work and yet too young to retire."

"We must unite the generations to fight this proposal and continue to make the case for a more flexible approach to retirement that recognises not everyone is able to keep working."

Prof Marmot's report said that one of the main causes of a slowdown in life expectancy was dramatic cuts to health and social care.

Today, average life expectancy in Britain is 79.6 years for men and 83.1 years for women,

On the day before Parliament closed for the summer recess, the government announced its intention to raise the state pension age more quickly than previously thought
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CQC claims one in three care homes unsafe

The latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) report has revealed that one in three care homes are unsafe - with staffing levels partly to blame.

The report shows that some care homes are going weeks without being cleaned and residents are served dangerous levels of medication.

The report covers all 24,000 providers in England and found that of 10,858 residential care homes inspected, more than 2,600 were rated either inade-

quate or required improvement for safety.

Meanwhile of the 4,042 residential nursing homes visited by the CQC, 1,496 - or 37 per cent - were unsafe.

Across the entire adult social care sector, including domiciliary and community social care, 23 per cent of services were found to require improvement for safety, and 2 per cent were judged to be inadequate - approximately 6,000 organisations.

The NPC continues to argue that these failings arise because

over 80% of social care is provided by the private sector - which has profit as its driving motive, rather than the care of residents.

These continual failings will not be resolved by "savvy consumers" picking the best home for their loved ones.

The entire sector needs to be brought into the public sector as part of the NHS and should be funded through taxation.

This is the call the NPC will be making when the government launches its consultation on the service later this year.



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Campaign Dates

1 October UN Older People's Day

The NPC will be marking this day again with a series of activities across the country. Details to follow

NPC Recruitment Week

The NPC will be staging its first major recruitment drive during the week 2-7 October. Details to follow

Pensioners' Parliament 2018

12-14 June, Winter Gardens, Blackpool. The report of this year's event is also now available on the NPC website. Tickets for the 2018 event are now on sale from the NPC office

Join the NPC

If you are a member of a local pensioner group or trade union branch join the NPC. For details contact info@npcuk.org

Housing Association tenants now under threat

Many pensioners living in housing association (HA) properties could be about to face huge rent rises, campaigners have warned.

Charitable landlords are catching up with 1999 legislation that made secure tenancies' rents subject to inflation + 5%, and in the last year, many secure tenants' rents have rocketed.

Today, most HAs are huge private businesses and the 2016 Housing and Planning Act effectively deregulates the sector.

Under the Act, associations that used to be registered at the Office of National Statistics as public providers of social housing, are now private providers, so their gambling on the money markets doesn't show up as public debt in the government's books.

The government regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), no longer controls the sale of HA homes

and the HCA no longer controls housing association mergers into bigger and bigger property empires.

Effectively, HA tenants are now private tenants.

At present, the Valuation Office Agency sets secure tenancies' rents, and the government also regulates assured tenancies.

But the National Housing Federation recommends that rent setting should now go to individual housing associations.

Most large housing associations consider rents as income streams for raising private finance, so understandably many tenants are worried about losing their rights.

The Grenfell Tower fire has clearly pushed the housing crisis up the political agenda, and the NPC is currently developing a detailed policy and campaign on housing.

For more information visit www.haresidentsaction.org.uk

NPC October lobby of MPs

The NPC has set Wednesday 18 October for its annual Autumn lobby of MPs.

This year's event will be particularly important given the number of brand new MPs that have come into Parliament since June's election.

The Convention will be using its six point Pensioners' Manifesto as the basis for the lobby, and campaigners are being asked to gather at 11.30am in Old Palace Yard by George V's statue oppo-

site the House of Lords, before making their way into the House of Commons for a rally from 1-3pm in Committee Room 14.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "All the political parties have to be made aware of our concerns, especially on the key issue of social care funding."

"Whilst for the time being the triple lock and the winter fuel allowance appear to be no longer under any immediate threat, it is important that we keep up the pressure."

When it's gone, it's gone

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has published the findings of a huge investigation into the pension freedoms championed by former Chancellor, George Osborne in 2014.

The study reveals that around one million pension pots have been

accessed and more than half of these pensions (53 per cent) have been withdrawn in full.

The FCA also found that most of those who are cashing in their pensions are possibly still at work - with almost three-quarters of schemes being accessed by people aged under 65.

The figures also reflect that, in a lot of cases, these people did not have much money saved.

In nine out of 10 such cases, the pension pots being emptied contained less than £30,000 worth of savings and, in six out of 10 cases, less than £10,000.

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