

# Campaign!

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

## Campaign marks success of ten year bus pass

**G**iant versions of a 10th birthday card were delivered to 10 Downing Street on March 28 to mark a decade of the England, Wales, Scotland and all Ireland bus pass for older and disabled people.

The concession is currently held by around eight million of the 11 million pensioners in the UK and is widely regarded as an absolute lifeline to many.

The most recent research has established that the concessionary travel scheme shows a 3:1 benefit-to-cost to society in general.

NPC research of bus



usage by older people also found that 45% of journeys were of benefit to the local economy (shopping, banking, eating out), 25% of journeys were used to carrying out voluntary work and unpaid caring, and

the remaining 30% were used to stay healthy by visiting keep fit classes, local swimming baths and helping to reduce demand and cost of health and care services. Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "One of

the main benefits of the bus pass is that it gives older people the opportunity to get out, stay active and remain independent."

"The growing problem of loneliness among older people is costing the NHS and other services millions of pounds every year, and without the bus pass this would be much higher."

The NPC remains critical that not all areas – particularly rural villages – have access to good bus routes.

The campaign also continues to extend the concession so that all passes can be used anywhere within the UK.

*NPC bus campaigners outside Number 10 with Cambridge MP, Daniel Zeichner (centre)*  
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## Jeremy Hunt outlines seven care reforms

**I**n his first speech since taking over responsibility for social care, Jeremy Hunt has indicated that the long-awaited summer Green Paper will address the current unfair charging system that treats dementia and cancer sufferers differently, introduce a cap on care costs, put forward an element of risk-pooling and deliver a stable and vibrant market.

Mr Hunt outlined seven principles that will be in the Green Paper to cover quality of care,

how to integrate the NHS and social care, the use of personal budgets, providing support for carers, ensuring services are available for younger and older people and introducing a new funding model.

In a shift of approach, the secretary of state has also accepted growing public support for ring-fenced tax funding for the sector, and the need to pool-risk to address the unfair way in which the current system charges those with dementia to be looked after,

but not those with cancer.

The NPC believes there are a number of different options that could be used to raise the funds needed to provide free at the point of delivery social care and has recently submitted detailed proposals to the Communities, Local Government and Health committees' joint inquiry into the long-term funding issue.

Jan Shortt, NPC general secretary said: "Millions of older people desperately need a solution to the care crisis."



## National Pensioners Convention

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## Campaign Dates

12-14 June 2018  
NPC Pensioners' Parliament

Event includes a march, opening rally, keynote speakers on pensions, health and social care, transport, loneliness and funeral poverty. Confirmed speakers include Dr Lydia Hayes, Cardiff University, Dr Gemma Carney Queen's University Belfast, Mick Cash RMT general secretary, Andy Nazer Campaign to End Loneliness and Mark Serwotka PCS general secretary. There will also be a lively exhibition area, fringe events including walking football and a film, along with a popular social evening. Tickets on sale now for the 3-day event, priced £10 or day ticket £5 from the NPC office or [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)

## Care BnB plan takes off

The company developing a controversial "Airbnb for social care" model allowing homeowners to rent spare rooms to recuperating hospital patients is now bidding to launch a new trial in Cambridge.

The company "CareRooms" is planning to target those who are ready to leave hospital, but are unable to be discharged because the care they require either at home, or in a care home is not yet available.

This approach would clearly focus on self-funders who could pay, as hosts would earn up to £1000 a month for letting out their rooms.

However, the homes would not be regulated by the Care Quality Commission because there would be no element of care being delivered.

The man behind the idea, Paul Gaudin was a former

"bagel mogul", who founded the New York Bagel Company 25 years ago, and started introducing the product into UK stores.

Not only does it highlight the extent of the deep crisis in social care, but also the lengths to which the private sector will go in order to make money out of vulnerable older people and their families.

A new report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) also revealed the extent of the funding crisis that local councils would face when in 2020 central government grants for local councils would be replaced by council tax and business rates.

The IFS predicted that income from these sources would not keep pace with the rising costs of care and services will become subject to a postcode lottery.

## Inflation and older people

As part of the Spring Statement on 13 March, the Office for Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) forecast a drop in inflation from 2.7% to 2% by the end of the year.

On the same day, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) also released its "basket of goods" used to calculate inflation.

This basket is regularly updated to reflect changes in purchasing patterns and trends, and in accordance with this the ONS announced that Edam cheese and pork pies had been removed from the basket, to be replaced by women's exercise leggings and ready-made mashed potato.

Why this is important is because the basket often

fails to adequately reflect the nature of the purchases that older consumers would make, and as such, often gives an inflationary figure that is much lower than the actual inflation experienced by older households.

The Spring Statement also included a review of 1p and 2p coins, but was dropped within 24-hours.

The NPC welcomed the return because there needs to be greater acknowledgement that the drive towards a cashless society does not suit everyone, particularly some older people.

The Convention also believed that the removal of the coins would have had an inflationary effect as retailers raised prices up to round figures.

## Triple lock tackles poverty

Some 700,000 more pensioners will be living in poverty by 2050 if the pensions triple lock is scrapped, according to the latest research from the Pensions Policy Institute (PPI).

Whilst removing the triple lock would decrease the cost of providing state pensions, but would have implications for pensioner poverty and the amount spent on other means-tested benefits

such as Housing Benefit, caring credits and disability premiums.

The report claims the triple lock is the most effective indexation link for providing a basic level of income and maintaining living standards.

The NPC has recently calculated that based on the Barbara Castle formula of the best of either RPI or wages, the basic state pension would now be £196 a week had the link with earnings not been broken in 1980.

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