

# Campaign!

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

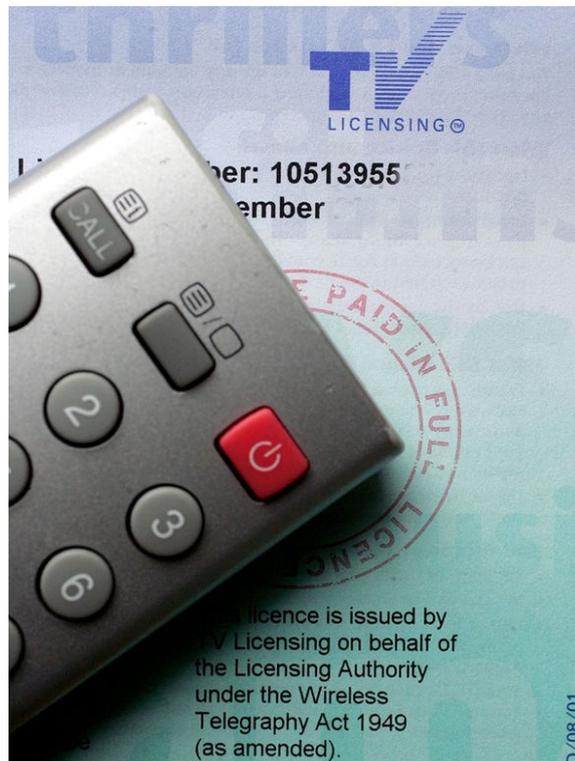
## BBC begins review of TV licence for over 75s

**B**BC Director General, Tony Hall has revealed that the broadcaster is considering the future of the free TV licence for the over 75s, now that it has started to take over responsibility for funding the concession.

However, the announcement comes as little surprise given the way in which the BBC was forced to pick up the bill for the benefit by the former Chancellor, George Osborne.

In 2015, Mr Osborne made it clear that the corporation would only get its charter renewed long with its funding if it agreed to take on the cost of the free TV licence.

Already the BBC is said to be considering raising the age at which the concession is offered - maybe setting it



to 80 or 85, means-testing it so that only those on Pension Credit will qualify or scrapping it altogether.

The concession was originally introduced by Gordon Brown in 2000 and is estimated to now cost £750m a year.

At the time of the original announcement the NPC said the Chancellor had effectively “privatised government cuts at the expense of Britain’s older generation by getting the BBC to carry out its dirty work.”

The BBC has also considered using well paid older celebrities such as Dame Helen Mirren, Lord Melvyn Bragg and Sir Michael Parkinson to encourage older people to give up their free licence.

Jan Shortt, NPC general secretary said: “Loneliness among pensioners is increasing and the TV is the main form of companionship for 45% of over 75s.”

“The government should therefore take back responsibility for funding what is a part of wider welfare policy.”

*Free TV licences for the over 75s are not given out automatically, but need to be applied for by the individual concerned*  
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## Congratulations on reaching 65 - here's a bill for £30K

**T**he latest suggestion for solving the funding crisis in social care will come as a bit of a shock to those reaching their 65th birthday.

The Social Market Foundation think tank has proposed that everyone on their 65th birthday should pay £30,000 (if they

have property worth more than £150,000).

Those who do not have the money available will have it taken from the sale of their house at a later date.

Interestingly, it would take someone at work 176 years to pay this amount in additional

income tax if it went up by 1%.

Critics have also noted that a flat rate charge obviously represents a bigger proportion of wealth for those who own modest properties compared to those living in a mansion.

The Green Paper on the funding of care is due in the Autumn.



## National Pensioners Convention

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## Campaign Dates

**NPC Lobby of Parliament 2018**  
Wednesday 24 October, assemble 11.30am George V statue Old Palace yard (opposite House of Lords) followed by rally in Committee Room 14, House of Commons 1-3pm.  
Speakers include Sharon Hodgson MP, Jack Dromey MP, Roger McKenzie (UNISON), Mark Serwotka (PCS) and Dot Gibson (NPC).

**Pensioners' Parliament 2019**  
Tuesday-Thursday 11-13 June, Winter Gardens, Blackpool. Three day event costs £10 or £5 for one day. The event will include an opening rally, specialist sessions, entertainment and a closing discussion. Booking form now available at [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org) or on request.

## Bank closures hit pensioners

**L**ower income households and older generations will be hardest hit as bank branch and cash machine closures threaten to strip them of vital access to cash, research from Which? reveals.

A survey from the consumer group found over three-quarters (78%) of consumers in the two lowest household income groups rely on cash the most - using it at least two or three times a week.

Among older generations; perhaps the most at risk of social exclusion when bank branches and cash points disappear, four in five retirees (80%) are reliant on cash - using it at least two to three times a week.

Just half of over-65s (52%) use a card this much.

Among the general population, almost everyone uses cash (98%), with almost three-quarters (73%) using it frequently to pay for goods and services.

Only one in 20 (5%) said they rarely use cash.

Ron Douglas, NPC president said: "The removal of access to nearby local facilities such as banking, combined with a low level of computer use by a significant number of consumers and the loss of local bus services to enable those people to get out create the conditions for large numbers of older people to feel like they are being left behind."

## UN Older People's Day

**N**PC groups across the country took part in events and activities on 1 October to mark the UN day for older people.

This year's theme for the Convention was "Solidarity between the generations".

Every week, older people are accused of having done well at the expense of the young.

Some politicians, think tanks and media pundits have tried to create a phoney war between the generations - not because they want to help them, but



Lambeth pensioners on the street © LPAG

because they want to reduce pensions and benefits for everyone.

That is why it's in the interest of young and old to

stand up for better public services, affordable housing and a decent welfare state for both today's and tomorrow's pensioners.

## Unfreeze UK state pensions

**A**nne is 93, she served in WWII and she paid her National Insurance in full when she was at work.

But Anne's pension was 'frozen' at £72.50 per week when she left the UK for Canada to be closer to her daughter and grandchildren.

Her pension doesn't increase in-line with inflation

so it falls in real value year-on-year.

If she had stayed in the UK she would be

getting £125.95 per week.

Astonishingly there are over 520,000 British pensioners in similar positions, most of whom live in Commonwealth countries, where as other countries like America and the Philippines are unaffected.

The NPC believes this is arbitrary and unjust and is backing a new petition at <https://endfrozenpensions.org/> to end this discrimination.

Please sign and give your support.

**Sign a friend up to receive copies of the Campaign! E-Bulletin - simply send an email to: [info@npcuk.org](mailto:info@npcuk.org) or follow us on Facebook and Twitter**