

Campaign!

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

Queen's Speech offers consultation on social care, but stays silent on triple lock and WFA

The Conservative party's failure to get an overall majority in the general election, now means that a number of proposals in their election manifesto are likely to be dropped.

For example, the plan to remove the triple lock from the state pension in 2020 and to means-test and remove the winter fuel allowance from up to 10 million pensioners did not appear in the recent Queen's Speech.

Despite this, David Gauke MP, the new head of the Department for Work and Pensions has still said the government will look again at indexation in three years' time.

What did feature in the two-year programme for government was the announcement of a consultation on the long-term funding of social care.

This will be the tenth consultation on this issue in 12 years and highlights how successive governments have been reluctant to tackle the crisis in the service.

Damian Green MP, the deputy Prime Minister told the media there would be a cap on the amount of money that people would have to pay for their care – but declined to say what that might be.

Most political commentators point to the bungled Conservative manifesto pledge on social care and the fact that minister were only told of the plans 24 hours before they were published, as one of the main reasons the party lost support.

Nevertheless, campaigners are concerned that this consultation must not allow the government to introduce its discredited and unpopular policy through the backdoor.

Jan Shortt, NPC general secretary said: "Either a consultation is open – or the government has already made up its mind what it wants to do, and is simply going through the motions."

"Whatever happens, the NPC will continue to campaign for a tax-funded care system, as the only fair and realistic solution to the problems."

As part of the new government, Guy Opperman,



The government has promised yet another consultation on the issue of social care funding - the tenth in 12 years. This suggests there will be even more delay before government tackles the crisis in the system
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the MP for Hexham has been appointed as the new Pensions' Minister replacing Richard Harrington.

The NPC has already requested a meeting with the new minister and will report back shortly.

The situation in social care is more complicated, as the former care minister, David Mowat (who suggested families needed to do more to provide care for their loved ones) lost his seat in the election, and the government has yet to appoint his successor.

Moreover, in Theresa May's first period as Prime Minister she downgraded the role from Minister of State to Under Secretary of State.

Given the crisis in social care, the issue should really now be dealt with at Cabinet level.

A copy of the NPC's more detailed Post-Election Analysis briefing paper is available on www.npcuk.org.



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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. More details to follow

NPC Recruitment Week

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

Pensioners' Parliament 2018

12-14 June, Winter Gardens, Blackpool. A draft programme will be available towards the end of the year. Tickets will be on sale shortly

Join the NPC

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

Storms in Blackpool can't deter campaigners

Torrential wind and rain battered Blackpool at the start of this year's NPC Pensioners' Parliament, but campaigners were undeterred as they marched through the town centre.

A packed Pavilion Theatre heard speakers at the opening rally raise issues about intergenerational fairness, the importance of meals on wheels, the scandal of frozen pensions, the crisis in social care and the impact of austerity on disabled people.

Day two included sessions on housing, the impact of Brexit on older people, the future of state and occupational pensions, health and social care, public transport and how to build local pensioner groups.

After a successful social evening, delegates returned for the final session which looked at how the Pensioners' Manifesto could be taken forward with the new government over the next few years.

Ron Douglas, NPC President said: "This was a difficult event to organise, seeing how the election clashed with our programme, but it has been widely described by many delegates as one of the best in recent years."

"Our job is to double our number for next year."

A detailed report of the three day event will be available shortly at www.npcuk.org.

Next year's Pensioners' Parliament has been set for 12-14 June 2018.

Elder abuse = hate crime

Figures released on UN World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 14 June showed that just 0.7% of all crimes against older people in the UK end in a conviction.

The charity, Action on Elder Abuse (AEA) said the figures pointed to clear institutional ageism, with too many crimes being seen as a social problem instead of a criminal one.

Gary Fitzgerald, AEA Director said: "Commit a crime against someone because of their age and you will probably get little more than a slap on the wrist."

"This needs to change and the impact of the crime can in some instances lead to admission into care or even death."

"This needs to be recog-

nised in law as a hate crime," he added.

BBC research has also shown that more than 23,000 allegations of abuse have been made against carers working in people's homes across the UK in the last two years.

Official figures recently revealed that up to 11,000 care home residents were not being properly fed, or left without food and drink.

Older people are also often actively harmed, often by those who are meant to be caring for them or are increasingly targeted by those who are behind financial scams.

For every instance of financial abuse that comes to light, 24 cases are thought to go unreported.

Visit elderabuse.org.uk.

Tax bills rise for over 65s

Pensioners are reported to be paying almost a third of their income in tax, according to the latest figures from the Office of National Statistics.

The bill is made up of direct taxes which includes income tax and council tax, costing an average £3,050,

and indirect taxes which include VAT, insurance premium tax and vehicle excise duty which cost an average of £4,360.

Dot Gibson, NPC Deputy General Secretary said: "All pensioners pay indirect taxes and around half still pay income tax, so when some in the media argue that older people are somehow getting something for nothing - it's complete nonsense."

As well as paying tax, the older generation also contributes in excess of £40bn every year more than the cost of pensions and benefits through volunteering and unpaid caring.

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