



Campaign!

Fighting for the rights of older people

NPC
Marchmont
Community
Centre, 62
Marchmont
St, London
WC1N 1AB.

Tel: 020-
7837-6622

Email: in-
fo@npcuk.org
Web:
npcuk.org

Facebook:
@NPCUK
Twitter:
@NPCUK

11th hour TV licence protests target Downing Street & BBC

National Pensioners' Convention members turned out across the country on Thursday (30th July) to protest at the axing of free TV licences for all over 75's.

They tore up their TV licences and waved banners in London, Newcastle, Oxford, and Norwich to try and get the government to stop the BBC imposing the £157.50 licence fee on our oldest citizens from this Saturday, 1st August.

Despite the coronavirus threat, they put on their masks and braved protests at the gates of Downing Street and outside BBC regional offices this morning, with more planned for Liverpool and Belfast in the run up to Saturday.

Jan Shortt, General Secretary of the NPC said: "Thank you so much to the many NPC members who supported our protests across the country today at the unjust scrapping of free TV licence for all over 75's! The fittest and most able came out of lockdown to show their anger and disgust at the axing of this vital universal entitlement – a particularly cruel thing to do during the pandemic, when many isolated older people are still afraid to go out. Jan added: "The NPC wants to thank Lord Foulkes and members of the House of Lords for making a final attempt to get the government and the BBC to find a way of retaining the free licence for all those over 75. We can only hope that the Prime Minister and the BBC Director General will heed all of our calls and find a way to reverse this decision which will cause so much distress to our oldest and most vulnerable." *Pictures and reports from all regional protests will be posted soon.



Downing Street



BBC Newcastle



Bonn Street, Oxford

New report makes powerful case for National Care Service

The NPC has launched a radical new report outlining how a National Care Service can heal our ailing and crisis-hit care sector.

Goodbye Cinderella: A New Settlement for Care Services—Moving Forward from the Pandemic, was produced by the NPC Health and Care Working Party's following a year of investigation, as well as consultation with NPC members on how they envisage reform of the care sector.

The result is a comprehensive report with 15 key recommendations include the new NCS, a high-quality, fully funded, and free at the point of need for all, with the service user at its heart. The NPC consulted their membership on what they wanted to see as an all-round quality care service in response to the already serious failings of the country's broken and chronically under-funded social care system.

But the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, and the tragic toll it has taken on the oldest and most vulnerable in our society – nearly 20,000 deaths in care homes alone by June – has starkly exposed the urgent need for reform now.

The NPC's Goodbye Cinderella report not only reveals the issues facing the care system, it also details what is required to instigate radical change.

Through 15 comprehensive recommendations* it outlines a blueprint for a National Care Service that will meet the needs, not only of this generation and those to come, but will also be beacon for care everywhere.

Care sector in crisis

NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said, "After everything the country has suffered through this horrific virus, the time has come to set aside years of procrastination over the reform of our 'Cinderella' care system that has been neglected, and starved of resources until it is on its knees.

"This report, the result of our specialist NPC Health and Care Working party, chaired by Dr Jean Hardiman-Smith, is the first serious step towards a national debate on genuine reform of our essential care services, which are just as important as our National Health Service, into an



offering that is worthy of every one of us. "The NPC is now inviting the Government to hold urgent cross-party talks, as promised by the Prime Minister in the Queen's Speech, with the NPC and other stakeholders who support serious reform for the provision of care." To obtain a copy of Goodbye Cinderella: A New Settlement for Care Services, please complete and return the form on page 2, along with payment of £2. + postage.



Risks posed by e-scooter trials raised with Transport Minister

The NPC is writing to Transport Minister Grant Shapps to express concern over the new rental e-scooter trials which started in early July.

The NPC fears this potential first step to legalising e-scooters on our roads poses a serious risk to senior citizens and the disabled without adequate infrastructure and policing.

Silent motor hazard

Although it remains illegal to use privately owned e-scooters on UK roads, they are widely seen on roads and pavements in cities and towns across the country, seemingly without fear of prosecution. The same applies to the use of rental bikes in cities, with people riding them illegally on pavements.

Many older people report near misses with e-scooters, which they can't hear coming up behind them because of the near silent electric motors. The NPC is now calling for an urgent review of the decision by the Department of Transport (DfT) to introduce the 12-month e-scooter trials until a clear infrastructure is in place to police regulations on their use. NPC Vice-President

and Transport Adviser Peter Rayner says the organisation has already expressed concerns over the use of e-scooters and other micromobility vehicles in its evidence to the DfT's Future of Transport Regulatory Review, which closed on Friday, 3rd July. He commented: "The effectiveness and safety of any regulation of e-scooters on roads, cycle paths or indeed pavements will be dependent on appropriate infrastructure being provided by the highway authority. Without such infrastructure, the Future of Transport Regulatory Values are likely to be seriously undermined."

Mr Rayner said the NPC has received reports from members who are afraid to use pavements because of the illegal use of e-scooters which often travel well above the 4mph speed limit for legal micromobility vehicles.

He commented: "The NPC appreciates the Government's desire to look at alternative, environmentally-friendly forms of transport, particularly at the moment to reduce pollution in our towns and cities. However this trial may send the wrong signal to the public on e-scooters before the correct infrastructure is in place to ensure their safe use."

NPC flags triple lock & pension age fears

Threats to the triple lock which safeguards future state pensions increases and the planned rise in the state pension age remain serious concerns for the NPC.

General Secretary Jan Shortt has written to both the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak on the triple lock, and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Theresa Coffey on the pension age, which is due to rise to 66 in October. Letters were also sent to the Shadow Ministers on both issues. Jan wrote to Rishi Sunak: "Scrapping the triple lock will cause hardship now and to future generations of pensioners... we wish to build on the current state pension so everyone has a comfortable retirement." She asked Theresa Coffey to suspend the next retirement age rise and work on a strategy to help young people who are out of work due to the COVID-19 crisis to be brought back into employment. Although we have yet to hear from either Theresa Coffey or the Chancellor, Shadow Secretary of State for Work & Pensions, Jonathan Reynolds, has responded and is interested in staying in touch to look at all pensions issues in the future.

Psychology survey closing date

The Royal College of Psychiatrists and the NPC are working together on a survey to gauge the mental health issues older people may be dealing with, particularly during the Coronavirus lockdown.

The questionnaires were sent out last month and we will be resending it to members during August. **Can you please complete and return your forms by Friday 11th September, 2020.** Your answers will help the Royal College to make the case for more investment in support services for older people.

Please be assured that we do not require your name and your answers will be completely anonymised. When completed, please return the form, in complete confidentiality, to info@npcuk.org.uk or by post to: NPC, Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AB

Mind the digital gap—it's a lottery

Not a postcode lottery but a UK nation lottery, depending whether you live in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland as far as government digital inclusion policies and help to get online are concerned.

This is a key finding of a survey being carried out by the NPC's Digital Working Party (DWP) whose draft final report with recommendations for an NPC campaign to address the gaps and shortfalls will be discussed at its September meeting.

In response to COVID-19 the Welsh government has given an extra £850,000 for free tablets for care homes and training for more 'digital champion' volunteers. A recent survey of NPC members found 67% of non-computer users would take up free training if offered. As a result, it hopes to set up a pilot with an NPC region to become a partner of the Good Things Foundation (GTF) charity which offers free training (can be on the phone), and access to free computers and tablets. Any region interested in becoming a pilot please contact DWP chair Jenny Sims, C/O the NPC: 020 7837 6622 or info@npcuk.org. Meanwhile, to find out where you can get free individual training near where you live, contact the GTF: 0114 349 1666 or visit the website: www.goodthingsfoundation.org

Jenny Sims, Chair, NPC Digital Working Party

JOIN THE NPC & GET YOUR VIEWS HEARD

If you or your group would like to join the NPC please contact us at info@npcuk.org.uk. We will be happy to provide more information on the NPC. During lockdown, NPC staff continue to work at home on your behalf. Please let us know if you have any news or issues you want us to look into. We would like to thank all our members and affiliates who have already paid their 2020 fees to support our work—it is much appreciated!

Goodbye Cinderella Order Form

"The set of recommendations for reform set out by the NPC in this report and supported by well referenced arguments and data are a fantastic road map for the future which I wish politicians and public alike would get behind."

"Let us move towards a national care service with national standards of care and registration for staff, tax funded, working with the NHS, with the capacity to provide services to all those with needs and fully integrated with housing and preventative services."

Professor David Oliver

"GOODBYE CINDERELLA" ORDER FORM

Name:.....

Address:.....

No. of copies required:.....

Cost: 1 booklet £2 plus p&p (£0.75)
5 booklets £8 plus p&p (£1.75)

**Please make cheques payable to NPC and return to:
NPC, Marchmont Community Centre,
62 Marchmont Street, London, WC1N 1AB**

**T: 020-7837-6622 E: info@npcuk.org
W: www.npcuk.org**