



# Campaign!

Fighting for the rights of older people

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## Marvellous Margaret & Tom — still doing their bit!

**A**ge is no barrier when it comes to joining the national effort to support our NHS and care heroes battle Covid-19.

Nonagenarians Captain Tom Moore and Margaret Payne have raised millions by stepping out—and up—in support of NHS charities. Captain Tom, who will be 100 on April 30, wanted to raise £1,000 by walking 100 laps of his Bedfordshire garden. **At the last count an astonishing £28million has been pledged by supporters around the world.**

Margaret, 90, has so far raised £270,000 by climbing the stairs of her home in Sutherland 282 times. That's the equivalent of climbing the nearby Scottish peak, Suilven, which stands at 2,398 feet!

You can donate to Tom's fund at: [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com) or Margaret's, at [www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com](http://www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com) Well done to both of you!



## Never Again!

**Government must act to avert another Covid-19 type tragedy striking our NHS & Care Services**

**T**he NPC is appealing to the Prime Minister and the Health Secretary to ensure our NHS and Care Services never again have to face a crisis like the Coronavirus with such a tragic lack of resources.

Jan Shortt, General Secretary of the NPC, has written to both Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Health Secretary Matt Hancock asking that they 'take the opportunity to lead the Government on a different course' to the one facing our care services before the Covid-19 reached the UK.

In her letter to Mr Johnson, (right) she said: "A decade of chronic underfunding of the NHS, local government and care providers is the responsibility of the current government and the decisions taken during that time have, as we now see, come home to roost."

"The fragmentation of NHS and care services has underpinned the way in which both have been woefully unprepared to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. As a survivor of COVID-19 yourself, you have had



first-hand experience of the wonderful people who work in our NHS who without hesitation always put patients first. The loss of life cannot go unanswered and we believe you know the right thing to do now. "The NPC asks you to lead the government on a very different course to that taken prior to COVID-19 reaching the UK."

**There is an opportunity now to make a huge difference to health and care services and invest in the future."**

The NPC also fears that the Government's 'care and concern for the elderly and vulnerable has somewhat shifted' in the course of their approach to tackling the pandemic. Under-reporting of deaths in care homes and lack of PPE and testing for those working in a care setting compounds these fears.

The NPC is calling for an urgent conversation with the Prime Minister and the Health Secretary to discuss proposals for a new, 'holistic' and fully funded strategy for the NHS, local government and charities with public service records, that includes fully funding a National Care Service free at the point of need, through general taxation.

To read the letters in full visit [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)

## Generations United



for the

**NHS**

And all our wonderful

**Care Workers & Key Workers**

The National Pensioners Convention is united with the whole country in supporting our fantastic NHS, care and key workers during the Coronavirus crisis.

**Thank you!**

**Thank you to all our NHS, Care & Key Worker Heroes**

**O**ur wonderful NHS staff, care workers and key workers have been on the frontline of this awful pandemic from the start. The NPC wants to take the opportunity to say a big 'thank you' to them all. We are continuing to highlight the problems they face, whether they are NHS medics, staff and care workers, or key workers like supermarket staff, postmen, bin men, and bus drivers—in fact all those working to help others at this time. **We have had requests for a window poster showing the NPC support for these heroes and have sent out the A4 version pictured above.** If you would like us to send you a copy to print out at home, just email [info@npcuk.org](mailto:info@npcuk.org). Share it as far as you can in safety. NPC staff are working from home to continue keeping you updated. Stay safe and well!

## **Mobility Pass win for Notts campaigners**

**NPC members in the East Midlands are celebrating winning a long-running campaign to restore the Nottingham Mobility Pass to 24-hour use.**

More than 1,000 people responded to a council consultation on the issues, to make the case for retaining 24 hour free bus and tram travel for older people.

The council proposed restricting free travel for the age group to outside rush hour periods - for example preventing older people from travelling until after 9.30am. Campaigners argued about the need for many people with disabilities to get to work, or attend volunteering placements, or college and school, as well as

medical appointments.

The council finally withdrew the Mobility Pass restriction, and campaigners now look forward to taking full advantage of free bus and tram travel once the Covid-19 lockdown ends.

### **Questions on Cuts**

The campaign group now plan to hold a public meeting to press the local authority on a date for the restoration of free travel, and to ask why they chose to introduce the restrictions in the first place.

They intend to ramp up pressure on the council to put properly funded services for Nottingham residents first and foremost on their list of priorities.

## **Call to scrap pension triple-lock to cover Covid-19 costs is 'ill-judged'**

**The NPC is concerned at the timing and strategy behind the latest proposal by a UK economic 'think-tank' to scrap the state pension triple-lock.**

The suggestion that the triple-lock - which protects the level of the UK state pension - should be scrapped, was published by the Social Market Foundation (SMF) last week. It came out on the same day as official figures revealed the tragic scale of Covid-19 infection and fatalities among the elderly and vulnerable in the country's care homes.

### **'Good reasons for triple-lock system'**

The NPC believes the SMF think-tank's briefing paper\* is ill-timed and ill judged, and is in danger of creating further inequality in society and within the pensioner population. NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: "The issue of pensions is a complicated one and there are very good reasons for the triple-lock system being in place. **The 'think tank' which proposes that pensioners lose all or a proportion of it have little understanding of life for older people in the UK.** We believe that to raise this now is ill-timed and ill-judged whilst there is loss of life across generations. The NPC will respond to any future proposals when they become clearer with evidence in support of the triple-lock with a more soundly-based indexing system applied equally across the board." The State Pension Triple-Lock is a mechanism that sets a minimum amount by which State Pension payments increase - it means pensioners' incomes rise by a minimum of the rate of inflation, or the rate of wage growth, or by 2.5%. \*Social Market Foundation—[www.smf.co.uk/press-release-scrap-pensions-triple-lock-coronavirus/](http://www.smf.co.uk/press-release-scrap-pensions-triple-lock-coronavirus/)

## **NPC Digital Working Party**

**Being online can help combat lockdown loneliness**



**Some NPC members would take up offers of training to help them get online if it were free and easily accessible, according to a survey carried out by the NPC's Digital Working Party (DWP) into use of computers and internet access.**

This will be explored at the DWP's first virtual meeting on 7th May when a full report on the survey findings by WP member David Briggs will be discussed and actions recommended. **COVID-19 has shone a spotlight on the many problems facing older people who are not online.** The lockdown has increased their loneliness and isolation, and made the need to support those who would like help, more urgent than ever. Self-isolation and social distancing has also made it more difficult for them to shop for groceries if they can't order online, or to keep in touch with families and friends if they can't use Facebook or other Social Media platforms. On the other hand, those who do have internet access report how valuable being online has been at this time. Discussions have already begun between the DWP and The Good Things Foundation, who provide free help and support to vulnerable and older people through their Online Network Centres throughout England and via partners DigiCommunitiesWales, to see how we might work together. [www.goodthingsfoundation.org](http://www.goodthingsfoundation.org)

## **NPC Annual Convention will return in June 2021**



**Southport Theatre and Convention Centre has already put the next NPC Annual Convention in the diary for June 2021.** Our much anticipated 2020 event had to be cancelled this June due to the restrictions on public events caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. However plans are already in place for the Convention to be held at our new venue on The Waterfront in Southport (above) - details coming soon. NPC Vice-President Peter Rayner said: "We were very disappointed that the Convention had to be cancelled this year, but we are looking forward to its return in 2021."

## **Media report on NPC fears over care homes tragedy**

**The Coronavirus is taking a particularly devastating toll on the oldest and most vulnerable in our society**

NPC members have been communicating their experiences and concerns to us as Covid-19 has spread across every region of the country. Along with the rest of the nation, you have been shocked and frustrated by the lack of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and testing for staff and patients in our hospitals, our care homes and across the entire care sector.

**The NPC is campaigning to make your voices heard at the highest level, writing to the Government and reporting to the UK media.** General Secretary Jan Shortt has been interviewed by The Times, The Daily Mirror, The Daily Express, The Daily Mail, The Evening Standard, as well as BBC Television and Radio. NPC Manchester member Derek Barton appeared on Granada TV News to talk about caring for

family in the crisis while suffering from a range of health conditions himself.

Jan Shortt said: "We have conveyed the NPC's serious concerns about the affect on older people of this horrible pandemic. **"The media reported our comments on the enormous scale of the tragedy unfolding in our care homes as a result of the Coronavirus. This pandemic should and could have been avoided, or at the very least mitigated against.** But sadly, social care in the UK has been in crisis for a long time, caused by chronic underfunding. COVID-19 has impacted on this already critically unprepared service provision to a disastrous degree, causing untold grief and pain to patients, their families and the staff who are dedicated to looking after them. Our view that the Government must urgently act to support front line staff in care homes and hospitals has been widely reported—we hope they now take action."