

Campaign!

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

Care conference excludes NPC

On Friday 19 February, health secretary Andy Burnham held a special conference to look at the future of care services and how they could be funded.

The event had been hastily arranged following an argument between the two main political par-

ties over the breakdown of private talks which had aimed at reaching a consensus on the issue before the general election.

Despite requests prior to the event to attend, the NPC was not invited to take part - and no pensioners were present.

A statement from the conference declared that there

was growing support for all over 65s to pay a proportion of their assets or savings in exchange for free care.

But Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "This conference was a complete sham - with not one real pensioner present to give their views."

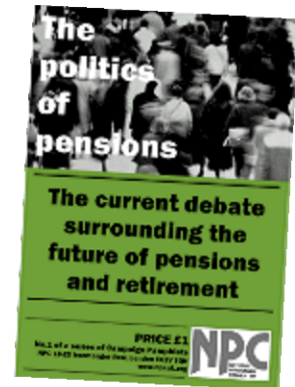
"What we need is a care service that is of the highest quality and funded through general taxation."

Average nursing home costs in 2008 were £24K a year

NPC launch new pamphlet on pensions

The NPC's new pamphlet for 2010 is the first in a series of publications which aim to give campaigners the arguments they need to make the case for a decent state pension.

Full of facts and figures; *The Politics of Pensions* has a foreword by Rodney Bicker-



staffe and is essential reading for all those demanding a higher state pension.

Order your copy today priced £1 from the NPC.

This new pamphlet uncovers the failure of means-testing, the weakness of the private pensions industry, the truth about National Insurance and the need for a state pension set above the poverty level
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Thousands expected for 10th April demo

Plans are now well under way for the major national demonstration in defence of the welfare state and public services, the NPC can reveal.

Thousands of pensioners, trade union-

ists, carers, health workers, disabled campaigners and the unemployed are expected to take part.

Coaches are being organised from across the country and the event is expected to attract

considerable publicity just weeks before the general election.

Joe Harris, NPC vice president said: "All parties need to know the welfare state shouldn't be made to pay for the mistakes of unregulated bankers."



Make sure you sign the online petition at:
<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/10-4-10demo/>

National Pensioners Convention

19-23

Ironmonger Row,
London EC1V 3QN
T: 020-7553-6510
www.npcuk.org



Campaign Dates

Defending the Welfare State and Public Services

10 April 2010

National march and rally in central London, with a range of guest speakers, music and entertainment. Organised by the NPC, trade union movement and other carers', disabled and professional organisations. Assemble at 12 noon at Temple Place, Embankment with a rally at 2pm in Trafalgar Square. More details available shortly.

Annual Pensioners' Parliament

8-10 June 2010

Winter Gardens, Blackpool. Question Time with MPs and debates on pensions, care, concessionary travel, age equality, sheltered housing, ageism and the media, pensioners across Europe, and the ageing society. Tickets priced £3.

Millions angry at 0% SERPS rise

Millions of pensioners are angry at the Chancellor's decision in the December pre-Budget report to freeze this year's increase in SERPS and deferred state pensions.

Tucked away in the detail of the pre-Budget document was the announcement that for the first time ever, the annual increase in the state pension would not be equally applied to additional pen-

sions such as Graduated Pension or SERPS.

Those who have opted to defer taking their state pension will also miss out on the usual 10.4% increase.

For many pensioners, their state second pension provides a much needed supplement to the pitifully low basic pension.

At a time when the costs of living are beginning to rise, this decision means that many

older people will be getting an increase in their state pension that is well below inflation.

Frank Cooper, NPC president said: "It was a shabby tactic by the Chancellor to hide his decision not to uprate all elements of the state pension."

The NPC has produced a letter, available on request, that can be sent to the Chancellor calling for him to reverse his decision.

NPC meet with Payments Council

Last month we reported the NPC's public criticism at the Payments Council's decision to phase out the use of cheques by 2018.

Following this publicity, the Council asked to meet with the Convention to discuss their proposal.

At the meeting they confirmed that before cheques could be withdrawn there would need to be a suitable paper-

based alternative that was being used by a significant number of people.

The head of the Payments Council, Paul Smeed also confirmed that the NPC would now be included in any future consultations on the subject.

In addition, he was keen that the views of pensioners were fed into the discussions and agreed to organise workshops for older people to

give their views.

Syd Ashby, NPC vice president said: "The Payments Council have now recognised that they must listen to the voices of older people when it comes to the issue of cheques."

"We must ensure that we maintain an easy to use paper-based payment system that enables pensioners to manage their finances without any undue stress."

NPC get offer to sit in HoC

The leader of the House of Commons, Harriet Harman has recently told MPs that Parliament should make itself more accessible to the people as a way of improving the public's opinion of politicians.

In her speech Ms Harman said: "Progress has been made on getting greater public involvement in and understanding of this House.

That has come about through a big improvement in our education and information programmes, and by allowing the UK Youth Parliament to meet in this Chamber.

I hope we can build on that by letting other organisations, for example, *the pensioners annual convention*, to meet in our Chamber when we are not sitting."

The NPC has written to Ms Harman asking to discuss how we might be able to take up her offer.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive this bulletin please send their email address to the NPC