

Campaign!

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

Minister says 'better off' should pay fare

Transport secretary, Phillip

Hammond, has suggested that 'better off' pensioners should

pay their own bus fare, rather than use their free bus pass, as a way of helping out the public finances.

His statement came just days before the Department of Transport announced it was considering raising the age of eligibility for a free bus pass from 60 to 65 before the planned change in 2020.

To make matters worse, some senior cabinet ministers are also thought to favour means-testing concessionary travel, and raising the age of eligibil-

ity to 65 sooner than was expected in 2020.

Peter Rayner, NPC vice president said: "The government has

stated that it will not remove the right to free bus travel after 9.30am, but that does not mean that schemes offering more generous concessions are safe from the threat of cuts."

"We must campaign to defend the existing concessions wherever we can."

In a recent meeting with the transport minister, Norman Baker, the NPC argued for the bus pass to be valid in all parts of the UK and to double as a senior rail card.

Further meetings are planned.

See the notes of the meeting with the minister at npcuk.org

Lower CPI index for all pensions

Just two months after taking office, the Coalition government has announced it intends to reduce future pension increases in the state, public and private pensions.

After the emergency budget on 22 June, it emerged that from 2012 the measure of inflation for the basic state pension would no longer be the Retail Price Index (RPI), but the lower Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Before then, the government announced that the state second pension would also be indexed to the CPI - along with millions of public sector occupational pensions.

But weeks later, on 14 July, the government went a stage further and announced that CPI would also be applied to 60% of private sector final salary pensions where the



Linking the state pension to the CPI will do nothing to raise it above the official poverty level - now estimated at £171 a week © NPC

rules did not specify a RPI increase.

Frank Cooper, NPC president said: "This change affects virtually every existing and future pensioner and must be resisted."

The NPC is now co-ordinating a campaign against this proposal.

HOW CPI WOULD DAMAGE YOUR STATE PENSION

(How a single basic state pension of £97.65 a week could be uprated)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
RPI	101.75	105.20	108.35	111.80	115.60	119.65
CPI	100.75	103.35	105.10	107.10	109.25	111.45

National Pensioners Convention

19-23

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



Campaign Dates

NPC Regional Meetings

During 2010 the NPC will be staging a series of open meetings in every region of the UK. Details are now available at npcuk.org

CSR Demo

20 October 2010

The NPC is leading a protest on College Green, Westminster at 12noon to protest against cuts in welfare and public spending expected to be announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review

NPC Lobby

27 October 2010

Theme: Higher Pensions and Better Care: Protest at 12 noon outside Parliament, Rally at 1-2pm, Westminster Central Hall followed by a lobby of MPs to be arranged. Please put this date in your diary. More details will follow shortly

Question Time breakthrough...

Following this year's Pensioners' Parliament, the NPC informed the makers of the BBC Question Time programme that if an invitation to appear on the show was not forthcoming, the Convention would organise a demonstration outside BBC headquarters.

As a result of hundreds of letters and emails being sent, the producers recently contacted the NPC

and agreed that the NPC would be invited to appear on the programme, around the time when the impact of the government's planned cuts were affecting older people's services.

This is expected to be in the late Autumn.

Key to the BBC's change of heart was the recognition that older people had a right to be represented by those they had chosen - rather than those picked

by government or professionals speaking on their behalf.

Neil Duncan-Jordan, NPC national officer said: "It has taken nearly two years to get to a position where the BBC are now ready to invite us onto Question Time."

"This is important because the show will help raise the NPC's profile as the campaigning voice of older people."

More details to follow.

Campaign to protect the WFA

The NPC has launched a new campaign in Parliament to protect the Winter Fuel Allowance (WFA).

NPC supporting MP, Kelvin Hopkins, has tabled early day motion 481 calling on the government to maintain the WFA at the current level of £250 for those households aged under 80 and £400 for the over 80s.

Pension minister, Steve Webb has already told the NPC that the Coalition government intends to cut the payment, despite a record 49% increase in the scale of winter deaths amongst pensioners last year.

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

Syd Ashby, NPC vice president said: "Three million pensioner households are already facing fuel poverty and cutting this allowance will be disastrous."

Supporters should contact their MPs and ask them to sign EDM 481.

Social care faces massive cuts

Social care providers are concerned about maintaining quality of services against a backdrop of rising costs and downward pressure on fees, according to new research from Pricewaterhouse Coopers.

The report entitled "Fair care crisis?", found that 80% of care providers think that the quality of care services will suffer due to cost reduc-

tion measures.

Adding to the concern, only 28% indicated that they knew a lot about future policy and regulation.

The survey also revealed a strong desire from providers to have more central and coordinated support from central government.

The report comes just as the government is setting up a commission to look at the funding of care and support.

The commission will report its findings by July 2011, but critics argue its main purpose is to try and find a policy that is acceptable to both parties in the Coalition government.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "We will be asking the commission to look at the need for a National Care Service that provides free care to all in need; paid for through general taxation."