



Campaign!

Fighting for the rights of older people

NPC

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We need a Covid-19 Public Inquiry Now!

'Our voices must be heard' after 100,000 lost to virus

As the UK passes the tragic milestone of 100,000 Covid related deaths the NPC is demanding that the government urgently convene a Public Inquiry.

The public has the right to know why this country has one of the highest Covid fatality rates in the world, with only four nations - US (421,129), Brazil (217,664), India (153,587) and Mexico (150,273) - suffering greater losses of life.

Of those who died here, a staggering 23,081 - a quarter of the total - were residents in care homes (ONS: 10 April 2020 to 22 January 2021). Frighteningly, the rate of care home deaths is rising again with 1,705 notified in the week up to 22 January. **These are not statistics—these are people. They are Mums, Dads, Grandpas and Grandmas, brothers and sisters, friends and colleagues, who have all lost their lives in our 'so-called' modern Western democracy. We must know why the UK is leading the world, not in how many vaccines we are delivering, but in the tragic number of lives lost to Covid.**

The NPC will be writing to the Prime Minister and to all MP's to demand answers through a Public Inquiry. As the generation who has suffered most through this pandemic, we will also be renewing our call for a spokesperson—an independent Commissioner for Older People for England—to join with

the other commissioners of the UK nations, to have our voices heard, now and in the future on policy and practice affecting older people.

Most of the UK's Covid deaths could have been avoided had the government acted more quickly on the scientific and medical advice they were given—we must find out why they did not.

The Prime Minister's promise of an "invisible shield" to protect the elderly and vulnerable during the current Covid lockdown has already failed. The NPC wants a full and public investigation into the actions of the government and those in industry who fell disastrously short in protecting us all. Even now they must reassess their latest decision to delay the second vaccine jab from 21 days to 12 weeks, going against the manufacturers' advice.

Jan Shortt, General Secretary, NPC

NPC Statement on the Rights of Older People, their Health and Wellbeing, January 2021

Older people are individual citizens who deserve to be valued for their contribution to society. We deserve to be listened to, believed, respected and treated with dignity regardless of our characteristics on all issues related to access to, and provision of, services that enable a better quality of life, health and well-being.

New Hope for the New Year – 2021 is a work in progress



The Centre for Ageing Better's new 'age positive' icon.' Artwork by SwaG Design.

It might seem as if not much has changed as we enter 2021.

Despite the very welcome roll out of the Pfizer and the Astra-Zeneca vaccines, most of us are still having to shield or socially distance from family and friends. But there are signs of better times to come—especially with the Centre for Ageing Better's brilliant new age-positive image initiative to tackle negative stereotypes of later life. The Centre, supported by Public Health England, invited designers to rethink the symbols and icons commonly used in public to represent older age groups. The winning entry by SwaG Design gave the current UK road warning sign for older people - a frail and hunched couple - a makeover (left). It's hoped the dancing couple—an expressive and uplifting spin on the outdated iconic image—will help change negative attitudes towards ageing.

***Join us this Monday for FREE 'Connections for All' Webinar — See page 2**

Online or not - Connections for All is a human right!

***Register now for FREE NPC Webinar on Monday, 1st February 2021**

The dangers of ‘digital poverty’ will be discussed at the NPC Connections for All webinar on Dignity Action Day 2021.

The online summit next Monday, 1st February at 11am, brings together an expert panel to consider how we can keep millions of the UK’s oldest citizens connected. Not only will the speakers examine how to help more to get online, they will also look at how to keep those who cannot, or do not want to get online, stay connected with family, friends and services.

Jan Shortt, NPC General Secretary said: “The Covid-19 pandemic has shown how valuable online video apps are in helping older people to stay in touch while they shield at home. But, the NPC believes many are still getting left behind in the ‘digital first’ age. They are often excluded because they either don’t know how to use the technology, or because they simply can’t afford it, or the broadband connection to get online. This webinar marks the



launch of the first part of the NPC’s Connections for All campaign to end digital poverty and exclusion. It will promote computer and internet training for older people, campaign to give them free tablets, and importantly free access to broadband - something

which the NPC believes is a basic human right.” The webinar is the result of research by the NPC Digital Working Party, who found that many older people would use the internet if offered training. The event will also discuss fears over the ‘digital first’ agenda of utility

companies, banks and even GP practices—as we move towards a ‘cashless society.’ Speakers will include: Heléna Herklots, Older People’s Commissioner for Wales; Helen Milner, CEO, Good Things Foundation; Jenny Haskey, CEO, Citizens Online; Roger Jenkins, National Officer, GMB; and Genevieve Lloyd, Campaigns Manager, Which? *To register for the free NPC Webinar, which will also be streamed live on YouTube, visit: www.npcuk.org

Videos aim to dispel ‘fake’ Covid vaccine myths

Two films featuring faith leaders and celebrities are urging people to ignore fake news and take the Covid vaccines when they are offered them.

Bishop Rose-Hudson Wilkin (right) appears in a multi-faith supported film by the race equality think tank, The Runnymede Trust. While actors Meera Syal and her husband Sanjeev Bakshar (pictured below) appear in a sec-



ond film by Citizen Khan creator Adil Ray. Both videos tackle concerns over vaccine uptake in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and aim to dispel myths around the jabs.

Welcoming the videos, NPC Vice President and Chair of the Minority Elders Working Party Ellen Lebethe, said: “The lower uptake of the vaccine by BAME communities is partly due to their experiences of Covid-19 and the disproportionate impact of the virus on BAME people, who continue to be more at risk. It’s important that we understand the different cultural, religious, ethnic and language constraints, norms and practices which may influence



and inform beliefs, attitudes and willingness to take the vaccine. There are also anti-vaccination messages from both inside and outside of these groups.

“We need to offer understanding, support, empathy and a readiness to work together with local pensioner groups and BAME-led community groups to raise awareness, reject fake news and promote uptake of the vaccines.”

NPC re-commits to saving ‘Triple Lock’

The NPC has pledged to defend the ‘triple lock’ guaranteeing state pension increases beyond the next review in 2022. Fears it will be axed were discussed by the NPC Pensions & Incomes WP, and the Executive Committee. The EC agreed to continue our campaign for its retention, with the long term aim being a decent state pension for all. A briefing document on the issue is being prepared.

ANNUAL CONVENTION—SOUTHPORT 2021

It is with great regret that the NPC Executive Committee (EC) has taken the decision to cancel the 2021 Annual Convention in Southport this June. The EC agreed that the health of members is paramount, and with no definitive end in sight to pandemic restrictions, the event could not go ahead. However, plans are in the pipeline for an alternative online event, to be announced soon.