

**A series of
information
sheets for
local
pensioner
groups,
trade union
retired
members'
associations
and NPC
regions**



2019

GUIDANCE NOTES

NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

NPC
NATIONAL
PENSIONERS
CONVENTION

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Introduction

In 1979, a newly retired Jack Jones embarked on creating a national organisation that could represent the interests of Britain's pensioners to the powers that be. Jack's view was based on the belief that if it was vital to have representation when at work, it was equally important to be represented in retirement. With the initial support of the TUC, he worked on a blueprint for an umbrella organisation, made up of affiliated groups, and in keeping with this idea he came up with the Chartist inspired name, the National Pensioners Convention. Over the years, the NPC acquired premises and staff, and grew in size to cover around 1.5 million older people in over 1000 different organisations across the UK. Quite rightly, it describes itself as the country's biggest older people's campaigning organisation. The NPC is a political organisation, rather than a charity, but remains unaligned to any single party and never advises individuals how to vote during elections.

Today, the Convention faces a number of challenges - particularly with the closure of many local pensioner groups and cut backs by trade unions. That is why there is a need to start re-building the organisation at every level of the pensioner movement. This pack of guidance notes is a step along that path.

Many people also ask how the NPC works, or struggle to understand how the annual Pensioners' Parliament fits into the organisation's structure. Some are also unaware of the range of policies that the Convention has or what it stands for. This document also tries to address these concerns.

The aim is to use this information alongside a series of meetings and sessions across the country, at which members can discuss the NPC's structure, understand what it campaigns for and discuss how the organisation can strengthen its position as the campaigning voice of Britain's pensioners.

So let's use the information collected here, share it as widely as possible and make it count.

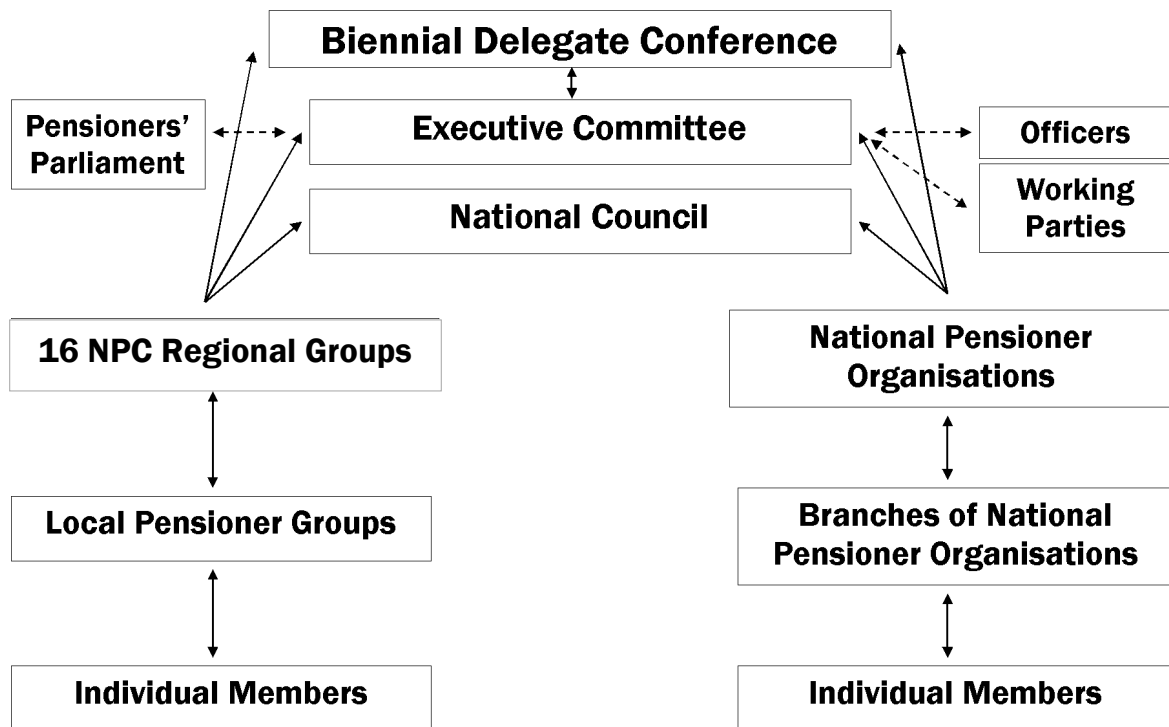
How the NPC works

The NPC's federal structure promotes the principle of delegatory democracy, so that the widest possible number of pensioners can have their views represented and discussed, and in turn, receive information and material, through the structures of their own organisations.

Local pensioner groups and forums are therefore encouraged to affiliate to their NPC regional body and that body has representation on both the NPC Executive Committee (EC) and National Council (NC). They can also join the NPC directly, so as to ensure that they receive all the important information, publications and newsletters.

Likewise, local branches of retired trade unionists and federations can have their views promoted via their national body's delegates to the EC and NC. In addition, major policy issues, changes to the constitution and the election of the NPC's officers are dealt with at the Biennial Delegate Conference open to all recognised national affiliates and regional groups.

The NPC's structure is as follows:



Executive Committee

The NPC's Executive Committee is responsible for overseeing the work of the officers, working parties and general activities of the NPC. It meets every two months and receives reports from the General Secretary, Treasurer, working parties and NPC staff. It is made up of four sections: A delegate from each NPC region, national trade union retired members' section, national pensioner organisation and the 8 NPC officers.

National Council

The NPC's National Council meets twice a year and has a number of specific tasks such as approving the annual audited accounts on the year when the BDC doesn't meet. Like the EC, it is constituted in the same four sections, but with a greater number of delegates, as follows: Up to 4 delegates from each NPC region, national trade union retired members' section, national pensioner organisation and the 8 NPC officers.

Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC)

The BDC is the policy making body of the NPC, where the 8 officers are elected and motions are debated. It takes place every two years and the numbers attending are made up in exactly the same way as the National Council.

Pensioners' Parliament

The annual Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool has been running for well over 20 years, and is open to any pensioner to attend, either as an individual or a delegate from an organisation. It remains one of the most important activities in the pensioner movement's calendar because it opens up the opportunity to build a united pensioners' movement, under the co-ordination and leadership of the National Pensioners Convention and at the same time to involve and give voice to our grassroots campaigning membership.

In other words our parliament reflects the dual character of the NPC; on the one hand a federal democratic structure leading to a policy-making biennial conference comprised of elected delegates from national affiliates and NPC regions, and on the other a social movement with members organised in local action groups and forums as well as local trade union retired members' branches. In effect, the annual Pensioners' Parliament is an advisory body, putting flesh on the bones of NPC policy.

Over the years the parliament has developed a number of key roles:

Debate: providing a forum to discuss ideas and provide an opportunity for grassroots members to give the benefit of their experience

Education: enabling members to find out new information that they can then use in their campaigning

Networking: offering the chance to get together, share ideas and build friendships

Rally: inspiring the movement to continue its united campaign on key issues

NPC Regional Groups

The UK is divided into various regional and devolved nation groups, each with their own constitution and way of working. They have their own affiliated groups and individuals in membership, and meet regularly with a Regional Council and a Regional Executive, along the same lines as the national NPC.

NPC Working Parties

The Executive Committee has, over the years set up a number of working parties to look at specific aspects of the NPC's work, organisation or policy. They are elected every two years, following each BDC and consist of up to 10 members each, excluding any officers or staff. The current working parties are as follows: Finance, Structure, Minority Elders, Women, Trade Unions, Pensions and Income, Health and Social Care and Transport. Copies of each working party's terms of reference and remit are available from the NPC office on request.

Individuals

Individuals can join the NPC directly at a national level, for which they would receive information, and/or at a regional level where they can attend meetings and have their say. In addition, they can also join local pensioner forums or associations.

National Pensioners' Education and Welfare Centre

Separate to the NPC is the National Pensioners' Education and Welfare Centre, which is a formally registered charity, and the NPC has a number of trustees on its board. Further information about the charity, its work and how to join is available from the NPC office or at www.npewc.org.uk

What we stand for

A brief selection of the NPC's main policies are listed here, but further information is available from the NPC office:

Pensions

- The state pension should be set at 70% of the living wage (outside London rate) and above the official poverty level. This is currently around £200 a week in 2018. This should be paid to all men and women, regardless of their National Insurance contributions.
- Every year the state pension (basic and second such as State Earnings Related Pension Scheme SERPS) should rise on line with the best of earnings, the Consumer Price Index, the Retail Price Index or 2.5%.
- The state pension age should remain at 66 in 2020 for both men and women.
- Those women affected by the Pension Act 2011 that have seen their state pension age rise should receive transitional payments, in the same way that those who retired before April 2016 with 35 years National Insurance contributions and also paid into the state second pension should receive the same pension as those with the same circumstances who retired after April 2016.
- Specific groups, such as disabled workers and unpaid family carers should be able to access their state pension up to five years prior to reaching state pension age, without any reduction in value.

Benefits

- All existing universal pensioner benefits, such as the winter fuel allowance, concessionary bus pass, free TV licence for the over 75s and free prescriptions shall be maintained. For example, the government should take back responsibility for funding the over 75s' TV licence.
- Older carers who are already in receipt of their state pension should also be entitled to receive the carer's allowance if they meet the appropriate criteria.

NHS and Social Care

- The NHS should be all inclusive, free at the point of use and include dental eye and elderly care services. The internal market and privatisation shall be ended, and there should be greater democratic control of services by both users and those working in the NHS.
- A National Care Service covering both home and residential care should be created, funded like the NHS through general taxation, free at the point of use and without means-testing.

Elder Abuse

- All forms of abuse against older people shall be recognised in law and carry appropriate sentencing, in the same way that there is specific legal protection for children.
- The NPC's Dignity Code, which sets out the way in which older people in care should be treated, should be incorporated into statutory guidance and regulations for all health and care providers.

Fuel Poverty

- The national scandal of annual winter deaths among older people must be tackled as a matter of urgency by government. This will require a programme to insulate homes, building more suitable properties for older people, raising the winter fuel allowance to £500 per household and tackling the excessive profits of the big six energy companies.

Social Inclusion

- Government, other statutory bodies and business have a responsibility to ensure that access to information, services and discounts are supplied to older people in whatever form is most suited to their needs.
- Age discrimination and the negative portrayal of older people in the media should be challenged at every opportunity.

Transport

- The concessionary bus pass scheme that has been in operation for ten years should be maintained and extended. In particular, the pass should be accepted in any of the four UK countries to enable cross-border travel. There needs to be a recognition of the value of the pass in enabling older people to remain active in their local communities, as well as the economic and health benefits to both the individual and society as a whole that are associated with the concession.
- The number and frequency of bus services needs to be improved, particularly in areas where older people are isolated and lack basic facilities, such as shops, post offices and GP surgeries.
- The bus pass should also be turned into a proxy senior railcard that would entitle the holder to a third off any rail fare.
- Access to Britain's transport system can be challenging for many older people, particularly those with reduced mobility. Proper staffing levels are therefore essential on stations to assist older passengers, as are guards on trains.
- Whilst some older people are confident with new technology, many find themselves excluded by areas such as online and smart phone ticketing. It is vital that paper tickets therefore remain available to those who require them.

Housing

- Tens of thousands of properties need to be built every year for older people in order to meet the current demand and the projected population rise.
- House building, maintenance and adaptations must be based on the Lifetime Homes Standard.
- Local authorities should be enabled to build and repair houses using their own Direct Labour Organisations or other suitable not for profit-based building companies, which provide proper terms and conditions for their staff.
- There should be an end to the 'Bedroom Tax' for all social tenants.
- The current definition of affordable housing is not fit for purpose and further work is needed to produce a credible definition that takes account of local income levels.
- Rent caps should be introduced in both the public and private sector to more accurately reflect local conditions.

Starting a new group

Many groups start as a result of a few people wishing to campaign on important issues – and having a number of enthusiastic organisers is essential for getting things done. This small group will be a Steering Group responsible for organising the first meeting of the new body. Use of emails greatly assists in communicating with each other.

Over the years, pensioners have decided to call their groups any number of names – in order to accurately reflect their local needs. The most common tend to be Action Groups, Associations, Forums or NPC branches. This decision is entirely down to those involved – but the most important thing is that they become part of the nationwide pensioners' movement through the NPC.

There may of course already be an active group in your area that you can join – but if not, talk to your friends and neighbours and see if they would be interested in forming a pensioner group in your area. If you can identify a few experienced and enthusiastic individuals, you have more chance of being successful.

The main purpose of the Steering Group meeting will be to:

- Draw up a list of potential supporters (individuals/groups) that you could invite to an inaugural meeting. Look in the local libraries/council directories, online directories, retired trade unionist branches, Royal British Legion branches, lunch clubs, bowling clubs etc where people might be interested in joining a campaigning pensioners' group.
- Discuss how to set up the group (see a model constitution in this guide).
- Consider the role and activities of the group.
- Make contact with the NPC so that we can offer advice and guidance. It may also be helpful for NPC us to send someone along to talk to your small group of organisers.
- Draw up a timetable leading to a launch date. Create publicity posters and flyers, press releases for the local media. Make sure that you allow time for the publicity to be seen by people and for them to plan ahead to come to the launch meeting.
- Decide how this meeting is going to be financed.

Launching the group

Before you officially launch the new group, make sure you have:

- Booked a decent venue where you can meet – preferably free of charge. Make sure this venue is easily reached by public transport and has suitable access for those with mobility problems.
- Publicised the meeting in local libraries, post offices, community centres, community notice boards, shops etc and informed the local media.
- Organised a guest speaker to talk about the importance of having an active pensioners' group in your area. The NPC will be able to provide someone if required.
- You should also consider whether or not it is possible to provide light refreshments for those who attend.
- Produced an agenda for the meeting that will cover all the business.

You will also need someone experienced to chair the meeting, a draft constitution to propose to the meeting, a minute taker to record any decisions taken and someone to take the names and contact details of those who attend. Having people who can write letters, with access to a computer or photocopying facilities will also be extremely useful.

At the meeting you will need to:

- Enthuse those who attend of the need for such a campaigning group
- Approve a constitution
- Elect a chair, secretary, treasurer and small executive committee.
- Agree to Affiliate to NPC
- Set a date and topic for the next meeting.

Involving everyone

One of the main aims of the group will be to recruit members. You should ensure that the group includes all sections of the older population in your area, including ethnic elders and disabled older people. Remember, the more representative the group – the greater its strength when challenging those in power. Above all, it is important the group is run by pensioners, for pensioners.

Getting and staying active

It is important that groups have something useful to do in order to generate interest, recruit new members and raise funds. Some of the activities you could try include:

- Public meetings – get a guest speaker to address your meeting and let the media know. Holding regular meetings of members with discussions/socials will also help maintain interest.
- Petitions – these provide a great opportunity for getting out on the street and raising your profile with the public.
- Newsletters – these can be as simple or as complicated as you are able to produce, but whatever their style, they are an essential way of keeping people informed of what the group is doing and how they can get involved. Remember to always put the NPC's name and logo on your materials to show that your group is part of the national organisation.
- Lobbying – most groups try to set up regular meetings with their local councils, MPs and other officials to discuss issues of concern.
- Representation – many groups have formal representation on a number of statutory bodies, such as Primary Care Trusts, Passenger Transport Authorities and social services advisory panels. This is a useful way of getting your views closer to those who make the decisions.
- Letters – writing to the local papers is a good and relatively easy way of advertising the group and raising public awareness. Letters can also be sent to local authorities and MPs as part of your general campaigning.

Raising funds

Local groups need money to survive and in order to pay for printing, postage, meeting rooms etc. The main sources of funding can include:

- Membership – fees from your members and affiliated organisations will bring in much needed funds.
- Donations – these can be sought from local organisations, ranging from businesses to trade unions, charities to celebrities. Local charities will most likely have a time schedule for receiving and deciding on grant applications.
- Grants – this guide contains a number of ways in which local groups can apply for grants.
- Fundraising – many groups run raffles and other events to raise funds.

Data Protection

The law has recently changed regarding Data Protection. The NPC has a standard policy which groups can easily adopt. Please contact the NPC to request a copy of the policy.

What happens next?

The information here is not meant to be comprehensive, but it should be enough for you to get started. Use it to guide you through the process and remember that as part of the NPC, we will always be available to offer advice and guidance on any issue you may have. We can arrange for people from other groups to come and talk to your group if you need it, as well as being able to talk to you over the telephone or in correspondence.

Remember, the NPC is Britain's biggest pensioner organisation and it is important that your group is a part of it. Keep in touch and good luck

Model constitution for local groups

Existing groups will already have their own constitution, but this model can be used and adapted as appropriate.

1. Name

The name of the organisation shall be the [to be completed], hereinafter referred to as the organisation.

2. Aims and Objectives

- (a) To promote the welfare and interests of older people within [area covered by the group to be completed].
- (b) To provide a platform where matters of concern to older people can be raised with statutory bodies and others.
- (c) To act as an umbrella body for all pensioners and their organisations when making representations to MPs, MEPs, local authorities and other statutory bodies.
- (d) To be a campaigning but non-party political organisation that is linked to the National Pensioners Convention and supportive of its policies.

3. Membership

Membership of the organisation shall be open to:

- (a) All older people resident within [area to be completed]. The annual fee shall be [amount to be completed].
- (b) Any organisation within [area to be completed] that is interested in the concerns of older people. The annual fee shall be [amount to be completed].

4. Finances

- (a) A bank/building society account shall be opened in the name of the organisation.
- (b) Two signatories shall be required to sign any cheques.
- (c) Audited accounts shall be presented by the treasurer to every Annual General meeting for approval.

5. Meetings

- (a) An Annual General Meeting (AGM) open to all individual members and 2 representatives from each affiliate will be held in [month to be completed] each year.
- (b) The AGM will elect a chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer and [number to be completed] committee members. These posts shall constitute the Executive Committee. Groups should have regard to ensuring that the committee properly reflects the membership in relation to gender, ethnicity and disability.
- (c) There will be at least a further [number to be completed] general meetings of all the membership throughout the year. In between such times, the Executive Committee shall meet as appropriate.
- (d) All members shall receive at least 28 days notice of meetings.
- (e) A quorum for general meetings shall be (10) and for the Executive Committee meetings shall be (5).
- (f) Voting will be by a simple majority unless when seeking to change the constitution; which shall require at least two thirds of those present voting in favour.

6. Dissolution

- (a) At a properly convened special general meeting, the organisation can be dissolved on a two thirds majority of those members present.
- (b) The meeting shall also determine how to dispose of any remaining finances.
- (c) The outgoing secretary will notify the National Pensioners Convention of the decision.

Standing Orders for the conduct of meetings

1. Chairing

The Chair shall be responsible for running and overseeing the meeting.

2. Order of business

The Secretary shall issue the agenda to members at least two weeks prior to the meeting, and any associated papers as soon as practicable.

3. Conduct of business

The Chair shall have power to lay down time limits for items within each section of the Agenda. Any member desiring to speak at meetings shall raise his/her hand and when recognised by the Chair, shall address the meeting. All members shall treat each other with respect at all times and conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity of the organisation.

4. Speeches

Unless waived in advance by the Chair in a particular instance, the following limitations shall apply to speeches: (i) movers of motions shall speak for no longer than three minutes to any one motion; (ii) all other speakers shall speak for no longer than three minutes on any other item (iii) no member shall speak more than once on any one motion or amendment, except that the mover of a motion shall have a right of reply.

Any member may formally second any proposition, but may in that case reserve the right to speak at a later time in the debate.

Visitors and observers who are not members may speak only on the invitation of the Chair.

5. Voting

Where there is a need to take a vote, voting shall be by show of hands. On an equality of voting, the Chair shall declare the question resolved so as to maintain the status quo.

6. Quorum

The quorum for meetings shall be 10 voting members.

7. Motions

Any motions for discussion must have been circulated to all delegates at least 14 days before the date of the meeting.

In line with normal procedure, a motion shall be moved and seconded, before being open for debate. A member seconding a motion or amendment without speaking to it may reserve the right to speak to it subsequently.

No member shall speak more than once to any question, except that the mover of a motion shall have a right of reply, which shall close the debate.

The Chair shall, as far as practicable, call on speakers for and against a motion or amendment. If there is no member wishing to argue the opposite view, the motion/amendment is put to the vote without further debate.

8. Amendments

Where any motion or report has been circulated before or at the meeting, members will be entitled to propose amendments. If, during the course of the meeting, it appears to the Chair that there is a possibility of reaching a consensus or majority view on a form of wording or a proposed course of action, then this may be put to the meeting from the Chair.

9. Points of order

Any member may at any time raise a point of order, which shall take precedence over all other business, and which shall be open to discussion. The point must be raised at the time the alleged irregularity occurred.

10. Points of information

Any member may, with the leave of the Chair, raise a point of information.

11. Ruling of the Chair

If the Chair rises for any reason connected with the proceedings, the member speaking at the time shall cease, and no other person shall rise until the Chair is resumed. The ruling of the Chair on any question under the Standing Orders, or on points of order or information, shall be final unless challenged by a member. The Chair shall then vacate the Chair and such a motion shall be put forthwith without debate. A successful challenge to the Chair's ruling must be supported by a show of hands of two-thirds of the members present at the time of voting.

12. Suspension of Standing Orders

Any of the above Standing Orders may be suspended by the meeting for a specified purpose on a motion to that effect supported by two-thirds of those present and voting by a show of hands. Standing Orders shall again apply immediately the specified issue has been disposed of. Any matters not dealt with in the above Standing Orders shall be governed by the customary procedure at meetings.

Officer job descriptions

Chairperson

- Plan meetings and develop the agenda in conjunction with the Secretary
- Chair meetings
- Make sure that everyone has a copy of the agenda and minutes
- Make sure that all the business is discussed, everyone's views are heard and no one person dominates the meeting
- Make sure that meetings are conducted in an appropriate manner with respect for everyone's opinions and ideas.
- Make sure that any decisions made are clear and unambiguous, written down and appear in the minutes for the next meeting.
- Always declare a conflict of interest in any subject matter where as Chair you might influence an outcome that could be seen as favourable to you and do not vote on that issue.

A chairperson must always be fair, above reproach and serve the best interests of the group he/she is chairing.

Secretary

- Plan agenda for meetings in conjunction with the Chair
- Send out notices for meetings giving date, time and venue
- Take and circulate minutes of all meetings, making sure decisions made are clearly communicated
- Receive and respond to correspondence and other information received
- Arrange activities, events and other group participation and ensuring everyone receives information
- Ensure external groups/organisations know who to contact

The Secretary's role complements the role of the Chair.

The Secretary should always ensure agendas, minutes and other important information is forwarded to members in time for meetings.

Copies of relevant correspondence or papers that require members decisions should always be circulated prior to meetings.

Treasurer

- Collect fees and subscriptions to the group on any given date as determined by the membership/committee
- Keep up to date accounts of income and outgoings
- Ensure receipts are correct and relevant to any agreed claim being made for expenses or other outgoings from the account
- Bank monies as appropriate and request statements of account as necessary
- Ensure accounts are properly audited in time for the AGM each year
- Produce the auditor's report and statement of accounts at the AGM
- Inform members of income and outgoings and current status of accounts
- Advise members on relevant expenditure and availability of funds

The Treasurer should have at least one other signatory on the bank account as a safeguard.

Bank statements should be acquired when necessary to show the income and outgoings of the account.

Most importantly, the Treasurer should be listened to when advising on potential expenditure and whether the account can support those outgoings.

The future of local groups

The NPC is keen for local pensioner groups and regions to discuss this paper and consider ways in which they might be able to improve their activities. For some time the NPC has been aware of the difficulties facing local pensioner groups, and how this has led in some cases to them closing down. Some of the specific problems include:

- Cuts to funding that was previously received from a local authority, which has caused problems in paying for meeting rooms, producing materials etc
- An ageing membership and a lack of new members, with particular problems in getting new officers to come forward
- Existing officers being unwilling to share or enable younger people to come forward and take up positions

Through discussions with local activists, the NPC is seeking to find new ways of tackling these problems. These could include:

- Recognising that everyone has a skill that could be useful to the group, and encouraging that person to get involved. For example, someone who makes things could be asked to do so in order that those items could be sold to raise funds
- Pensioners are extremely active in a whole range of activities every week – from art classes to keep fit, from dancing to playing sport. Pensioner groups need to find ways of linking with these other local groups and organisations – after all this is where pensioners can be found!
- Local carers' groups might also have many older members who would be interested in receiving our information
- There is a growing importance of building a sense of belonging in groups, which can be done through social activities and events
- Retired trade unionists have many skills to offer local pensioner groups, and should be encouraged to get involved wherever they can
- Where possible, opportunities should be taken to recruit new members and to keep them in touch with what's happening through regular meetings and newsletters
- Every year, the NPC stages a number of calendar events which groups can support: Dignity Action Day 1 February, Pensioners' Parliament in June and UN Older People's Day 1 October. National leaflets are produced and groups could arrange to give these out at suitable places. Static demonstrations where people can stand or sit down for brief periods so that photographs can be taken and perhaps gain media interest
- Local retailers, such as Co-op and Waitrose regularly give money to good causes. Please see page 19 for more information.

Where a number of members from a local pensioners' group attend the Pensioners' Parliament, this experience strengthens them individually and also the whole group, because the time spent together on the journey, at mealtimes and in the evenings (especially the social evening) gives them the chance to get to know each other and mull over the day's discussions etc. They feel part of the NPC and have a better understanding of its aims, especially having seen and met pensioners from other parts of the country. We find that some of our local leaders, knowing that their group is short of funds, decide that they have to cut back on the numbers attending the Pensioners' Parliament. However, experience shows that members will pay for their ticket, the fare and accommodation by instalments over the previous, 12 months.

Some of our local pensioner groups have also been finding new ways of getting involved. For example:

- Lambeth Pensioners Action Group: When the Council stopped their grants to local minority elder groups in the borough (eg Caribbean, Chinese) LAMPAG brought all these groups into a campaigning federation.

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- Tendering Pensioners Action Group: Members of TENPAG joined the local Pensioners Forum (a group more directed to social activities) and assisted in taking forward the campaign opposing the cuts.
 - Islington Pensioners Forum: The Forum is accepted by the Council as the borough "hub" working with a local charity, Generation Health, to point older people to the various activities and events in the borough aimed at overcoming isolation.
 - Merseyside Pensioners Convention: held a big meeting to take forward Generations United and is working with a locally-based community film company to take the campaign forward.
 - In Lincoln the pensioners' group meets in sheltered housing lounge areas and this has encouraged some residents to become part of the group.
 - Milton Keynes: arrangements were being made for members to attend a local older people's social activity, with the enthusiastic encouragement of a relatively new member who is a musician.

If any local group is having difficulties they should contact the NPC office for advice and guidance asap.

How to run a campaign

Within the NPC there are years of experience of campaigning and a host of skills that individuals can use to get their message across effectively. Here is a brief guide to running a campaign that's either about a local issue, or part of a wider national campaign:

1. Define your issue

Set a realistic goal for your campaign.

Think of a clear, simple message that communicates your aim.

Does your message have a good ring to it? Can you visualise it on a T-shirt, a banner? Do you like what you see?

2. Gather your evidence

Research the cause you're campaigning for thoroughly.

Gather testimonials about the importance of your cause.

Back up your testimonials with facts (Has the issue been covered by the media - online, offline?

Are there any studies or surveys about your cause?)

Put together a concise objective argument for your cause.

Be prepared to answer difficult questions about the importance of your cause.

3. Find useful allies

Target people who understand your cause or have a connection to it.

Get in touch with organisations set up to help causes such as yours (ask for advice, access to experts).

Get endorsement from a celebrity.

Ask your supporters to sign a petition in favour of your cause.

4. Know who to lobby

Identify your routes of influence.

Use your own contacts to get to the people at the top.

Could your local MP or councillor help? Maybe they're the ones you're lobbying?

Don't get disheartened at the first hurdle, lobbying is hard work!

5. Use a range of tactics

Leaflets, newspaper coverage, a good website and social media are all useful.

BUT... try a little more creativity - what would make your campaign stand out and get people talking?

And finally, don't forget to tell the NPC what you're doing and send us your photos.

For further information visit <https://knowhownonprofit.org/campaigns> or contact the NPC office for advice.

How to get your message across in the media

Many groups complain that their voices are rarely heard in the local or national media, and that when they do appear, their views are either marginalised or patronised. Yet much of modern campaigning is now increasingly played out in the media, and any organisation that seeks to raise public awareness, influence opinion and change official policies must find ways of effectively getting their message across.

News as a product

We consume news everyday through papers, radio and television – but very few of us ever analyse *what* we see, read or hear. We might feel we instinctively know that ‘man bites dog’ is more newsworthy than ‘dog bites man’, but we seldom consider why a story appears and more importantly, why a story doesn’t appear. Moreover, we rarely look at how news is presented or how the media works.

Nevertheless, news stories are as much a product as anything else we might consume. A news item must go through certain stages and treatments before it appears in print, on screen or on the radio, and it often conforms to various constraints and rules.

For example, national TV news items are rarely longer than 3 minutes; within which time there are usually at least two interviews (from opposing perspectives) and a comment from the reporter, along with accompanying pictures. Yet how many issues can be adequately explored and explained in such a short space of time? Likewise, newspaper coverage is limited by available column inches, the paper’s house style and – as with all news stories – whatever else is happening on that particular day.

But probably the most important factors in what events make the news are the values that journalists, editors and producers place on stories, and how those values are based on prevailing ideas of consensus. Often a debate on a particular issue is drawn from within very narrow boundaries of opinion, and more often than not, many newspapers and broadcast media will cover the same stories because they choose what should be reported based on shared ideas as to what is news.

Media Strategy

Before you even begin to issue information or make contact with the media, it is important that you have a clear idea as to what you are trying to achieve. It may sound grand, but a media strategy is actually very simple.

You must consider:

- whether your story is the type that will interest journalists
- the main points you are trying to get over
- which media outlets you are going to contact (TV, radio, newspapers etc)
- who is going to write the press release, make telephone calls and do any interviews

Without this very basic planning, even a good story can fail to grab the journalist’s attention. So it’s worth spending a bit of time thinking about how this work is going to be done. Your first point of contact with the media however, will usually be through a press release.

Press Releases

Journalists are busy people, so the press release that gives all the important facts about a story in a clear and concise way, stands the best chance of success – if your story is considered newsworthy. In general, press releases can be used to give advance notice of an event, report on an event that has taken place or offer comment on something that has happened elsewhere in the news.

Make sure you give the 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when' and 'why' of the story as simply and as early in the press release as possible. For example:

WHO: The Anytown Pensioners' Group
WHAT: will be lobbying the Anytown Council meeting
WHERE: at the Town Hall, Anytown Road
WHEN: at 11am on Tuesday, January 25
WHY: to protest over plans to cut concessionary bus travel for the over 60s

Once you've covered the 'Five Ws' in the first and second paragraph, continue your press release giving more information. News is often about people – so make sure you also include a comment, in direct quotes, from someone who is either involved in or affected by the story. An example would be as follows:

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate use: [Insert date]

Call for a commission to tackle fuel poverty as figures reveal 11 pensioners died every hour last winter

The [insert name of group] has called on the [government/local MP/council] to launch a new fuel poverty commission to urgently address the scale of annual winter deaths among the country's older population.

The call comes as official figures today show an estimated 34,300 excess winter deaths occurred in England and Wales in 2016/17; the second highest number in the last five years. This equates to 9720 more people dying this winter than in 2015/16 and represents a 39.5% increase. In total, the figures represent 285 deaths a day or 11 deaths an hour.

[Insert name and position of spokesperson] said: "Successive governments have simply ignored the problem of winter deaths amongst the older population and seem to have a policy of crossing their fingers and hoping things will improve. Today's figures show that this policy simply doesn't work – in fact things are getting worse. The key to tackling winter deaths is to make sure older people have got a well-insulated, warm home and the income needed to pay the fuel bills. This is a basic requirement of what a decent society should do. A fuel poverty commission should be set up as a matter of urgency with the task of finding solutions to this problem such as rolling out a more effective programme to insulate homes, building more suitable properties for older people, raising the winter fuel allowance and tackling the excessive profits of the big six energy companies."

ENDS

For further information contact [Insert name and phone number]

Some important steps to remember:

- Local groups should appoint a press officer, who ideally has access to email, and can contact the media on your behalf
- Press releases should be typed so that they are easy to read. Try to write in the style of the media eg. look at a story in the local paper and follow how it is constructed
- Date your press release and give time/date from when the information can be used eg. For immediate use: 1 January 2018
- Give your press release a short, snappy headline that sums up what you are trying to say, but don't be surprised if it doesn't get used
- Stress a photo opportunity if there is one and always include a good quote from someone involved in the story
- At the end of the press release give details and telephone number of who to contact if the journalist requires more information. Make sure the person chosen is knowledgeable about the subject
- If possible send press releases via email. Always mark everything for the attention of the Newsdesk unless you have the name of a journalist dealing with the story. If you are holding an event, call the Newsdesks of the local paper, radio and TV station 24 hours beforehand and ask if your event is in their diary and whether they will be covering the story

Giving interviews

If your press release is successful, the journalist will probably want to do an interview with someone from your group. Make sure the person who does this is good at getting your views across. For any interview, it is worth making a few notes – especially if you are doing it over the phone. Never try and make more than THREE points in any interview – and sometimes you may only get the chance to make one comment. If your interview is not going out live on radio or TV, you can always ask to give an answer again if you didn't feel it went very well. Try to relax and be yourself. If you are concerned that the interviewer will edit what you have said, you can always try to give a similar answer to whichever question you are asked. That way, the journalist either has to use what you have said or cut the item completely. Bearing in mind they will have to meet a deadline; in these circumstances your interview is more likely to be used.

Making contacts

Whenever you have dealings with a journalist, ask for their telephone number and if possible, email address. You can then build up a network of contacts and use these the next time you've got a story. The essence of modern journalism relies on people bringing stories to the media's attention. If you give a journalist a good story, they are much more likely to come back to you when they want a comment on another issue. This relationship can be beneficial to both sides: the journalist gets the story done quickly and you get some useful publicity.

Angles and opportunities

Once you've started contacting the media, you will realise that there are many reasons why a story doesn't make it into the paper or onto our screens or radios. The most obvious ones are that there was a better/bigger story happening at the same time or the story wasn't deemed interesting enough.

There are however, some easy ways of getting publicity:

- A stunt or activity that makes a good photo opportunity
- Lobbying/meeting local councillors/MPs
- Writing letters to local papers
- Taking part in local radio phone-in programmes
- Commenting on how national issues will affect local people

Using Social Media

What is social media?

Websites that enable users to create and share content with other users on the internet. The most popular sites are Twitter and Facebook.

What is Twitter?

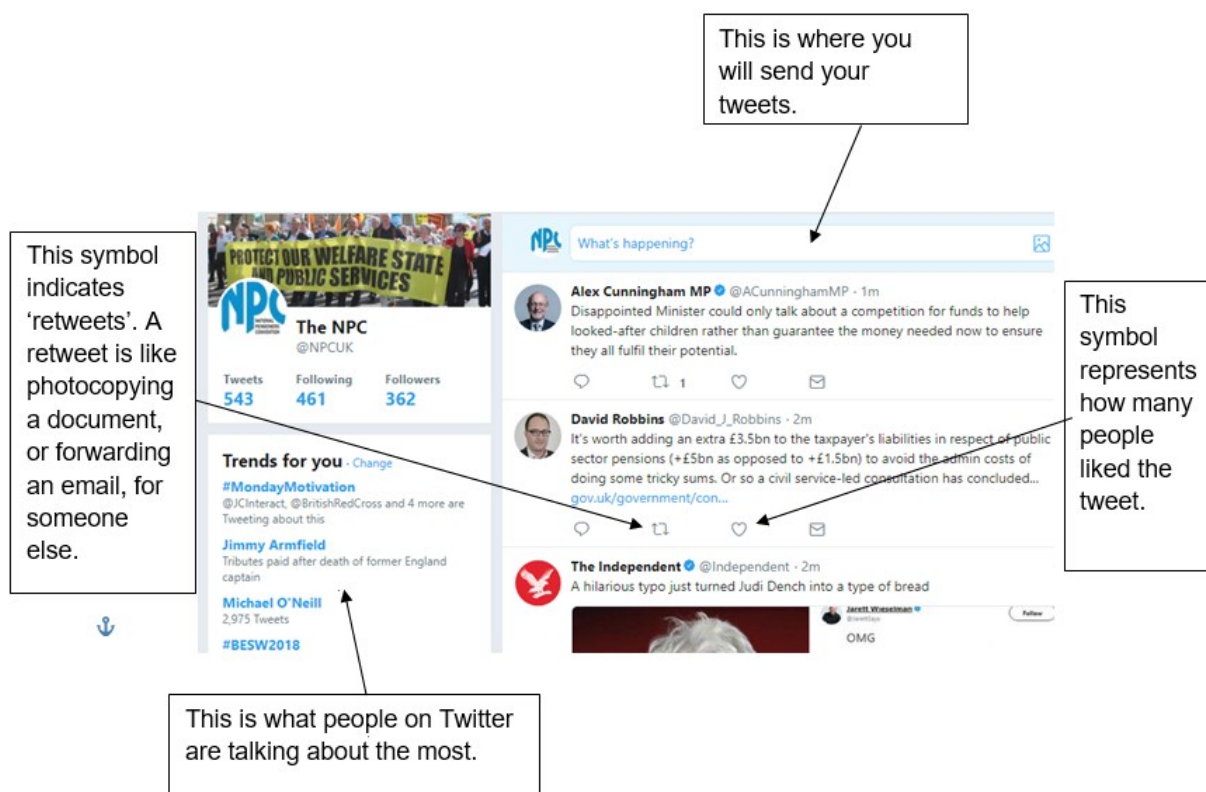
- Twitter allows you to share information with all other users on twitter. Twitter is a platform which lets you write just 260 characters, and share it with everyone else on twitter. It is designed for short quick interactions.
- On Twitter you choose to 'follow' people. When you follow them, their tweets will come up on your Twitter page. For example, we follow a range of news outlets, journalists, academics and politicians. People can too choose to follow your page.

How to set up a Twitter page

Visit www.twitter.com/signup

1. Enter your full name, your email address and a password you would like to use to access your twitter account.
 2. You will then need to choose a user name. Our username is NPCUK. For example, you could choose 'ThamesValleyNPC'
- You are now ready to start tweeting. You can type in names of people you would like to follow.

Example Twitter home page:



What is Facebook?

- Facebook is a social networking website where users can post comments, share photographs and links to news or other interesting content on the internet. Facebook has no limit to how many words or photos you can share.
- Facebook is used to share photos and web articles to all those who 'like/ follow' our page.

How to set up a Facebook page

If you do not have a personal Facebook

1. Visit www.facebook.com/reg/
2. Type in your Name, email address and a password you would like to use.
3. On the left-hand column, click the 'pages link' and then 'create a page'.
4. Type in what you would like to call your page. From here, you can edit the page and add photos to it. Facebook will give step by step instructions on how to add content to the page.
5. To access your page, login in with the email and password you registered with in step one. The page you created will be on the main page on the left hand side.

If you already have a personal Facebook:

1. Login to your Facebook account and follow the above instructions from step 3 onwards.

Example Facebook home page:



Facebook pages look more like a traditional website, in comparison to Twitter. They have links on the left, so you can access various content which has been posted on the page.

How to raise funds for your group

Gaining funding from your local supermarket, bank, building society or the national lottery is a great source of income to fund your local group's day to day activities or a project. Each businesses' terms and conditions vary for who and what they will fund, so it is important to find a business which suits your funding needs. This guide will provide an overview of what funding is available, who can apply and how to put in an application.

Waitrose Community Matters

Each month, every Waitrose branch donates £1,000 (£500 in Convenience shops) between 3 local good causes that customers and staff members choose.

Who can apply? Welfare organisations, community groups, schools or local divisions of national charities.

How do you apply? The programme is a rolling programme and you can apply all year round. Visit your local Waitrose shop and fill in a 'Community Matters' Nomination form. The form will ask the name of your good cause and ask for a short paragraph on what they do.

Example of a successful application for **Waitrose Community Matters**

Name of the good cause.... Islington Pensioners' Forum

What does it do?... Islington Pensioners Forum is a charity championing the rights and dignity of pensioners London wide and nationally with the aims of reducing isolation and loneliness. Through its forum meetings and by sending out monthly newsletters they highlight the issues that affect older people such as social care, state pensions and the NHS. They run free weekly IT classes and activities such as outings, knitting, games afternoon etc, to reduce loneliness and achieve better life satisfaction and psychological well-being among older adults.

Co-op Local Community Fund

Since September 2016, the Co-op has raised more than £20 million for local causes.

Who can apply? Only registered charities can apply to the Co-op fund. If you qualify as one, the Co-op will help, or fully fund, a wide range of projects. However, they will not fund running costs, salaries or projects which are already up and running.

How do you apply? Applications open in the Spring 2018, via www.causes.coop.co.uk

ASDA Foundation

The ASDA Foundation aims to transform communities, improving lives now and in the future. They have a wide range of grants, with their 'Local Impact Grants' being the most relevant to pensioner groups.

Who can apply? Charities, community activities or local good causes can all apply for funding. They will fund a wide range of items and activities from; new equipment for groups, computers to learn new skills, community carnivals/fetes, entertainment for events and food/refreshments for community events. They will also support lunch clubs and Christmas lunches and dinners

How do you apply? You can apply all year round. Visit your local branch and speak to the 'Community Champion'. You will then be advised on how to fill out the application form.

Tesco Groundwork

Tesco funds local charities and projects with grants up to £4,000. Your project can be a stand-alone project or a self-contained part of a larger scheme or part of a phased project.

Who can apply? Grants will be awarded to voluntary or community organisations, including registered charities and local companies. The types of project they fund is very broad, including purchasing material and equipment to help the local community, developing an outdoor space or running a community activity. The grants will even cover costs such as co-ordinators to manage volunteers, staff to lead activities or training sessions, website development for publicity and promotion and workshops. However, they will not fund general running costs or overheads.

How to apply? You can apply all year round. The first step is to find your local Tesco store. You will then be advised to fill out an online application form. Tesco also provide their own guidance notes available on: www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme

Yorkshire Building Society

The Charitable Foundation offers grants of up to £2,000 to registered charities and good causes in local communities across the UK where Society employees and customers live and work. They will not support equipment, expenses, fees, salaries, administration or sponsor events.

Who can apply? Registered charities, good causes and community groups who focus on children and adults with special needs, the elderly or those who are terminally ill.

How to apply? Forms **must** be complete online only. They will not accept paper applications forms or letters. www.ybs.co.uk/societymatters/charitable-foundation/index.html

Santander Community Investment

The Santander Foundation provides grants of up to £5,000 to support knowledge, skills and innovation to give disadvantaged people the confidence to discover and create a new world of opportunities. They will fund complete projects, equipment or materials and part-time staff salaries.

Who can apply? They make grants to UK registered charities and Community Interest Companies

How to apply? You can apply all year round. Simply fill out the application form found in any local Santander branch and post it in the Discovery Grants post box at any branch.

Awards for All, National Lottery

The National Lottery Awards for All programme offers funding from £300 to £10,000 to support what matters to people and communities, focussing on projects which bring people together and build relationships. They will fund staff costs, equipment, expenses, events and much more.

Who can apply? Voluntary or community organisations, registered charities, constituted groups.

How to apply? You can apply all year round by filling the application available online.

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding

Tips for your application

In your application it is vital that you clearly state why your group or project benefits your local community. In addition, it is important to cater your application to what the supermarket wants to fund. For example, ASDA place an emphasis on tackling isolation and loneliness, so it is important you mention how your project or group does this.

Useful contacts

NPC

Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AB

Tel: 020 7837 6622

Email: info@npcuk.org

www.npcuk.org

Facebook and Twitter search for NPCUK

Contact the NPC for details of your NPC region

House of Commons Enquiries

Email: hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

Phone: 0800 112 4272 (Freephone) or 020 7219 4272 during opening hours: 10am-12midday and 2-4pm (Monday to Friday)

Post: House of Commons Enquiry Service, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

BBC Complaints

Online: http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/contact_us/making_a_complaint.html

Phone: 03700 100 222 or 03700 100 212 (textphone)

Post: BBC Complaints, PO Box 1922, Darlington, DL3 0UR

TUC

Email: info@tuc.org.uk

Phone: 020 7636 4030

Post: Trades Union Congress, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

Age UK

Help Line: 0800 055 6112

Action on Elder Abuse

Help Line: 080 8808 8141

Independent Age

Help Line: 0800 319 6789

Silver Line

Help Line: 0800 4 70 80 90

Contacts Book (Fill in yourself and keep for future reference)

Local MP:

Local authority contact(s):

Local trade unions:

Regional NPC contact:

Local media contacts:

Room booking contact:

Others: