



Campaign!

Fighting for the rights of older people

Coronavirus – follow advice & stay safe!

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Milkman Tony rides to the rescue—read more on next page (Picture, BBC)

Southport Cancelled

2020 Annual
Convention called
off as UK fights
off Covid-19

During this unprecedented Coronavirus pandemic the NPC urges all our members and supporters to stay safe and well by following NHS and Government guidelines.

We welcome the steps being taken by Government and our amazing NHS and local communities to support those most at risk. However we still have concerns about the roll-out of Government measures and will be monitoring the situation to ensure that they are being introduced quickly and effectively to save lives and suffering.

Among the initiatives the Government announced is the Shielding measure to protect 1.5 million of our most vulnerable people – identified by GP's and local health trusts – who are being asked to self-isolate for a minimum of 12 weeks. Their health will be closely monitored and

they'll qualify for special services such as deliveries of food and medicines (see the link below to register for Shielding assistance). The Government is advising us all to stay at home at the moment, only going out for essential groceries, medicines and limited exercise. This advice is more stringent for all over 70's and those under 70 with underlying health problems. The BBC has also thankfully delayed the scrapping of the free TV licence for over 75's from June 1 to August 1 – but the NPC feels this needs to go further and will be lobbying for that in the coming months. NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: "We want everyone to be safe and well. Our press and radio work has meant that the most vulnerable will now be looked after properly, and local radio stations are making sure only the factual information gets through - not the fake news."

The NPC sadly has to announce that our Annual Convention—the much anticipated 'pensioners' parliament'—will not go ahead this summer.

The venue, Southport Theatre & Convention Centre is now closed due to the coronavirus emergency, and our Annual Convention booked for 2-4 June is cancelled.

We are liaising with the Centre to reschedule for next year.

Government

Those of you who have already purchased tickets for the event will be reimbursed as soon as possible. We ask you to please be patient with our staff who will do everything they can to assist you.

Following Government advice our office is now closed with staff working from home with remote access to our telephone answering system. Post will be checked every week and responded to as appropriate

We will also still be contactable by email—info@npcuk.org

If you have booked accommodation in Southport without a deposit, then please cancel. Anyone who has paid a deposit can claim it back on the grounds of self-isolation advice from the government.

Travel, train and coach companies are, in the main, sympathetic to refunds. Please contact the station or booking office and where you purchased the tickets to claim your refund.

HOME ALONE? HERE'S WHERE TO FIND ADVICE



ONLINE

- www.111.nhs.uk/covid-19
- www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable (TO REGISTER FOR HELP AT HOME)
- www.ageuk.org
- www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/

BY PHONE

- NHS –111
- Age UK Helpline - 0800 678 1602

TV & RADIO

- BBC TV Breakfast News
- BBC Local Radio - 'Make a Difference' updates (see over page)*

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

MP's must act over Covid-19 hospital supplies

NPC says NHS and care workers need help now

The NPC is calling on all MP's to urgently raise questions with the Government over the supply of vital medical equipment and protective clothing at their own local hospitals, care homes and other care providers.

Members across the country are praising the courage and dedication of our NHS and care workers during the Coronavirus pandemic. But they are also reporting stories of a shocking lack of resources at hospitals, health centres and care establishments, where family and friends work or are being treated.

Although the Government has repeatedly said it is sending these vital resources to hospitals, there's still little evidence of it arriving at local level.

The NPC completely supports our NHS and care workers during an unprecedented call on their expertise. But a government that is not up to speed with the distribution of essential medical equipment and trusting to luck that nothing happens is hugely worrying.

Nurses, Doctors, Consultants, care workers all have families at risk while they work on the front line with little protection. We call on every MP to investigate the supply of protective clothing and other medical supplies at their local hospitals and to raise urgent questions of the government and its ability to commit to safe working of dedicated medical and care staff."

Please contact your local MP and ask them to make the difference.

Don't let Pension Credit confusion cause hardship

Portsmouth NPC says new research by the city's Citizens Advice Bureau shows more than 3,300 local older people are failing to claim Pension Credit.

Concerned by pensioner poverty in the area, Portsmouth CAB says they are each missing out on their entitlement to benefits of £2,000 per year. This amounts to a staggering £6.6million of unclaimed Pension Credit in 2017/18 alone.

University of Portsmouth Professor Dan Finn, a Trustee of the local CAB, says claiming Pension Credit unlocks so many other vital benefits, like the free TV licence for over 75's. He said: "Based on existing take-up trends, it is likely that just over 1,500 local pensioners over 75 could mistakenly pay for their TV licence each year." Professor Finn says many older people aren't claiming because they are confused by the application process—a situation that has led to around 1.5million failing to claim the benefit across the UK.

Pension Credit is composed of two elements. In 2019/20, **Guarantee Pension Credit** tops up a pensioner's weekly income if their income is below £167.25 (for single people) or £255.25 (for couples). **Savings Pension Credit** is an extra payment to reward people who prepared for their retirement and have some savings. The maximum savings credit available is £13.72 for a single person and £15.35 for couples. NB: This element is being phased out and is only available if a claimant reached state pension age before 6 April 2016.

The quickest way to claim pension credit is to call the Pension Service on 0800 99 1234. The team there will even fill in the application form for you. You'll need to have these things handy when you call:

- Your national insurance number.
- Information about your income, savings and investments.
- Your bank account details.

This tax-free benefit is for retired people on low incomes. It is means-tested, but for those who qualify it can be worth £1,000s a year. It offers older people a weekly top-up to their income (you can also choose to be paid fortnightly or every four weeks).

Southport Convention cancelled

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In the meantime we ask that you please circulate this information to members in your groups and regions to ensure that they know what to do and how to do it. General Secretary Jan Shortt said: "We would like to thank everyone for their continued support of the NPC.

"It is frustrating that we lose our unique event this year, but we can get through this together by being vigilant, looking after ourselves and others and making sure we stay up to date, safe and well."

HELP FROM YOUR COMMUNITY

They're making a difference 

Milkman and NPC supporter Tony Fowler—pictured on our front page—made the BBC news this week by coming to the rescue of vulnerable customers who are self-isolating.

Tony is well-known in North Leicestershire for going the extra mile to deliver groceries as well as milk to his clients, many of whom are over 70. With the spread of Coronavirus he has added to his services, changing light bulbs, picking up prescriptions and sharing books. Tony said: "My customers trust me to always be there, even in bad weather to check on them. But in the last few weeks it's about making sure people are OK, and trying to have a calming effect."

BBC Local Radio stations across the country have launched the 'Make A Difference' project to help keep communities connected during the crisis. All 39 local stations have joined with volunteer groups to help get information out about the support that's available in their areas for the most vulnerable or at risk—and most importantly how to access it. **Tune in to your local station for regular news updates.**

Warning over criminal **Corona-scammers!**

ActionFraud
National Fraud & Cyber Crime Reporting Centre
0300 123 2040

You would think in these difficult times even scammers would take a break!

Unfortunately not. Between February 1 and March 18, 2020 Action Fraud received 105 reports from victims of coronavirus-related frauds with losses totalling almost £1million. In some instances, thieves have been offering to do shopping for isolated and vulnerable people, but are keeping the money for themselves. Most of the scam reports were related to online shopping, where people ordered protective face masks, hand sanitiser and other products which never arrived. Action Fraud also had over 200 reports about coronavirus-themed phishing emails attempting to trick people into opening malicious attachments or revealing sensitive personal or financial information. Here's their advice to stay safe. **Action Fraud: 0300 123 2040**

Careful With Your Cash

Don't give money to anyone you don't know unless they can show or prove their identity. Ask family, friends and neighbours to support you and use online services. Ask others to help you to make arrangements for the delivery of food, medicines and essential services and supplies.

Shopping Online

If you're making a purchase from a company or person you don't know and trust, carry out some research first, and ask a friend or family member for advice before completing the purchase. Where possible, use a credit card to make the payment, as most major credit card providers insure online purchases.

Watch for Scam Messages

Don't click on the links or attachments in suspicious emails and never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for your personal or financial details

Protect Your Devices

Always install the latest software & app updates to phones & PCs to protect them from new threats.