

Campaign!

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

Christmas Turkey?

After months and months of deadlock, political parties are readying themselves for an election, after MPs voted through The Early Parliamentary General Election Bill for a poll on December 12.

Most of the main political parties have yet to spell out their policies. However the future of universal pensioner benefits, such as the over 75s TV licence, free pre-

scriptions, bus travel and the winter fuel allowance, will be of great importance to older voters, amongst many other issues, when they consider who to vote for.

That is why at the next General Election, the NPC will call on all candidates to support a manifesto that will put the concerns of today's and tomorrow's pensioners at the heart of the political process.

Half a million with dementia face losing free TV licences

More than half a million older people with dementia, including more than 140,000 aged 90 or over, could lose their free TV licences as a result of the change, research suggests.

The estimate came after the BBC announced it will make people aged 75 or over pay £154.50 a year for their TV licences from June, apart from those who claim the means-tested pension credit. More than 552,000 older people with dementia, including more than 140,000 aged 90 or over, could lose their free TV licences as a result of the change, statistics show. The total was reached by combining official population statistics with the prevalence of dementia by age group. The Alzheimer's Society said that television can serve as a "lifeline" for isolated older people

Register to vote at:

<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

British pensioners in Europe in real hardship

British pensioners residing in the EU are not living the life of luxury as portrayed in the media, the Lords EU justice sub-committee has been told.

Many thousands of pensioners live exclusively or almost exclusively on the British state pension and have suffered a real terms decrease of approximately 20% in their pension income because of the depreciation in sterling since the referendum.

UK pensions are already the lowest of advanced nations, according to the OECD. The average pensioner can expect to receive just 29% of what they earned at work. When voluntary pensions are included, the average UK pensioner receives 62% of his or her working income. This is still lower than the OECD average of 69%. Ex-pat pensioners were hit by a



second blow last month when the government revealed it would not give a lifetime guarantee to index-link their pensions if the UK crashed out of the EU without a deal.

The Department for Work and Pensions said it would increase the state pension for UK citizens in the EU for the next three years under the "triple-lock" arrangements - which guarantee a rise by either 2.5%, average wage growth or by the consumer price index, whichever is higher - as

announced last month. "During this three-year period the UK government plans to negotiate a new arrangement with the EU to ensure that uprating continues," said a spokesperson.

The committee was told "Britain can't just wash its hands of its citizens abroad" and that the issues "have got to be resolved. It was not good enough for the British government to expect other EU countries or the European commission to guarantee their rights", as they heard examples from pensioners living abroad who are desperately worried about the pensions issue and healthcare no longer being covered in the event of a no-deal.

Lord Morris committee chair identified the pension issue as of "fundamental concern" to the 220,000 British pensioners living in the EU.

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NPC

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Flu Season

25 million people
will be offered free
NHS flu jab this
winter.

People who are
eligible for the NHS
flu vaccine this year
include:

- those aged 65 and over
- those aged 6 months to 64 with a long-term health condition
- health and social care workers
- Carers

Getting the vaccine
from the NHS ,if
you are eligible,
and practising good
hand hygiene is the
best way to prevent
yourself from
getting flu.

Ageism in healthcare

Over-65s with eating disorders are being prevented from accessing some specialist clinics. Of the 49 adult eating disorder clinics in England and Wales, three have a cut-off age of 65, with older patients being referred to general geriatric mental health units - which some experts say are not able to provide the same level of tailored care. This is despite NHS England telling the programme there is no upper age limit to eating disorder services.

NHS ageism also means GPs are failing to properly treat depression in the elder-

ly, research suggests. Experts said older patients were far less likely to be referred for psychological therapies, and more likely to just be given pills. Overall, those aged 85 and over were five times less likely to be referred for psychological therapies, as those in their late 50s, a review found.

Public Health experts warn that the concept of premature mortality needs to be abandoned so that doctors concentrate on cutting illness for all ages.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is calling for care to be standardised for over-65s across the country.

Thousands missing out on council funded adult social care

Older people are having to 'fend for themselves' as 40,000 fewer pensioners receive care despite rising demand. Figures released by NHS Digital reveal that the number of people receiving long-term care has fallen each year.

Researchers also found that local authorities received 1.9million requests for adult social care support during 2018-19 - the equivalent of 5,245 requests for support received per day. This marks an increase of 3.8% since 2017-18. Demand is growing and local government resources are so stretched, that only those with the highest levels of need get help. The risk is that those with less serious conditions miss out on care because of lack of investment, leading them to need much greater and potentially more costly support in the long run.

The number of individuals with complex care needs is projected to increase due to more people reaching the ages of 85 and over. The ONS predicts the number of over 85s in the UK will almost double to 3 million in the next 25 years, with these individuals having higher levels of dependency, dementia and comorbidities.

As our society ages, and more people rely on this system, it is vital that high quality services are in place to support them at the right time. Increasingly people are having to privately fund their care, with more than 400 older people selling their family homes each week in order to pay for the care they need, but can't get through their local authority.

Many older people rely on family and friends to help them in the absence of a reliable and fair adult social care system that is in desperate need of reform.

Ageing prison population 'sees officers working as carers'

The ageing jail population has left prison officers providing care for a growing number of older inmates "dying in front of them", officers have said.

The warning from the Prison Officers' Association, that the system was failing to meet the needs of elderly inmates. has come as new figures revealed the oldest prisoner in England and Wales was 104 years old. The data also showed there were 13,617 inmates aged above 50, around 16.5% of the prison population.

Barclays U-turn

Barclays has reversed its decision to prevent customers withdrawing money from the Post Office network.

It prompted fury when it announced its debit card holders could deposit money but not withdraw cash from a post office counter from January.

Cancelling that plan, the bank said it recognised the network was "valued by many communities in the UK".

It had been the only one of 28 banks and building societies not to fully sign up to a Post Office agreement.

Dates for the diary:

Executive Council
Tuesday 19th November 2019.

National Council
Wednesday 11th December 2019.

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