

February 2020

Annual Convention Special



# Campaign!

## See you in Southport!

**Book now for the 2020  
Annual Convention  
2-4 June**



Get your views heard at the UK's biggest forum for older people

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**The 2020 NPC Annual Convention will once again shine a spotlight on the key issues affecting older people in a brand new location this summer.**

Britain's unique 'pensioners' parliament' - now renamed the National Pensioners' Annual Convention - is being held at the Southport Theatre & Convention Centre at The Waterfront from Tuesday to Thursday, June 2-4.

Offering a packed programme of talks, seminar sessions and workshops featuring leading experts and policy makers, the event is an opportunity to make your views known on the topics that matter most to you - pensions, social care, housing, transport, climate change and our fast-changing digi-

tal world.

The event opens with a members' rally led by a jazz band in Southport's King's Gardens.

Last year, over 550 delegates picked up a huge amount of useful information, met friends old and new, and enjoyed a great social programme across the three days.

Our new programme and new location, Southport - Merseyside's premier seaside resort with a delightful beach and pier, great shops, and fabulous restaurants, bars and entertainment - promises to be a big hit with delegates, who will also enjoy a fabulous free social evening with top entertainment.

**Tickets for the full three-day event are priced at just £10, or £5 for one day. Book early for the best deals on travel and accommodation... and we'll see you there!**

### Here's how to Book...

It's easy to secure your place for Southport—just complete and return the **booking form over-leaf**. You can also download individual and group booking forms online at: [www.npcuk.org/events](http://www.npcuk.org/events)

We would like to thank our sponsors and partners below, who enable us to keep our ticket prices low. **NB: To receive our grant from Sefton Council (Visit Southport), we ask everyone who books to complete either an individual form or a group form to register your hotel details.**



Wayfarers Shopping Arcade, Southport

Southport Theatre & Convention Centre



**The 2020 Annual Convention is delivered with the support of:**





**Fighting for the rights of older people**



## **Your invitation to the 2020** **Annual Convention** **from Jan Shortt, General Secretary, NPC**

**I**f you want change for the better for Britain's older people I invite you to join us at this year's NPC Annual Convention in Southport.

The rights and benefits we have all worked and paid for through our taxes and national insurance over the

years are being seriously eroded.

Everything from our failing social care system, to the scrapping of the free TV licence and a retirement age that keeps going up and up, signals that retirement is increasingly becoming something to fear rather than to enjoy after a lifetime's work. The only

thing that can reverse this trend, is if we, as a generation, make our voices and our views heard. That is why we will be once again discussing and debating the most pressing issues concerning older people today, and in the future at Southport. Because the benefits and rights we lose today, won't just affect our generation, it will adversely affect our children and our grandchildren, who face a bleak old age if we do not act now.

**Join the campaign to fight back—come along to the 2020 Annual Convention.**



### **W**hat we'll be talking about at the NPC Annual Convention In Southport In 2020

- Connecting with the NPC
- March from King's Gardens
- Rally with Keynote Speakers
- Climate Change—Why it Matters to You

- Tech Talk — Getting Online & Avoiding Scams!
- Fit for Purpose? State Pensions & Benefits
- Housing & Older People - Next Generation Rent
- Transport - Accessible & Affordable?
- The Social Care Crisis
- The Big Debate—What's the right age to retire?

## **Let us entertain you...**

**W**ednesday evening's Convention Party is a great chance to relax and have fun with new friends and old in the spectacular Floral Ballroom. Topping the bill are the spectacular Midnight Sisters of Soul who promise a fantastic night with hits to get you dancing from the 60's, 70's and 80's—and it's all free with your delegate pass.



Top of the bill — Midnight Soul Sisters

## **BOOKING FORM - NPC National Pensioners' Convention 2-4 June 2020**

Number of credentials required: £10

£5 for 2 June

£5 for 3 June

**Is your travel / accommodation at the event:**

Self-funded ☐

Funded by an organisation ☐

Part funded by an organisation ☐

to keep admin costs down please only tick if a receipt is required ☐

Name: .....

Organisation (if any): .....

Address: .....

Email: .....

Please make cheques payable to NPC and return with this form to  
NPC, Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AB



## Housing is a 'a human right' argues Tony in new book

**T**ony O' Brien executive committee member and chair of our newly established housing working party has recently published a book entitled "Tackling the housing crisis."

The book's timely publication (see our ONS story on page 4) argues that housing is a human right. It looks back at the history of council run social housing and its construction direct labour organisations and how they hugely benefited our people, which governments set out to de-

### New Publication



stroy. This has led to so many people including our pensioners—whether they be in private or public social

housing—suffering from bad housing. He argues that we must campaign to reverse this and obtain truly affordable quality-built homes.

The book is priced at £10 plus £2 postage. For book enquires, and if you would like Tony to speak about the book at one of your meetings, phone: 07500169151. **To order the book, send your address and contact details together with payment to: 'Tony O' Brien' C/O, Southwark Pensioners Centre, 307 Camberwell Rd, Camberwell, London SE5 0HQ.**

## Keep them switched on!

NPC writes to all MP's to save the free TV licence for over 75's



**E**very UK MP has been sent a personal plea to save the free TV licence for the country's millions of over 75's before the concession is scrapped on May 31.

The NPC has emailed personal letters to MP's of all parties asking that they support the campaign to retain the

benefit for our 5.4 million oldest citizens. The NPC says while the Government has announced a consultation on whether non-payment of the TV licence fee should be decriminalised, those over 75's who can't afford the £154.40 cost (£157.40 from April) still face having to switch off in June. NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: "We have written to all MP's to ask that they do the right thing by their oldest and most vulnerable constituents. Millions of over 75's, who are already struggling on the basic pension, will suffer if the free TV licence is scrapped – they'll have to choose whether to opt for a cooked meal and a warm home have the company of their TV. It's not a choice any of our MP's will ever likely have to face. So we ask them to think of the oldest in their constituencies - many of them voters who have put their trust in their Parliamentary representatives at the recent election – and back the NPC & Age UK campaign to stop the free TV licence for over 75's being axed."



NPC Minority Elders branch protest in support of the free TV licence

## Shock as life expectancy falls for first time 100 years

**L**ife expectancy growth for men and women has stalled over the past decade - the first time this has happened in 100 years.

In a new report warning of growing health inequalities, it was found that life expectancy among women in the poorest communities in England in particular has declined since 2011. The largest decreases were seen in the most deprived areas of the north-east, while the biggest increases were in the richest parts of London.

The report, by Prof Sir Michael Marmot, a leading expert on health inequalities, comes 10 years after he first published data on the growing gap between rich and poor, and between north and south. Prof Marmot said England has lost a decade and called the damage to the nation's health "shocking". He said: "If health has stopped improving, that means society has stopped improving." His new report, after a decade of austerity, finds the picture

has got worse, and blames "social and economic conditions, many of which have shown increased inequalities". Prof Marmot said similar trends can be seen right across the UK, where the slow-down in life expectancy is more obvious than in most European and other high-income countries, apart from the US. His report says the govern-

### Urgency

ment must tackle health inequalities "as a matter of urgency" and bring deprived areas in the north up to the level of good health enjoyed by people in the south.

In a statement, Health Secretary Matt Hancock said: "There is still much more to do, and our bold prevention agenda, record £33.9bn a year investment in the NHS and world-leading plans to improve children's health will help ensure every person can lead a long and healthy life."

## **'Thanks Neil!' National Council pays tribute to Officer**



**F**ormer National Officer, Neil Duncan Jordan was invited back to January's National Council meeting and presented with a gift for many years of work he had done for NPC.

Deputy General Secretary Dot Gibson said the NPC had got "a good bargain" when it employed Neil 20 years ago.

Pictured receiving his gift from NPC Vice President Marion Wilson, Neil said he missed the NPC, adding that the most memorable aspect of his work had been the people he met, including trade union giants like Rodney Bickerstaffe, and Jack Jones, who founded the NPC.

## **Tomorrow's pensioners may live in fear of homelessness as more must rent privately**

**M**any pensioners may live in fear of homelessness if the number of people living in the private rented sector continues to rise.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) recently released analysis on changes in housing tenure between 1993 and 2017 and what this might mean for older people in the future.



As expected they found fewer people in their mid-30s to mid-40s had a mortgage by the end of the period, while many more were living in private rented accommodation. By 2017 only half of them

had a mortgage, compared with two-thirds 20 years earlier. Conversely a third of them were renting from a private landlord in 2017, compared with fewer than one in ten in 1997.

The ONS concluded that while many factors could affect the trend in future - including government policy on social housing provision - the findings pointed to many more older people relying on the private sector in future than have done in the recent past.

Shelter, the homeless charity fears this will leave these older private renters - who haven't bought and cannot buy their own homes - in "an impossible position."

### **Misery**

Polly Neate, Shelter's Chief Executive, told Express.co.uk: "The sky-high cost of private rents means many older tenants face an uphill struggle in retirement, living in fear that the next rent hike will leave them homeless. On top of this heavy financial burden, a lot of privately rented homes simply aren't up to scratch, so older people are being condemned to live out their later years in cramped, damp, or run-down properties."

She said the UK "desperately needs a housing alternative" that doesn't leave older renters at risk of homelessness or make their daily lives a misery.

## **New research needed into welfare of minority elders**

**O**lder people from ethnic minorities are one of the most disadvantaged and excluded groups in UK society according to a report in the British Medical Journal.

Researchers at the University of Sussex say this is reflected in international studies, which show increased rates of poor mental and physical illness among ethnic minority ageing populations compared with the ethnic majority population.

The UK has not collected any survey data specifically on older ethnic minority populations, but data from 2004 - the last year when the Health Survey for England oversampled ethnic minority people (over 15 years ago) - found that the proportion of people aged 61-70 reporting fair or bad health was 34% for white English people but



86% for Bangladeshi people, 69% for Pakistani people, 63% for Indian people, and 67% for black Caribbean people. These data show that the health of white English people aged 61-70 is equivalent to that for Caribbean people in their late 40s or early 50s, Indian people in their early 40s.

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