



Campaign!

Fighting for the rights of older people

A poster for your window to support a 'proper' NHS pay rise

People across the UK are being asked to put this bright poster in their windows from April 1 in support of a proper NHS pay rise.

Health unions, including Unite, UNISON and the Royal College of Nursing, representing more than a million health workers, are urging the public to show how strongly they feel that NHS staff should receive a proper wage increase now—not the government's 1%. Get the poster here: www.uniteunion.org/media/3713/web-back-our-nhs-workers-poster-v2.pdf



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Time to end State Pension tier system and ensure everyone gets a fairer cash increase this April

Everyone over 66 – whether they are on the new or the old 'basic' State Pension – should receive the same £4.40 cash increase this April says the NPC.

State Pension payments will rise by 2.5 per cent from April 12. This means retirees on the new – and highest – State Pension will receive £179.60 per week, which is an increase of £4.40 on the current rate of £175.20. Meantime those on the old State Pension (category A or B), currently receiving £134.25 each week, will be paid £137.60, which is a benefit increase of £3.35.

The NPC proposes giving everyone on both tiers of the State Pension scheme—regardless of whether they get the top rate or not—an increase of £4.40.

Media attention has focussed on the percentage rise, but this shows an inaccurate picture of the difference between pensions and average earnings. It neglects the fact that not everyone receives the top rate of either the old or new State Pension.

Poverty

NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: "The NPC's policy on a decent State Pension for all calls for a flat rate monetary increase across the board for all pensioners. The NPC does not expect this to happen all at once, but we need the government to start talking to us about state pensions, the myths around the triple lock, pensioner poverty and the fact that those on the new state pension will, over time, be worse off than if they had been on the old

pension scheme. Currently, the replacement value is 29% but research shows that it will reduce to around 24%. Add to that the fact that the basic state pension in the UK is the most inadequate in the economically developed world, we can see the future problems."

Jan added: "The NPC is committed to fighting for a better State Pension for all pensioners. We believe everyone should ultimately receive the same basic State Pension and that the multi-tier system, where those who had the misfortune of being born earlier receive a lower payment, is wrong and unfair. After all, the high cost of living is the same for us all."

Worthless

The NPC rejects media assumptions that every pensioner has either a lucrative private or occupational pension to add to their State Pensions. Jan said: "The suggestion that pensioners are receiving £300 plus a week is totally inaccurate as the majority survive on much less. Many pensioners, particularly women and those on low income have not had the financial wherewithal to pay contributions over and above their State Pension."

The NPC appreciates the research commissioned by The Telegraph which found the 2.5per cent rise is actually 'worthless' when compared to the rocketing costs of care. Britain has the worst mandatory pension provision of all 36 countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development. Retirees' pension income is 28pc of their pre-retirement earnings – half that of other countries.

People's Covid Inquiry hears how care sector was failed

The NPC gave evidence to the People's Covid Inquiry that years of funding cuts and neglect of the UK care sector meant it was tragically unprepared for the devastating impact of Covid-19.

General Secretary Jan Shortt's testimony at the second session of the Inquiry on 10 March was highly praised by Co-Chair Dr Tony O'Sullivan.

He said Jan's evidence on "the gross failures of the Government in letting down at risk groups, including so many people in care homes or receiving domiciliary care" was scathing and shocking.

Carnage

Jan spoke about the blanket use of Do Not Resuscitate Orders (DNRs) and older people discharged from hospital to the care homes without coronavirus test clearance. Dr O'Sullivan said her testimony revealed "a total disregard for the safety and care of such a large section of the population. We know 38,000 care home residents died from Covid. Our Inquiry is exploring what mistakes were made and why. It is not too late to learn lessons that can save lives. It is too late sadly to avoid the carnage of the last 12 months." Jan told the Inquiry panel:

"Before the pandemic hit, the NHS and care sector were really struggling. Our organisation and others, including academics, have been begging the government to properly reform and fund social care. But the government has not been listening. **We cannot say none of this would have happened if they had, but they would have been in a lot better position to deal with it, had the health sector had enough staff, enough money and enough resources like Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).** It is not true (as the Health Secretary recently said) that the sector had everything it needed." The People's Covid Inquiry - under the auspices of Keep Our NHS Public - will examine the Government's overall Covid-19 strategy, such as how it controlled the spread of infection, the timing and extent of 'lockdowns' and their impact on case numbers, as well as the implications for death rates. The Inquiry has no legal powers but has gathered a panel of experts to follow Public Inquiry format to question witnesses providing evidence. The findings will be presented to the government who are currently deferring a full Public Inquiry. Video: www.keepournhspublic.com/why-launching-peoples-covid-inquiry/

London care home evictions needs urgent investigation

The NPC is asking health and care ministers and local councillors to urgently stop the distressing snap eviction of elderly residents from a London care home after the property was sold.

The NPC has written to the council and ministers over our serious concerns at the closure of the home, which will see the residents, aged from 80 to 100 years old, being evicted by the new owner in the midst of the pandemic. **Throughout the pandemic, the home has remained COVID free by the monumental efforts of staff and residents themselves.** Yet the NPC understands that relatives are still having difficulty visiting residents at this time when they must make major decisions about where they can move to following eviction. General Secretary Jan Shortt said: "We have serious questions around the Home's Trustees due diligence and a possible breach of their Memorandum & Articles by selling their assets to a 'for profit' buyer. Likewise, the new owner has either been lax in his due diligence in terms of the sustainability of the asset he was purchasing, or has seen an opportunity to make a profit from those who will lose their homes and need care and support. There is something not right about this. We hope the outcome of the council investigation will be known soon. **Unfortunately this is the system of care we have in this country which will only be resolved by radical reform that puts people at the heart of services and not profit.**"

Vice President's diversity call

There is keen awareness across the NPC that we must have a much more diverse membership to truly reflect society as a whole.

NPC Vice President Ellen Lebethe won praise at the recent Executive Committee meeting for raising the issue in her report from the Minority Elders group.

Ellen is concerned about the way the term BAME is used almost as a 'catch-all' today, and that it is important to realise that Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people are individuals and deserve to be treated as such.

She said: "Covid 19 has brought into sharp focus the deep rooted inequalities that have existed within society for years. The inequalities are profoundly felt by those in later life and in particular by Black, Asian and Minority Elders. There is a problem of treating BAME communities as a homogenous group and of failing to recognise the differences. As long as these views prevail, any future proposals, recommendations, policies and practices put forward by interested organisations and well meaning groups will fail to adequately address the issues of inequalities and disadvantages which blight the lives of so many of the elderly. They will fail to help to change the health and socio-economic conditions of older people to make a real difference."