



# Campaign!

*Fighting for the rights of older people*

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**WANT TO JOIN THE NPC?**

Do you care about issues affecting older people? Want to do something about them? Then why not join us, as an individual or as an affiliate group. We are the biggest campaign group run for and by older people. So contact us today and find out how to get involved. Details above.

## Minister to meet NPC deputation after Older People's Commissioner question in House of Lords

The NPC's first live Annual Convention in three years has triggered major progress with our key campaign to have an Older People's Commissioner in England.

Lead speaker Lord George Foulkes, who backed the NPC's call for a Commissioner at last month's event, has secured a meeting to discuss the proposal with Government Pensions' Minister Baroness Stedman-Scott. Lord Foulkes, the Joint Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ageing & Older People, tabled a Parliamentary Question in the House of Lords on 19th October to ask if the government was considering the appointment of a Commissioner.

### **Unanswerable**

Baroness Stedman-Scott replied that while the government does not have any current plans, she is "very happy to meet" the Peer and a deputation—including NPC—on the matter. Commenting after the debate, where several peers spoke in support of his proposal, Lord Foulkes said: "We are now one step nearer to getting a Commissioner for England. The case is unanswerable and when we meet the Minister, the NPC along with other bodies, Peers and MPs will make a case that we hope will persuade the gov-



*Speakers (l.to.r): Eorann Lean, Age UK; Heléna Herklots, Older People's Commissioner, Wales; NPC President Rosie MacGregor; General Secretary Jan Shortt; Lord Foulkes & Birmingham Cllr Mariam Khan..*

ernment to take the next step to agree to a Commissioner for England."

Thanking Lord Foulkes for his work and support for a Commissioner who can champion older people's rights, as they have in Wales and Northern Ireland, NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: "Lord Foulkes made a powerful case for Commissioners to fight for older people's rights in all four UK nations at our recent NPC Annual Convention. So we are absolutely delighted that he has secured this meeting with the Minister."

### **Annual Convention'22 Report Page 2**

## New PM Rishi Sunak MUST keep Triple Lock Manifesto pledge

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is under increasing pressure to keep the government's promise on the 'triple lock' when his Chancellor announces the Autumn Budget on 17th November. As food prices surge by an average of 17% the NPC warns that millions will be plunged into poverty if the PM and his Chancellor don't keep the measure to ensure state pensions rise next April by the highest of either the previous Septem-

**'Millions condemned to poverty if triple lock axed in April'**

ber's inflation rate, wage growth or 2.5pc. NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: "It's well known that older people spend more of their fixed incomes on energy, so they have to cut spending on other essentials like food. I fear as the cost of living crisis continues we'll see more poverty and a rise in winter deaths."

**\*WRITE TO YOUR MP to SAVE TRIPLE LOCK — see page 3 for details.\***

## Welcome return of live NPC Annual Convention

**N**PC members gathered at our first ‘live’ Annual Convention since the pandemic for a successful one day event at Birmingham Council House on 21st September.

Thanks to Birmingham City Council, our much-missed annual get-together hosted a series of topical, expert-led discussions in the magnificent Council House Banqueting Suite.

### Pensioner Rights

The audience heard speakers warn how our oldest and most vulnerable are facing increasing hardship in the face of soaring prices and growing ageism. Keynote speaker Lord George Foulkes, the Joint Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Ageing and Older People, said it was time that England and Scotland had dedicated advocates for pensioners’ rights, as they have in



Members put questions to the panels.

Wales and Northern Ireland. Backing the NPC’s continuing campaign for Commissioners, Lord Foulkes said: “Heléna Herklots, the Welsh Commissioner who is doing a great job in Wales, is with us here today. It is beyond time that we followed Wales’ example in England and Scotland, and I call today on the UK Government and the Scottish Government to act on this at the first opportunity.” Lord Foulkes said pensioner poverty is ‘a growing scandal of immense propor-



Lively panel discussions were popular with members

tions’ and even if the government keeps it promise to re-introduce the Triple Lock to guarantee a state pension rise next spring, it will not make up for the erosion in the value of pensions.

He added: “Some in politics are challenging even that. They say pensioners are doing better than poor families. It is wicked in the extreme to set one poor group against another when the wealth of the very rich doubled during the pandemic and the curb on bankers’ bonuses is being lifted.”

More than 150 delegates heard experts from Age UK, Cash Action Group, Healthwatch England, the Centre for Ageing Better, Better Transport, Homes for All, National Federation for the Blind UK and the Institute for Development Studies discuss a range of issues. The cost of food and fuel crisis topped the agenda, along with inadequate pensions, poor housing, to disappearing services, including the difficulty in getting GP appointments and social care, the push to end cash transactions, and the isolation caused by digital poverty of older people who do not or cannot use the internet.

General Secretary Jan Shortt thanked “all of our brilliant speakers” and Birmingham City Council. She said: “This first face to face Convention in three years galvanised our members to continue campaigning on behalf of pensioners, and particularly to see the appointment of Commissioners in England and Scotland.”

### Extract of Welsh Commissioner Heléna Herklots’ Convention Speech

“It’s a great joy and pleasure to work with NPC in Wales. You have an incredibly important role and my goodness we need you now – we need your campaigning spirit. We need your terrier like qualities to keep at things; your persistence, your skill and influence and your passion and understanding. All these work together in what are incredibly serious times. I think we imagined the pandemic was one of the greatest challenges we faced, and now we’re facing another huge challenge (*the cost of living crisis*). My role as commissioner is set out

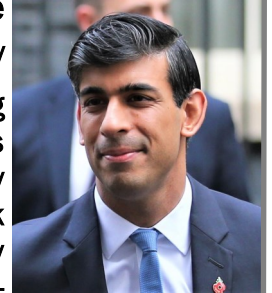
in law, and that gives it authority, and also confers some legal powers.” Supporting the NPC call for commissioners in each UK nation, she added:

“We need to unite across the UK: as people who are older people, who work with older people and who care for older people, and a step forward would be having a commissioner in each of the nations, so there’s nowhere in the UK where there isn’t one scrutinising and challenging.”



## Write to your MP to save our pensions triple lock

As fears grow that the government will ditch its Manifesto promise to reinstate the Triple Lock the NPC is calling on all members and friends to write to their MP as a matter of urgency. Template letters for members to send are available on our website or by post from the NPC office (address P1). General Secretary



### Support growing for TL campaign

The NPC's ongoing triple lock campaign is gathering momentum as more people—groups, organisations and politicians—join our call for the Prime Minister and Chancellor to save the measure that will ensure a fair pension rise next April. General Secretary Jan Shortt wrote a Comment piece for the Daily Express which has launched a petition to save the triple lock. The newspaper intends to send the signatures to Rishi Sunak before the 17th November Budget is finalised. Jan told Express readers that pensioners faced a winter of misery if the triple lock is not reinstated. She said: “Rishi Sunak and Jeremy Hunt must stop pontificating on the triple lock and give a firm commitment to the restoration of the full rate of inflation next year. It should be quite easy to do, after all it is a Conservative Party manifesto promise.” Find the petition at: [www.change.org](http://www.change.org) and search 'Express triple lock.'



Shortt said: “We are urging everyone to write to their MPs because of the uncertainty created by PM Rishi Sunak (right) and Chancellor Jeremy Hunt over the future of the triple lock. We are asking MP's to vote to keep the measure which ensures that the state pension rises in line with whichever is highest - inflation, average earnings or 2.5%. If reinstated next spring it would give us a 10% increase, which is desperately needed to try and offset the spiralling cost of living. The suspension of the triple lock for 2022 was not necessary and the 3.1% set last September was quickly overtaken by inflation. By the time pensioners received their rise last April the meagre increase was quickly swallowed up by huge hikes in energy and other bills. Older people spend a larger percentage of their fixed income on energy and therefore have to cut spending on other essentials such as food. These decisions are critical to the health and well-being of older people, especially those with ill health and disabilities.”

## CQC says gridlocked health & care puts patients at risk

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) says England's 'gridlocked' health and social care system is causing a 'deterioration' in people's access to and experience of care. It adds that without change people will be at 'increased risk of harm.' Their annual assessment blames the challenges services are now facing on historical underinvestment and lack of sustained recognition and reward for the social care workforce. It adds that most people still receive good care, when they can access it. But too often people are not able to access the care they need. Capacity in adult social care has reduced and unmet need has increased. Only 2 in 5 people are able to leave hospital when they are ready to do so, This contributes to 'record-breaking waits in emergency departments' for admissions, and dangerous ambulance handover delays. NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: “In 2019, the then Prime

Minister Boris Johnson promised to 'fix the crisis in social care' We're still waiting and the CQC report proves the system is at breaking point.” CQC Chief Inspector Kate Terroni said: “The money announced to help speed up the discharge of people from hospital... as well as to retain and recruit more care workers is welcome.

### Harm

“But there needs to be more focus on long-term planning and investment rather than short-term sticking plasters. With 165,000 vacancies in adult social care, there needs to be a step change in how to attract and retain staff, If this doesn't happen, people will be at increased risk of harm.” The NPC continues to campaign for a National Care Service, and has submitted evidence to The Fabian Society's consultation for a Road Map to Social Care. **More on page 4 - submission details on our website [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)**

## Meals on Wheels more vital than ever

**M**eals on Wheels Week 2022 launched with a call to the government and nation to support the much valued service. The need for hot nutritious meals delivered daily to our oldest and most vulnerable has never been greater with the cost-of-living crisis and pending austerity. At the House of Lords launch of MOW Week (31 Oct to 4 Nov) Project lead Neel Radia said: “I urge all sectors to take part in Meals on Wheels Week to ensure this precious service is recognised and protected. It is imperative that our older population has access to a meal service delivered to their home, and the social interaction it brings to assist with preventing isolation.” Like many others MOW is suffering from funding cuts and often relies upon charitable support.” *Learn more: [www.thenacc.co.uk](http://www.thenacc.co.uk)*



*NPC Pres. Rosie MacGregor (l.) Baroness Pitkeathley. Neel Radia, Meals On Wheels*

## Time to scrap Bill that will axe EU laws protecting our rights

**T**he Prime Minister is being urged to scrap ‘undemocratic’ proposals to axe 2,400 European Union era laws.

Charities and trade unions are among those calling on Rishi Sunak to shelve a controversial bill that would scrap EU legislation protecting workers’ rights and the environment. Proposed by Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, the bill could end laws governing animal testing, environmental issues and workers’ rights. The retained EU law (revocation and reform) bill’ had a stormy second reading in the House of Commons on Tuesday (26th). Under a so-called sunset clause, the bill is designed to

switch off 47 years of laws devised during EU membership, from 31st December 2023. Ministers have promised to replace them in new legislation but there are concerns that they could be changed or badly redrafted.

### **Alarm**

Ahead of the second reading, the Trades Union Congress, the RSPB, the Civil Society Alliance, and Wildlife Trusts were among those urging Mr Sunak to kill the legislation. Their call comes after leading lawyers sounded the alarm over the proposals, including one former government official who described the move as “anti-democratic.”

## Fabian Society study aims to design a Roadmap for Social Care

**T**he case for a fully funded, independent National Care Service headlined the NPC’s submission to a Fabian Society consultation on care in England. The Fabian’s new inquiry aims to develop a roadmap towards a national care service for England. NPC Health & Social Care Working Party provided a detailed submission concentrating on the experiences and concerns of members.

### **Recommendations**

The final report will make recommendations to the Labour party policy review and to shadow health and social care secretary Wes Streeting MP. Funded by UNISON, the project is an independent study and its proposals will not necessarily reflect the views of either the Labour party or UNISON. The NPC has long championed the policy of a fully funded stand-alone National Care Services, free at the point of need alongside a full-

ly funded NHS, regulated by an independent monitoring unit.

The NPC Health & Care Working Party’s detailed submission to the study included a copy of our landmark briefing, “Goodbye Cinderella: A New A New Settlement for Care; our Manifesto for Older People’s Rights to Health & Well-being; and the NPC Dignity Code.

Fabian Society General Secretary Andrew Harrop said: “We are delighted to be working on plans to develop a national care service for England. We will present practical, workable proposals to gradually develop national entitlements, standards and funding models that will support the integration of social care with healthcare and are designed around local accountability and individual preferences and needs.” *Read the NPC submission to the study at: [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)*