



NPC

Campaign!

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WANT TO JOIN NPC?

Do you care about issues affecting older people? Then join us as an individual, or as an affiliate group. We are the biggest UK campaign group run for and by older people. Contact us and get involved. Details above.

Fighting for the rights of older people

NPC Lobby of Parliament

The NPC Lobby of Parliament and joint mass rally in protest at cuts to the Winter fuel payments drew great support from across the UK – and our campaign is still gathering momentum. *More on P. 2*



What have they got against us? Government betray older people again with shock WASPI news

The NPC is calling for an urgent parliamentary debate and vote on the government's shock decision *not* to compensate 50's born women whose retirement age was rapidly raised from 60 to 66.

The decision announced by Work and Pension's Minister Liz Kendall flies in the face of the findings of the independent Ombudsman who recommended the WASPI women – Women Against State Pension Inequality – were due compensation for lack of notice and losing years of state pension, leaving many in poverty. It also comes after the Minister, the Chancellor and the Prime Minister all promised the women their support for justice before the General Election.

Jan Shortt, NPC General Secretary said: "WASPI women have been betrayed by Work and Pensions' Minister Liz Kendall says she cannot offer compensation because she needs to save taxpayers money. She also said that giving the women earlier notice of the rapid rise in their retirement age would not have made any difference. We beg to differ. Properly promoted and distributed for-

mal notice would have allowed all women to make informed decisions about their income, work and pension. Remember, older women were among the lowest paid in work, and now generally have the lowest pensions, so they do not have a lot of leeway with their retirement income. WASPI women have our full support and we will be contacting the WASPI Chair Angela Madden to discuss how we can support their next steps."

Jan says the government's betrayal on the premise of protecting taxpayers is 'bizarre.' She said: "If the government wishes to protect the taxpayer, why are they so supportive of tax havens and slow to ensure that the wealthy pay all the tax they should. WASPI women have worked, paid their tax and pension contributions, and it is totally unjust to deny them. Thousands have died waiting for justice, others have sold their homes to afford to live, or are impoverished because they can't find work" **The NPC—including our Womens Working Party—are urging all to write to Ministers and local MPs to call for a parliamentary vote on the injustice.**

Denying WASPI women any compensation is shameful

Visit www.npcuk.org to read our great WP newsletters, including Health & Care, Womens & Digital



NPC Lobby of Parliament over Winter Fuel Payment Cuts



From top left to right: Commons Lobby Panel; Neil Duncan Smith MP & Rachael Maskell MP; NPC's Marian Wilson raises a point; NPC's Michael McLoughlin; John McDonnell MP; Sharon Graham, Gen. Sec. Unite, Jan Shortt, Gen. Sec. NPC.

The NPC Lobby of Parliament and rally protesting over cuts to the universal Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) attracted great support from MPs, charities, campaign organisations, trade unions, NPC members and people of all ages.

Jan Shortt, General Secretary spoke at the Rally opposite Parliament, alongside John McDonnell MP and Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham who have been staunch supporters of the reinstatement of the WFP.

Jan thanked everyone who supported the day with around 350 at the rally alongside Unite outside Parliament, and more than 100 in the



House of Commons committee room for the Lobby of MPs. There were also protests in Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland by Scottish Pensioners' Forum, as well as across the UK.

Jan said: "We heard great crucial evidence as to why these government-imposed cuts are wrong and must be reversed. There is no doubt they will cause untold hardship, illness, and indeed loss of life if they are allowed to go ahead.

"But we are heartened by the amazing support for our campaign against the government's decision. Despite the Chancellor's disappointing Budget,

this is not the end – it's the beginning."

The NPC would like to thank all the MPs who attended and spoke at the Lobby in support of our campaign, including: John McDonnell MP, Rachael Maskell MP, Neil Duncan-Jordan MP, Emma Lewell-Buck MP, Sharon Hodgson MP, Richard Burgon, Luke Taylor MP, Ian Byrne MP, Ayoub Khan MP, Bambos Charalambous MP, as well as

others who dropped into the Lobby, and many more who sent their apologies. The Lobby was hosted with many thanks to John McDonnell MP.

The session was chaired by NPC President Norman Jemison.

Particular thanks go to our speakers including Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director, Age UK; Jonathan Bean, Policy and Parliament Lead, Fuel Poverty Action; Angela Madden, Chair, WASPI campaign; Maggie Roberts Vice-Chair at Unite Retired Members, Kamran Mallick, CEO, Disability Rights UK; as well as Sally Tsoukaris at CSPA who spoke at the rally, and Morgan Vine, Director of Policy & Influencing at Independent Age.

All our speakers encouraged us all to keep lobbying local MPs and Ministers to bring back universal WFP as a matter of urgency.



WASPI supporters at rally

New Year Resolutions Chancellor must make in 2025 to avoid fuel poverty disaster this Winter



The NPC is writing to ask Chancellor Rachel Reeves to start 2025 with a series of New Year Resolutions to re-set the government's badly damaged relationship with older people.

General Secretary Jan Shortt expressed 'our disappointment' as the UK's largest organisation run

NPC backs the call for a UN Convention on Older Persons

NPC calls on members to support Age International's call for the UK to support a United Nations Convention for Older Persons to protect our human rights. The creation of an international legal framework by the UN would help protect older people everywhere, from Southampton to Sudan. Age International is asking people to sign an open letter asking Foreign Secretary David Lammy to make a public statement declaring the UK's support for a Convention. In August, the UN General Assembly recognised there are gaps in the protection of older people's rights and that more needs to be done to address them including the creation of a human rights convention.

Protecting Rights

It asked relevant UN Agencies, including the Human Rights Council, to consider how to act on the recommendations of a UN Working Group investigating these issues. The next meeting of the UN Human Rights Council – HRC58 - will take place from 24th February to 4th April 2025 and we expect the issue of a creating a Human Rights Convention for Older People to be on the agenda. To sign the open letter, copy or click on this link: https://campaigns.ageinternational.org.uk/page/157037/petition/1?ea_tracking.id=AgeInt_DG *(Not online? Write to the NPC office).

for and by older, that the Chancellor has still not replied to our letter of deep concern at the ending of the universal Winter Fuel Payment. Having spoke with other older people's agencies, it

seems we are not alone in not receiving a response from the Minister.

Jan wrote: "There are major issues of poverty in these (older) communities, but little understanding and compassion from the government in building relationships with them to ensure they are able to access their rights, for example to Pension Credit, which opens the door to the few who still qualify for WFP. "We call on you to reinstate the

Government needs to act as older and vulnerable skip meals & turn off heating

winter fuel payment to all pen-

sioners this year. The drive to balance the books on the backs of older people and others struggling to deal with energy and food prices is, at best, unworthy. Older people still contribute to the economy in a variety of ways and yet no value is given to them. We have the right to live in dignity and financial security in later years - not have it swept away on the excuse that an economic 'hole' needs

to be filled." Jan's letter listed a number of concerns that we would wish to raise with the chancellor. These include the lack of proper impact assessment on the DWP cuts; the admission by Minister Liz Kendall that the government knew the loss of the WFP would force 50k more older people into poverty; and the total unpreparedness of the DWP to cope with the huge increase in Pension Credit applications.

Meantime, NPC believes Ofgem's new proposal that energy suppliers must offer two supposed solutions to deal with exorbitant standing charges for next winter will not help the millions of older, vulnerable, and poor who are turning off their heating and skipping meals this winter. The special tariffs Ofgem is proposing won't apply until next winter, and we fear suppliers can merely hide the standing charges elsewhere. Older people who have lost their winter fuel payment are in serious danger of falling ill as the temperatures drop. A new study by Age UK found that more than a million aged over 66 have been skipping meals to cope with rising fuel bills. While 620,000 with long term health conditions were missing meals.

Our Campaigns make headlines across UK

Our campaigning has had great news coverage, including by The Guardian & The Express—see Officers, Les McDowell & Ellen Lebethe—P 1 picture below.

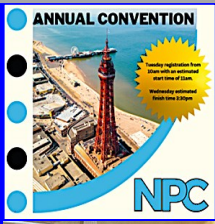
DAILY EXPRESS



The Guardian



2024 Blackpool Annual Convention Emergency Sessions



TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak with NPC's Jan Shortt.



Speakers included (top, LtoR) Morgan Vine, Independent Age; Brian Sturtevant, Chair, NPC Pensions & Incomes WP; & Helena Herklots, former Welsh Older People's Commissioner; Climate campaigner Tina Rothery (above Rt)

More than 300 delegates packed the opening emergency sessions of this autumn's NPC Annual Convention in Blackpool to discuss the shock Winter fuel payment cuts announcement. Expert speakers gave grim evidence of the impact of the cuts, which led to a call for the October Day of Action outside Parliament. Outgoing Commissioner for Older People in Wales, Heléna Herklots CBE told the Convention: "Part of my anger at what the government has done is over the levels of anxiety so many older people are facing because they don't know how they will get through the next months. For me that feels unforgiveable. Where is the understanding, where is the empathy and where is the humanity? Because there is no way the govern-

ment doesn't know this is going to hit some of the people who can least manage." The Convention also covered rising privatisation of NHS and care services. **Many thanks to all our speakers** including: Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer, Chair, British Medical Association-England GP Committee; Lord Davies of Brixton, Labour Peer; Eorann Lean, Senior External Affairs Manager, Age UK; Morgan Vine, Director, Policy and Influencing, Independent Age; Dr Bob Gill, Director, Great NHS Heist; Diarmaid McDonald, Director, Just Treatment; Phoebe Sleet, Policy Officer, Digital Poverty Alliance; Caren Evans, Officer, Unite the Union; Nav Hussain, BT Digital Voice; Tina Rothery, Nanas Against Fracking; Jenny Sims, Chair NPC Digital Working Party; & Owen Sloss, Campaign for Better Transport.



Hard-hitting WFP parody of Muds' classic Christmas hit tops the charts

A parody version of the old Muds Christmas hit song 'Lonely This Christmas' - called "Freezing This Christmas" - is topping the charts. Andrew Mid-

leton was inspired to write it in protest at the Government Winter Fuel Payment cuts. Andrew says money raised by the single will be donated to charity. Watch it on You Tube.

**NPC
250
Club**

Sign up today and support our work

Join the NPC 250 Club and you could win cash and help the NPC. For just £2 a month or £24 per annum, you will be entered into the NPC 250 Club prize draw. Half of the income goes into the monthly prize draw, and the remaining 50% will go to the NPC to support our work for older people. **You can sign up at: www.npcuk.org/post/npc-250-club *OR: Write to the NPC address on Page 1.**



Holiday Closing

The NPC head office will be closed for the festive period from the end of business Friday, 20th December 2024 until Thursday, 2nd January 2025 to allow for staff leave. We'll reply to inquiries upon our return.