

Summary of NPC policy

as adopted by the

Biennial Delegate Conferences and NPC bodies 2007-2023

September 2023

National Pensioners Convention

Marchmont Community Centre

62 Marchmont Street

London WC1N 1AB

**POLICIES PASSED AT THE 2007 BDC**

**GENERAL POLICY**

* This BDC notes the massive challenge that still exists to eliminate poverty in retirement. Conference calls on the NPC to embark on a high profile campaign, working with other like-minded organisations such as the trade unions to raise awareness and win public support to bring an end to these problems. The campaign should include the following:
1. an immediate substantial increase in the level of the state pension;
2. an immediate restoration of state pension indexation to the best of prices or earnings;
3. an end to means testing of benefits;
4. measures to ensure that pensioners are protected from inflation plus rises in council tax, and
5. free travel on all modes of public transport.

**STATE PENSION**

* This BDC believes that the NPC should embarrass the Labour Government by promoting the first section of the Pensioners’ Charter more powerfully, including supporting AGE’s campaign to persuade all EU national Governments to allocate sufficient resources to provide adequate pension provision.

It is a disgrace that the basic state pension for a single person is over £40 per week below the Government’s own poverty line measurement and is one of the lowest in Europe.

We call upon the NPC Executive to put this at the forefront of its campaigns on behalf of all the people of this country.

* This BDC instructs the executive Committee to campaign for the state pension to be raised to the level that it would have been if the link to earnings had not been broken in 1980.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

* This BDC believes that the National Health Service has a duty to meet the cost of care for the elderly if an assessment is made that nursing care is needed.

Conference further believes that elderly people who need personal as well as nursing care should have that care provided at no cost. Such provision of care should not be subject to any form of means-testing, which is a penalty on hard work, thrift and enterprise.

Conference therefore calls on the NPC to campaign for free health and community care throughout the UK.

* This BDC places on record our continuing belief in the principles set out in the 1946 National Health Service Act, establishing the right of every citizen to a comprehensive health service funded through taxation and designed to secure improvement in the physical and mental health of the people and the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness free of charge.

We are therefore deeply concerned that this government is betraying these principles and undermining the whole NHS ethos through its so-called reconfiguration policies carried out with no mandate, no proper consultation and shifting policies from patient care to finance.

Whilst publicly owned health care is facing massive debts, billions of pounds are being handed over to private companies through Private Finance Initiatives, Local Improvement Finance Initiatives, the privatisation of diagnostic and blood services, clinics, day centres and even whole hospitals. Massive sums are being paid to financial consultants, whilst there are cuts in medical and ancillary staff and closures of wards and community hospitals especially those dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of vulnerable old and disabled people.

We congratulate NHS Together, Keep Our NHS Public, our affiliated organizations and pensioners throughout the country who have been in the forefront of opposing these attacks on our health service. We believe that local campaigns of NHS staff, patients and their relatives must increase the pressure to force government to listen: we are not opposed to change, but we are opposed to the abandonment of our NHS.

This BDC therefore calls on:

1. the TUC to lend its full support, financial and organisational to the united national demonstration in London on 7 July 2007 to mark the anniversary of the 1946 National Health Service Act with the aim: Save Our NHS, and
2. all affiliates and members to join with others on the day.

**POST OFFICES AND LOCAL SERVICES**

* This BDC agrees that the post office network is a vital community resource. It calls on the NPC Executive Committee to campaign to prevent further unnecessary closures to post offices and to ensure that the replacement for the Post Office Card Account can be opened and used at a post office.
* This BDC affirms that free, clean, accessible and efficient public toilets are essential for a civilised society. Conference notes that there is no statutory obligation on local authorities to provide public lavatories. We therefore call upon the NPC to campaign for the long overdue introduction of legislation to address this aspect of public health.

**COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS**

* For many years people who live alone in England have been allowed a 25% discount on their rates and more recently their community tax. Such a discount is especially beneficial to pensioners, many of whom live on their own.

However, single occupancy households in Northern Ireland receive no such benefit. This BDC urges the Executive Committee to campaign for this concession to be extended to Northern Ireland.

**DIGITAL SWITCHOVER**

* This BDC calls on the government, at the time when analogue television and radio are discontinued, to offer a free digital box to all pensioners who do not already have one, and arrange for those boxes to be fitted and tuned in at no cost to the pensioner concerned.

Furthermore, where necessary, in any case of acceptance of the offer, an upgraded reception aerial shall be provided, installed and satisfactorily tested at no cost to the pensioner concerned. If a pensioner relies solely on a radio for information, a DAB radio shall be provided in the same way as the digital box outlined above.

**IDENTITY THEFT**

* This BDC is concerned about recent reports of Government agencies publishing letters through the public mail system to 26,000 pensioners which contain data of a personal nature. The letters were sent to the wrong people thus increasing the very real possibility of identity theft amongst a vulnerable group of the population.

At the same time it has come to our notice that the DWP insists on sending national insurance details to the main clearing banks when paying state benefits directly into personal bank accounts. Many clearing banks then identify NINos on personal statements which are then sent through the public mail system.

Unsuccessful attempts have been made to persuade the DWP that they should use a different system of being able to identify individuals, and banks have also been contacted who say that they have to identify pensioners on their statements by NINo.

This BDC feels that some other system should be found to safeguard both the pensioner and the state that does not expose the pensioner to identity theft. This BDC therefore calls upon the NPC to raise these concerns at the highest level within the DWP and the banking industry.

**AGE DISCRIMINATION**

* This BDC is very concerned and disturbed that the Equality Act 2006 contained no mention of discrimination on grounds of age, although it provided for combating remaining areas of discrimination or harassment on grounds of religion or sexual orientation; to bring them in line with the laws on sex, race and disability discrimination.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 that came into force in October 2006 are concerned only with discrimination in relation to employment.

Conference notes that there are many other areas in which discrimination has been made unlawful, in particular:

1. the provision of goods, facilities and services such as insurance etc
2. the provision of premises
3. the provision of education
4. by public authorities
5. in discriminatory advertisements
6. by instructing, causing or inducing someone to discriminate unlawfully or by other discriminatory practices

The law still leaves pensioners (and the under 18s) open to age discrimination in these areas, where all other vulnerable categories will be protected.

This BDC notes that Government proposals to make age discrimination illegal in the provision of goods, facilities and services were due to be published in a Green Paper in May 2007.

This BDC applauds the efforts of the NPC officers to press the Government to correct this inequality in the lead-up to the publication of the Green Paper.

This BDC instructs the NPC Executive Committee to continue campaigning on this issue with a view to ensuring that the forthcoming Single Equalities Bill does end age discrimination in the UK.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Committee to use all means to exert pressure for fresh legislation in respect of age discrimination at an early date, to cover areas other than employment; and recommends all NPC affiliates to do the same.

This BDC welcomes the Government’s new Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 although trade unions need to continue to campaign for retirement on a decent state pension at 60 or earlier if possible.

However, welcome as the new regulations are, they only cover people at work and in one respect older and retired people are still massively discriminated against. The new legislation makes no attempt to outlaw the discrimination that older people face in respect of the provision of goods and services.

Older people can be refused insurance, access to medical treatments and a range of other goods and services on the grounds of age.

This loophole in the law could have been addressed in this current legislation, but was not, so the discrimination against older people will continue.

This BDC believes this discrimination is innately unfair and instructs the Executive Committee to:

1. Campaign for changes in the law to make ageism in the provision of goods and services illegal through all means possible including;
2. Raising the this issue at the TUC, Labour Party and other labour movement conferences
3. Highlighting the issue through articles in The Message and on the NPC website
4. Support current initiatives being undertaken by AGE to obtain an EU Directive eliminating age discrimination.

**FINANCE**

* This BDC congratulates the CSPA on its recent decision to ask each of its individual members to make a regular financial contribution through their annual subscriptions towards the work of the NPC.

In view of the need to guarantee the NPC’s long-term future, this BDC therefore calls upon every affiliated national pensioner organisation to follow the CSPA’s example and consider ways in which each of their individual members can make an annual contribution to the NPC’s funds.

* This BDC, aware of the ongoing funding problems that hinder the NPC's
development and campaigning effectiveness, believes that to ensure a firm
financial future, it is necessary to base affiliation fees for National
Pensioner organisations on an appropriate rate per member per year.

This BDC therefore agrees to instruct the Executive Committee to urgently
investigate introducing affiliation fees for National Pensioner
Organisations with the aim over three years of achieving a rate of 10p per
member per year.  The Executive Committee to report back in six months time.

**AGE RELATED PERSONAL TAX ALLOWANCES**

* Whilst this BDC welcomes the significant increase in the Age Related
Personal Allowances, which will take effect from April 2008, it is
nevertheless seriously concerned about the adverse effect the abolition of
the 10% tax band will have on pensioners between the ages of 60 and 64.

These pensioners will be from a variety of employments, who often had no
choice in having to retire at age 60, and a significant proportion of them
will be women. This BDC therefore agrees that the NPC will campaign to persuade the Government to take steps to offset the effects of the tax changes in order that pensioners in the age group 60-64 will not be disadvantaged.

**HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

* This BDC is appalled that the House of Lords ruling on the Human Rights Act and residents of private care homes, made on 20 June 2007, effectively denies vulnerable people legal protection in relation to their care in private care homes.

Bearing in mind that central government was instrumental in recommending local councils sell their care homes to the private sector to achieve budgetary savings, how can they accept that the responsibility which was formally theirs as moral custodians, is now lost as a direct result of their own irresponsible oversight.

This is a total abrogation of their duty to protect the vulnerable as laid down in the Charter of Human Rights, and the NPC Executive Committee is instructed to seek to re-establish those rights, by whatever means necessary.

**POLICIES PASSED AT THE 2009 BDC**

**GENERAL ELECTION STRATEGY**

* This Biennial Delegate Conference notes the outcome of the seminar held on 1 July 2008 on how the NPC should intervene strategically and organizationally in the next General Election and future European Elections. This Conference, therefore, instructs the Executive Committee to prepare and initiate, as a matter of urgency, an NPC General Election Strategy, focusing on a number of key issues. This strategy should include not only immediate demands in relation to the state pension, to health and social care, and to transport, but also more long-term objectives, including the need for a fundamental re-think of pensions policy, with a proper state pension for all as its centrepiece.

**TAX ALLOWANCES**

* This Biennial Delegate Conference of the National Pensioners Convention agrees that pensioners continue to pay a disproportionate amount from their incomes by the way of direct taxation, given the contributions already made during their working lives. This Conference, therefore agrees to campaign for the personal tax allowance to be set at a significantly higher rate.
* This BDC requests that the NPC campaign to restore the marriage tax allowance which was withdrawn for couples born after 1935.

**HEALTH AND CARE**

* As health is of concern to everyone, but particularly older people, we call upon the National Pensioners Convention to campaign vigorously for the following:
1. An all inclusive, free at the point use, National Health Service that includes the

dental, eye and elderly care services as when the NHS was first introduced in 1948.

1. (The NHS internal market to be ended together with any form of privatisation

such as the costly private finance initiative and any EU health directives, aimed at privatising the health service, to be opposed.

1. Improved democratic control of the NHS through greater powers for the user

and those working in the service, or their representatives, at trust level.

* This BDC welcomes the joint NPC/GMB ‘Care Free’ campaign recognizing that social care should be provided through taxation and that the social care system should:
1. Reject the use of means-testing and be properly funded by central government to provide free services to all without the use of rationing criteria
2. Recognise that the use of personal budgets places an unnecessary burden on individuals and undermines proper statutory care services
3. End the postcode lottery in provision and replace it with national standards of access and quality of services
4. Value and support, both in financial and practical terms, the families and carers of users
5. Recognise the need for properly trained, supervised and paid staff to assess, enable and care for users
6. Offer appropriate care to Britain’s diverse pensioner population

**DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE**

* Conference notes that Disability Living Allowance is paid only to people who have qualified to receive it before they reach their 65th birthday; and that Attendance Allowance, which is payable to people who qualify on or after their 65th birthday, does not include any payment to help with mobility.

In view of the increasing life expectancy of pensioners, many of whom become less mobile later in their lives, and the importance of continuing to lead an active, involved and independent life in retirement, Conference regards these existing restrictions as outdated, short-sighted and counterproductive.

Conference considers it important to facilitate the continued mobility and participation in normal daily life of pensioners and therefore calls for extension of the provisions of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance to all pensioners who can benefit from them.

Conference therefore agrees that the NPC should press this demand on Government using all means available and instructs its National Committee to pursue this policy.

**HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

* The human rights now enshrined in legislation should affirm the equal dignity and worth, to which we are all entitled, but the human rights of our sector of society are daily and routinely violated and this needs to be stopped. Elder abuse is a shameful by-product of age discrimination and as such is totally unacceptable. Elder abuse occurs in the home, in nursing and residential homes to the detriment of defenceless older people. This Conference believes elder abuse is unlawful.

Conference welcomes the commitment given by Ivan Lewis MP, Health and Social Care Minister, to amend the Health and Social Care Bill to make care homes providing publicly-arranged accommodation directly subject to duties under the Human Rights Act.

However, Conference is concerned that self funders will continue not to be covered by the Human Rights Act, only having recourse to refer complaints to an independent adjudicator. Those who pay for residential care themselves do not usually do so by choice and analogies between those paying for residential care and those choosing whether or not to pay for private health care or private education are misleading.

Conference believes that irrespective of who pays for the care, older people in institutions need the protection of the 12 tenets of the Human Rights Act as they are by definition dependent on the care of others for their day to day survival and quality of life as a result of physical and/or mental illness. Therefore, Conference calls upon the NPC to:

1.    Take appropriate action to eradicate the disgraceful, discriminatory

 practice of elder abuse;

2.    Make approaches to the government with a view to changing legislation

 to correct the inequalities in human rights as it affects pensioners

 especially in nursing homes and residential homes.

3. Press for the extension of protection under the Human Rights Act to all

 older people in private care homes.

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PRIVATISATION**

* This NPC Conference congratulates our trade unions on maintaining a high profile in the TUC’s campaign – “Speak Up For Public Services” and notes with concern the continuing privatisation of essential public services. The elderly are at risk right through the public sector.

Conference therefore calls for a renewed commitment to the public sector and will continue to campaign against privatisation proposals or measures that will adversely impact upon the elderly.

**LIFELONG LEARNING**

* This BDC calls on the NPC Executive to:
* affiliate to the “Campaigning Alliance for Lifelong Learning”;
* have the NPC’s name and logo added to the more than 180 Trade Unions and other organisations, who support the Campaign’s main principle of access to high quality education for all learners, (regardless of: class, gender, age,ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, asylum status or employment status):
* reinforce the campaign to restore concessionary tuition rates to people over 60.

**POLICIES PASSED AT THE 2011 BDC**

**PENSIONS AND INCOME**

* This BDC congratulates the Pensions and Income Working Party on its detailed report which was presented to the Executive Committee in January 2011 and endorses its recommendations. However, the subject of the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) should be added to the working party agenda as a matter of urgency.
* This Biennial Delegate Conference of the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) notes with disgust the Government’s attack on occupational pensions both private and public sector by lowering the indexation from RPI to CPI. Lord Hutton’s interim report calculates that this amounts to a 15% cut in the value of these pensions. This same change in indexation will also apply to elements of the State Pension from April 2011.

This attack is being carried forward in the employers’ current attempt to railroad through changes in the pre-92 universities USS pension scheme. Here indexation will be capped at 5% which will heavily erode the pension if there is even a limited period of high inflation.

The NPC commits itself to campaign to reverse these changes in the indexation of elements of the State Pension and of occupational pensions, and seeks to involve the wider Trade Union movement in this campaign.

* This Biennial Delegate Conference of the National Pensioners Convention notes that to most of today’s pensioners their house is a home which they have spent years making their own. Also as pensioners tend to remain in the family home until they die or move into a care home they do not benefit from increased house values.

Hence, as very few pensioners use their home to supplement their income, this Biennial Delegate Conference calls on the National Pensioners convention to strongly oppose any move to include the investment value of owning one’s home in any arrangement to include housing costs in the basket of goods for the evaluation of any inflation price indices.

* This BDC of the National Pensioners Convention supports the idea that personal tax allowances between married couples and civil partnerships should be transferable if they so wish, particularly for pensioners on Age Allowances.

The Executive Committee is instructed to pursue this matter with the appropriate government department in order to bring about this change in the taxation system.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

* This BDC believes the current social care system is riddled with complexity; uses an unfair system of means-testing to determine payment, perpetuates a postcode lottery of funding and standards; provides little support for family carers and has a distinct lack of personalised services.

In addition there are concerns surrounding the standards and quality of care services, the training, remuneration and employment conditions of the care workforce and the lack of a robust and effective regulation and monitoring of care providers.

This BDC is further concerned by the work of the new Long-term Care Commission, its limited terms of reference and its potential lack of independence and calls on the NPC to campaign, alongside others who share our aims, to influence the commissioners, ministers, politicians and the general public to support the creation of a National Care Service which is funded through general taxation and provides a high quality, comprehensive system of social care that meets national standards and is available to everyone, based on their care needs rather than their income, in line with the policies outlined in the NPC document *Shaping the Future of Care Together*.

* Conference will be aware that in a White Paper in March 2010 the former Labour Government announced plans to establish a national care service free at the point of need. Decisions on the funding of this proposal were to be delayed until after the May general election of that year.

Conference notes that the new coalition government has scrapped the White Paper and given a commitment to establish a new independent commission to advise on the future funding of long-term care. The Commission are likely to consider a range of ideas including a voluntary insurance scheme and a partnership scheme.

Conference further notes that the United Kingdom has some six million unpaid carers who provide support for most of the elderly and vulnerable members of society at a saving to the state of £87 million a year.

Conference instructs the Executive Committee to urgently press for an immediate improvement in access to respite services for both carers and those receiving care.

These aims to be financed from General Taxation, with no means-testing, rationing or postcode lottery.

* The Coalition government asks us to forget the past and join their new vision for a 21st century care and support system, by they provide no balance sheet of the old vision and the disastrous policies which are leading to its destruction.

The new vision means transferring risk and responsibility either to the individual who needs social care or to their relatives. They must now take on management roles (wages, income tax, national insurance and manual handling regulations etc) or deal directly with private companies which would provide advice or care for profit.

Expecting some of the most vulnerable older people to take on the responsibility of employers for example, recruitment, dealing with payroll matters, contracts, employment rights and discipline is simply unrealistic. In effect, rather than giving choice to the individual, personal budgets open up the chances of abuse by those who manage the individual’s affairs and those organisations who see it as an opportunity to win contracts and make profits.

Local authorities have a regulated workforce and can monitor and enforce the contracts they have with private companies. There are also scrutiny committees where electors can raise their concerns, doubts and opposition. They are democratically accountable through annual elections in which councillors can be removed from office.

This BDC therefore believes that it is essential that local authorities continue to regulate the system of personalised payments.

**DIGNITY CODE**

* This BDC calls on the NPC to campaign for the introduction of a nationwide Dignity Code in all health and social care settings for all older people that will be adopted by central and local government, health professionals and other appropriate bodies as a way of upholding their rights and maintaining their personal dignity, within the context of ensuring the health, safety and well being of those older people increasingly less able to care for themselves or to properly conduct their affairs.

This Code must recognise that certain practices and actions are unacceptable to older people, such as:

* Being abusive or disrespectful in any way, ignoring people or assuming they cannot do things for themselves
* Treating older people as objects or speaking about them in their presence as if they were not there
* Not respecting the need for privacy
* Not informing older people of what is happening in a way that they can understand
* Changing the older person’s environment without their permission
* Intervening or performing care without consent
* Using unnecessary medication or restraints
* Failing to take care of an older person’s personal appearance
* Not allowing older people to speak for themselves, either directly or through the use of a friend, relative or advocate
* Refusing treatment on the grounds of age

This Code therefore calls for:

* Respect for individuals to make up their own minds, and for their personal wishes as expressed in ‘living wills’, for implementation when they can no longer express themselves clearly
* Respect for an individual’s habits, values, particular cultural background and any needs, linguistic or otherwise
* The use of formal spoken terms of address, unless invited to do otherwise
* Comfort, consideration, inclusion, participation, stimulation and a sense of purpose in all aspects of care
* Care to be adapted to the needs of the individual
* Support for the individual to maintain their hygiene and personal appearance
* Respect for people’s homes, living space and privacy
* Concerns to be dealt with thoroughly and the right to complain without fear of retribution
* The provision of advocacy services where appropriate

**THE WELFARE STATE AND PUBLIC SERVICES**

* This BDC recognises that the greatest impact of the government’s proposed cuts programme will affect the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society, many of whom are pensioners. As those who helped create the welfare state and public services after the Second World War, pensioners have a vital role to play in campaigning for certain key principles of universalism and public provision through taxation, rather than means-testing and privatisation.

This BDC therefore calls on the NPC to:

* Continue to make representations to government and other political parties on those issues that concern older people
* Produce information and research to support campaigning against the cuts which undermine the welfare state and public services for older people
* Hold events and demonstrations where appropriate to highlight our opposition to those proposals which have an adverse impact on older people
* Work with other appropriate organisations that share our aims, like the trade union movement, to build solidarity between the generations
* Promote the NPC’s policies as widely as possible across society to ensure the views of older people are not ignored or overlooked from the discussion
* The National Pensioners Convention deplores the unfairness of the government’s cuts in pensions and services to date, and commits itself to work with any groups or organisations which campaign on a non-party political basis, and of course on a non-racist and non-sexist basis, to oppose attacks on the welfare state and public services, including supporting campaigns to save jobs.

This BDC congratulates the leadership of the NPC on its work with trades unions and others in helping to build a broadly based popular resistance to the government’s attacks on welfare, pensions and services available to pensioners.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**

* This BDC notes that the government has already abandoned the socio-economic duty of the Equality Act passed just before the General Election in 2010. There have also been efforts to water down the age discrimination ban in relation to the provision of health and social care. This BDC therefore instructs the NPC to campaign through its affiliates, the trade union movement and friendly MPs to ensure that the ban is implemented in full as soon as possible.
* This BDC calls on the National Pensioners Convention to demand the introduction of legislation which protects older people against abuse by bringing in a legal definition as defined under the Children’s Act, and invites other organisations to join us in this demand.

**DEVELOPING THE NPC**

* Since 2001 the NPC has embarked on a programme of regionalisation to strengthen the internal democracy of the organisation, and raise the profile of the Convention in every part of the country.

The creation of specialist working parties has enabled more people to get involved in a rolling programme of policy development, and the recent launch of the NPC Supporter’s Card and affiliate’s logo have promoted the idea that individuals can become part of the NPC – either directly or through their affiliated group.

This BDC now believes that these positive developments need further consideration and calls on the structure working party to carry out a feasibility study into the following:

* Creating a national individual membership system to run alongside group affiliation and assessing what rights each would have under such an arrangement
* Simplifying the existing affiliated fee structure, particularly between the regional and national NPC
* Considering how such changes would affect the NPC’s existing structure and organisation

The working party should produce a report with recommendations to be considered by the EC before the end of 2011. No final decision shall be taken by the EC until clear recommendations have been considered by regions prior to a debate and vote at a meeting of the National Council.

* This BDC calls upon the EC or the appropriate sub-committee, to examine the feasibility of recording/filming the highlights of the NPC Pensioners’ Parliament, with a view to it being made accessible via the NPC website. A recommendation whether to proceed would be made to the first EC meeting in 2012. If agreed this would be applied to the 2012 NPC Pensioners’ Parliament.

**THE FUTURE OF THE NHS**

* This Biennial delegate Conference notes that the Health and Social Care Bill, published on 19 January 2011, shows that responses objecting to the White Paper Liberating the NHS: Equity & Excellence have been ignored. The NPC strongly objected to the proposal to abolish Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and give 80 per cent of NHS commissioning monies to consortia which GPs would be forced to form and which would not be in any way accountable to local people. Public bodies would be abolished and replaced by narrower bodies meeting with press and public excluded, and not required even to consult the public on changes.

We further note that:

* The NHS has widespread support among the general public which overrides any acceptance of the cuts culture introduced by the Coalition government.
* The far-reaching changes in the structure of the NHS outlined in the White Paper proposals and the Bill were not included in either the Tory or Lib Dem manifestoes nor in the Coalition agreement, which means there is no mandate for them.
* If the Bill succeeds, it will widen health inequalities between England and the other nation states of the UK.
* GPs will have to buy in the necessary management and financial expertise, probably from private companies, heralding the end of the NHS in England as any more than a fund administered by and spent on private sector providers.
* Senior PCT staff were expensively trained for World Class Commissioning, and the delivery of more than 120 statutory duties: expertise which will be lost with the abolition of PCTs.
* Most GPs have expressed alarm at this change, which they see as risky to the NHS in England and potentially dangerous to patients.
* The Royal College of General Practitioners and the British Medical Association have also opposed the changes.
* The estimated costs of the reorganization, ranging between £1.8 and £3 billion, will outweigh any savings.
* The NHS budget is being cut by the demand for 20 per cent efficiency savings, outweighing the miniscule 0.1 per cent per year increases in funding, contrary to the government’s claim that the NHS is being protected from cuts.
* Hospitals are already announcing substantial staffing cuts, which will mean growing reductions in front line services in the next four years.

This BDC believes that:

1. The proposed changes to the NHS in England will be widely opposed by the general public, who may be less inclined to resist other cuts;
2. Retaining the PCT commissioning role for three years (with subsequent review) is a viable and much less expensive alternative;
3. Reorganising PCT Boards so that at least half their members are directly elected, while retaining appropriate representation of health professionals and the general public, would address the long-standing democratic deficit in NHS governance and give patients a proper role.

We therefore demand that the NPC makes opposition to the Bill a key and separate objective of policy including by:

* Pursuing the alternative policy outlined above.
* Declaring complete support for health service professional bodies and trade unions opposing the Bill, including by supporting actions they may take to defend the NHS as a service that is free at the point of delivery and funded by general taxation.
* To oppose the Bill through its Parliamentary contacts who should be urged to amend it in line with the points outlined above.
* Urging NPC regions and affiliates to initiate or join in local and trade union activities, protests and demonstrations opposing the government’s NHS proposals for England.

**POLICIES PASSED AT THE 2013 BDC**

**PENSIONS**

* This BDC congratulates the NPC Pensions and Income Working Party on the production of its report entitled “A Decent State Pension For All Generations” and endorses the recommendations outlined in the report’s summary as the basis of future campaigning on this issue.
* This BDC notes the presentation to Parliament on Monday 14 January 2013 of the long-awaited White Paper on State Pension Reform - The Single-Tier Pension: A Simple Foundation for Saving.

Whilst acknowledging that the framework of the proposals in the White Paper will eventually produce a more straight forward and comprehensible State Pension Scheme for future pensioners in a few decades time, this BDC recognises that there are major drawbacks in the proposals:

* that the level set for the Single-Tier State Pension is way below that of the official poverty threshold
* that any benefits of a Single-Tier State Pension will be denied to current pensioners and those that qualify for a State Pension before 2017
* that the accompanying abolition of the contracted-out rate of National Insurance Contributions (NICs) will have major detrimental consequences for existing Deferred Benefit Private Sector Pension Schemes and the terms & conditions of public service employees

This BDC therefore agrees to campaign together with all other willing organisations concerned with State Pension issues against the White Paper and to press for reforms of the current State Pension system that will improve the lots of both current and future pensioners.

* This BDC congratulates the NPC on the work it has done so far since the publication of the White Paper on the single-tier state pension and the draft Pensions Bill, and endorses the general approach outlined in the NPC’s briefing paper on this issue. The need to improve the state pension for existing as well as future pensioners is a crucial campaign and the NPC is therefore called upon to explore all possible ways of defeating the government’s proposals.
* The NPC condemn the government for passing through parliament procedure and changes to pensioners’ rights by introducing “A Single-Tier Pension” without any consultation being allowed from the general public and other interested parties such as the NPC.
* This Biennial Delegate Conference notes that it remains the intention of the Government to introduce a new flat rate basic state pension, corresponding to a current figure of £140 per week, in 2016.

Conference further notes that despite the introduction of the Equal Pay Act disposable income for older women is still disproportionate to that for older men. In particular the average state and occupational pension for women is considerably lower than for male pensioners.

Whilst the introduction of such a flat rate pension will alleviate the disparity between women’s and men’s pensions in the future, Conference believes it is unacceptable for future pension reforms to reproduce historic sex discrimination. Ending sex discrimination must be at the heart of reform.

Conference notes that the proposals are unacceptable for the following reasons:

* The new arrangements will not be backdated and many existing pensioners will remain financially disadvantaged
* No new money is to be provided and the increase in basic pensions will be funded by making people work longer and retire later
* By combining the basic pension with the state earnings related pension (SERPS) some future pensioners will actually be worse off than under the present scheme
* In any event, the new basic figure of £140 per week is considerably lower than the official poverty line figure of £178 per week
* The proposals do nothing to end sex discrimination in current pension provision

Conference requests the NPC to:

1. Initiate a campaign to have a basic state pension in line with the official poverty line figure (currently £178 a week) for all pensioners
2. Work closely with the Trade Union Congress, Scottish Trade Union Congress and other trade unions and relevant organisations to get support for such a campaign, and
3. Highlight the gap in pension provision between men and women with the intention of ending of such discrimination in all future campaigns to improve the state pension

**TAXATION**

* This conference instructs the NPC Executive Committee to call upon the government to close the loopholes in taxation legislation that currently enables companies and wealthy individuals to avoid paying UK taxes.

**UNIVERSAL BENEFITS**

* This BDC congratulates the National Pensioners’ Convention, Age UK and all the other pensioner organisations that have publicly opposed the threats to Universal Pensioner Benefits - Concessionary Bus Passes, Winter Fuel Payments, Free Prescriptions and Free TV Licences – and which have clearly demonstrated not only the advantages of these Benefits to society as a whole, but also recognises the large net contribution that pensioners make to the nation both financially and through unpaid care.

This BDC therefore instructs the Executive Committee to make this matter a priority in its campaign work for the next General Election and to involve the wider cross-section of organisations for and of older people in its future efforts to maintain our Universal Pensioner Benefits.

**THE WELFARE STATE**

* We reject the thinking of this, and the last government which divides society by artificially creating competition between its different component groups. This thinking demands, for example, that the poor and disadvantaged pay for those who are poorer and more disadvantaged by the “targeting” of benefits; taking money from some benefits to pay a little more for others. It removes free Higher Education and saddles those receiving it with enormous debts at the start of their working lives. It demonises pensioners as consumers of the welfare state at the expense of our children and grandchildren and seeks to remove all non means tested benefits to compensate for our cost to the state.

We reaffirm the thinking behind the creation of the welfare state which recognised that a civilised society provides for the general good of all its citizens. We note that the Age Related Tax Allowance was introduced under Winston Churchill in recognition of the indisputable fact that older people have to pay for things which younger people can do for themselves.

We understand that the only way to pay fairly for the welfare state is through honest, progressive taxation. We further recognise that no government has implemented this through fear of not being re-elected.

At this time it becomes clearer all the time that the rich and powerful live above the law and outside the rules which govern the rest of us. In doing so they have lied to set interest rates favourable to themselves and they have gambled recklessly with our money and brought the world economy to its knees. We believe that at this time the transparent taxation of rich people and rich companies will attract public support. We further believe that to stop providing help to those who need it is setting this country back 65 years.

We will not accept the removal of universal benefits. Today’s pensioners produced the current generation of workers; we are currently helping and supporting them with financial help, childcare, shelter and moral support. We are former workers and have contributed to the wealth of this country before the bankers got hold of it. We are voters and consumers.

This conference commits the NPC to uphold these principles in all discussions with politicians and the media, and to reject all suggestions that we owe the country anything or have anything to be ashamed of. We call on the NPC leadership and all affiliated organisations to campaign against the destruction of the welfare state and the oppression of older people.

* On Saturday 22nd December, 2012, it was revealed on BBC1 News and Sport programme at around 08.00hrs by a Parliamentary Researcher quoting from Office of National Statistics figures that:-

85% of all National Welfare Payments are made to persons currently in employment.

60% of all Housing Benefit Supplements are paid to persons in work.

Where now is the argument of Coalition Backbenchers (and some Government Ministers), that wealthy pensioners being paid supplementary benefits and allowances are responsible for the high cost of Housing and Social Care. They are currently demanding that all such pensioner benefits should be means-tested.

This argument, proven by their own figures, is a complete tissue lies.

We must insist on a Ministerial Statement, delivered in House of Commons, withdrawing any such statement (s) that are unjustified, and are a distortion of the facts in relation to pensioners and their benefits. This ministerial statement should be a warning to all MP’s that any such future statements must be both truthful and factual, from whichever corner of the house they are made.

**WINTER DEATHS**

* This Biennial Delegate Conference instructs the NPC Executive Committee to draw up a nationwide press and poster campaign to draw public attention to the elderly winter death figures published by the Office for National Statistics.

**NHS**

* This BDC instructs the NPC to instigate a campaign for the re-nationalisation of Health Services and social care on the model and principles drawn up by the Labour government which brought about the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948. Then, similar to the present day, was a time of sever austerity, high unemployment and also rationing. The objectives should be to reverse the wholesale privatisation of the Health Service and social care system by politicians and profiteers and cancel all PFI contracts which are a drain on the public purse and a burden on taxpayers well into the future.
* This BDC welcomes the publication of Lord Owen’s National Health Service (Amended Duties and Powers) Bill which seeks to reinstate the secretary of state’s duty to secure or provide health services as the key to a free at point-of-use, comprehensive and democratically accountable NHS. Furthermore, the NPC is called upon to work with other like-minded organizations to give full support to this Bill in whatever way possible.
* This BDC notes that reports of older people being failed by the NHS are increasing as the effects of the Health and Social Care Act kick in.

These changes, which were not heralded in any party manifesto, are moving the NHS in England towards an American style privatised healthcare system. The World Health Organisation’s league table has put the US healthcare system at No 37 in the world, far below the level of the NHS. In the US, 44 million people have no access to free healthcare and more than 70 per cent of American bankruptcies are caused by the inability of people to meet their medical bills.

Pensioners campaigned for the NHS and wish to bequeath its benefits to future generations. This BDC therefore agrees that the NPC must become the leading voice of pensioners in campaigning to maintain the NHS in England as a comprehensive, publicly provided health service free at the point of use.

**SOCIAL CARE**

* This BDC notes the announcement by Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health on 11 February 2013 outlining plans for the reform of social care funding from April 2017. Conference agrees that these proposals do not offer sufficient progress on this issue to be worthy of support and reaffirms its support for the NPC to continue campaigning for a National Health and Care Service which is free at the point of delivery and funded through general taxation.

**HEALTHWATCH**

* This conference is concerned that the replacement of Local Involvement Networks by Local HealthWatch will be used as an opportunity by local authorities to reduce the influence of local communities on the provision of health service and social care provision locally.

Conference instructs the NPC to work with other organisations such as Age UK, the National Association of Links Members and trade unions in the health and social care province to work towards a position whereby the funds provided by the Department of Health (or its successor bodies) for HealthWatch are effectively ring fenced and are not diverted to fund other projects.

Conference furthermore expresses its support that a significant number of the members of local HealthWatch organisations should be appointed or elected by and accountable to the local community. Conference instructs the NPC to work towards this aim.

* This BDC recognises that Healthwatch will be the new body that replaces LINks and will have an important role to play in being the voice of the patient within the NHS. Given that older people make up a majority of the NHS users, it is vital that their voice is heard. This will help in the development of services appropriate to the needs of older people, particularly in areas such as dementia care where much more work needs to be done.

It seems appropriate therefore that all Healthwatch Boards have a reserved seat for at least one older person who is elected from an appropriate community group who is able to represent the views of older people in their area and we call on the NPC to raise this issue with the appropriate government minister in order to ensure that Healthwatch Boards reflect the age profile of people using the NHS.

**COSTS OF RETIREMENT HOUSING**

* By 2026, older people may make up almost half of the increase in the total number of households. To avoid residential care every effort should be made to keep older people independent at home. Many of them have to pay extra to do so. This includes wardens/house managers, fire alarms, smoke detectors, emergency buttons, 24 hour care lines, security, cctv, the testing of systems, communal coffee lounges, gardeners, window cleaning, adaption of bathrooms/premises etc. If these people are taxpayers they should be able to claim a tax rebate for such expenditure. Although care should be provided free if there is a charge this should also be claimed. This conference instructs the NPC to adopt this as policy and take it forward in any submission and discussion on taxation of pensions.

**RESTORING ADULT EDUCATION**

* This Biennial Delegate Conference deplores the decimation of publicly provided adult education services which has been carried out under successive governments.

It believes that a wide variety of educational experiences – artistic, physical and intellectual - can contribute substantially to the health and wellbeing of older people.

It rejects the move towards providing publicly funded support only for employment related vocational courses as being socially harmful and in fact discriminatory against older people.

Conference calls on the NPC to renew its campaign in support of publicly funded non-vocational adult education and for the re-introduction of fee concessions for pensioners, within the terms of the Equality Act 2010, which allows for “beneficial concessions in services , for example cheap haircuts for pensioners, cut price or free travel related to age” (EHRC website 2012).

**GENERATIONS UNITED**

* This BDC acknowledges that the government’s programme of austerity has yet to be fully implemented, but is already hurting many people, including millions of pensioners. At the same time, there has been a distasteful suggestion by a selection of politicians, think tanks and media commentators that older people have escaped this financial hardship at the expense of younger generations. Not only is this assertion factually incorrect, it is also extremely divisive. That is why there is an urgent need to unite the generations in a campaign to defend public services and the welfare state and we believe the launch of the Generations United initiative in October 2012 was a very positive first step towards this goal. We now call on the NPC to:
* Promote alternatives to the government’s austerity programme
* Join with other organizations who share this approach
* Publicise the need for all generations to join together to campaign against cuts in public spending
* Join with younger people’s organizations to pursue this

**GENERAL ELECTION STRATEGY**

* Over the last year there has been a growing number of attacks on universal pensioner benefits from all sides of the political spectrum. It is clear that the future of these benefits will be a key issue at the next general election and this BDC calls on the NPC to:
* Produce a Candidate’s Pledge that can be put before those standing in the General Election which, should they be elected, asks them to defend all universal pensioner benefits
* Hold a series of regional hustings meetings where this issue can be discussed
* Publicise a Pensioners’ Manifesto of key election demands to be put before all the main political parties across the UK

**NPC PARLIAMENTARY GROUP**

* This BDC recognises the important development in setting up a NPC Parliamentary Group and expresses its thanks to Kelvin Hopkins MP in acting as the group's convener. As a way of strengthening this part of the NPC's work, this BDC ask the NPC to:-
* Arrange for him to give a Parliamentary Report once a year to the National Council
* Encourage MPs to join the group
* Stage at least two meetings of the group a year and publicise the outcomes

**GENDER BALANCE IN THE NPC**

* This 2013 Biennial Delegate Conference notes the findings of the NPC Women’s Working Party that indicate that the proportion of women taking roles of responsibility within the NPC does not reflect the gender balance of the retired population as a whole.

This 2013 Biennial Delegate Conference notes that the NPC Constitution 4e states "The NPC and its affiliated organisations should work towards a position where one half of the National Council and the Executive Committee members are women"

This 2013 Biennial Delegate Conference therefore strongly recommends that regional organisations put in place open and transparent measures that will encourage greater involvement of women and give them support to participate in decision making roles.

In addition, this 2013 Biennial Delegate Conference recommends that regional organisations should appoint a Regional Women’s Officer to encourage women to take part in decision making roles. She should be given support to:

* Lead a discussion on the issue of local under-representation of women.
* Identify local reasons for low participation.
* Put in place measures that will encourage greater involvement of women.

**POLICIES PASSED AT THE 2015 BDC**

**STATE PENSION AND BENEFITS**

This BDC recognises that the austerity measures are having a negative effect on working people, and will ultimately have a huge impact on tomorrow’s pensioners. Whilst it would appear to be good news that unemployment is coming down in many regions of the country, it is regrettable that many of the jobs created will be part-time, low wage, no minimum levels of security of employment with zero hour contracts.

All these issues are likely to impact on future pension provisions for tomorrow’s pensioners. The state pension provision will be reduced as National Insurance contributions are reduced, either by lower wages or increases in self-employment.

The low skill opportunities are no substitute for proper training, for example via bona fide apprenticeships in industries that are of economic benefit to the future prosperity of the country.

Conference therefore pledges to continue to highlight the dangers facing future generations and to campaign for decent pensions and universal benefits for all.

**UPRATING OF PENSIONS**

This BDC notes that, despite the statement made on behalf of the Labour Party to the NPC Rally on 5 November 2014, the prospects, post-General Election 2015, for the re-instatement of RPI as the index used for increases in the State Pensions, both Basic and Additional, remain remote, not least because of the decision made by the UK Statistics Authority in March 2013 to remove recognition of RPI as a ‘national statistic’ by removing its benchmark of quality.

This BDC also notes that the legislation for the introduction of the Single-Tier State Pension (STSP) in April 2016 will mean that the annual uprating of the STSP will be determined by increases in Average Weekly Earnings (AWE), whereas legislative increases in the current Basic & Additional State Pensions will continue to be linked to CPI, all of which will be further confused by the, as yet equivocal, commitments from the major political parties on the application of the triple-lock to the current Basic State Pension, the STSP or both?

In order to ensure that current and future pensioners are treated fairly and receive increases in their State Pensions that properly reflect increases in the costs of living, this BDC agrees that the NPC should:

* Campaign for the current Basic & Additional State Pensions and the STSP to all be increased annually by reference to the triple-lock mechanism
* Jointly with other pensioner organisations, consider, in the wake of the 2015 General Election, whether a return to the use of RPI remained a realistic objective and whether there were more achievable measures for protecting pensioners from inflationary pressures

**FUTURE OF ANNUITIES**

This Conference of the NPC deplores the government’s decision to allow people retiring to spend their pension pot other than on annuities. It notes that contributions to pension schemes of all kinds attract tax allowances and do not attract capital gains tax or income tax on dividends precisely because they are designed to provide a regular income from retirement until death.

In a Guardian article Will Hutton, while recognising that annuities are not performing well, observed that: “what we will have instead is more inequality, an escalating buy-to-let boom, more pensioner poverty, lower annuity based pensions for those who choose them, less home ownership and less infrastructure investment”.

We therefore call on a new government to repeal this decision and to undertake a serious long-term policy review of pension provisions for all, taking account of:

* the increasing attacks on occupational pensions
* the increase in part-time working, often for more than one employer
* the use of fixed term contracts including zero hours contracts
* agency working and bogus self-employment schemes
* the total inadequacy of both the existing and newly planned state pension
* the serious possibility of many people losing their employment long before the ever increasing retirement age

The review should take as its starting point the real and predicted needs of all people and their right to a comfortable retirement free from financial anxiety, rather than the government’s view of what can be afforded.

**HANDS OFF UNIVERSAL BENEFITS**

This Biennial Conference opposes any attempts by Governments across the UK to cut universal benefits for older people such as the winter fuel payment, free bus pass, free prescriptions and free TV licences.

These benefits are essential to ensuring a decent standard of living and social inclusion for millions of pensioners who face daily poverty, fuel poverty and discrimination due to inadequate occupational and state pensions, as well as unequal access to public services including health and social care. They are essential to help keep older people independent and active.

Any reductions in these benefits will have an adverse effect on pensioners especially those who are already on the breadline. Pensioners need the bus pass, free health prescriptions and winter fuel payment, why because the state pension is nowhere near a living income.

This Biennial Conference refutes the myths that:

1. All pensioners are wealthy. The reality is that the UK is ranked fourth out of 27 EU countries in relation to the risk of poverty amongst older people;

2. Pensioners are a burden on society. Research shows that the overall net contribution by older people to the UK economy is almost £40bn a year;

3. Means testing will help the neediest. All the evidence shows that means testing does not work for older people with over £5billion a year of means tested benefits going unclaimed, mostly by those who need them the most;

4. Older people have escaped the austerity measures. Over the past few years the Winter Fuel Payment has been frozen, personal tax allowances have been frozen; pensions have been indexed to a lower CPI measure of inflation (CPI); and the increase in the state pension age for women has been brought forward.

This Biennial Conference calls on the National Pensioners Convention to continue to work with the ‘Hands Off’ campaign’ in its struggle to defend universal benefits for older people.

This Biennial Conference further calls on the National Pensioners Convention to work with all relevant organisations to oppose any current and future attack on universal benefits to ensure that whichever government is in power after the 2015 general election is aware to keep their “hands off our universal benefits”.

**PRINCIPLES OF THE NHS**

This conference believes that a National Health Service is essential for retired people and furthermore that this should be an accountable public service.

This Conference recognises the threats that this service faces including:

* The introduction of market principles into its operations
* The increasing outsourcing of NHS services to the private sector
* The reduction in the Secretary of State’s responsibility

This conference, therefore, supports the NHS Reinstatement Bill drafted by Peter Roderick and Allyson Pollock, resolves to campaign for its implementation and to work with the Keep Our NHS Public campaign to this end.

This conference further supports the NPC policy for a national care service combined with the NHS free at the point of use and funded by general taxation.

**TTIP AND THE NHS**

This BDC notes that there is now clear evidence of a well organised Tory plot dating back to 1987 to reduce the NHS to an American style insurance system. This plot is now being rolled out by the Coalition Government, which had no mandate to introduce the wholesale changes that have been made to the NHS since 2010.

The Health and Social Care act is the main trigger for this fundamental change, which had led to 70 per cent of all NHS services put out to tender being awarded to private companies.

Foundation trusts are now in a position to earn nearly half their incomes from private practice and to put their profits into offshore funds if they so wish. These developments are detrimental to the continued NHS model of a free and comprehensive health system available to all and irrespective of their means, which has been the envy of the rest of the world since it was introduced in 1948.

A new threat on the horizon is the current negotiations between the European Union and the United States of America under the TTIP proposals (The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) which would permanently hand over many NHS services to the private sector.

This BDC therefore instructs the NPC to campaign for a return to a fully comprehensive National Health Service funded by general taxation and free at the point of use. This campaign should include urging all affiliates to lobby candidates for the 2015 General Election to promise to work for the exclusion of the NHS from the TTIP proposals and for the repeal of the Health and Social Care Act.

**SELF MANAGEMENT OF OLDER PEOPLE – THE ROLE OF THE NURSE**

Older people frequently have one or more long term conditions such as heart disease, respiratory or neurological disease or diabetes. To assist them to take control of their conditions, in order to improve their quality of life and to avoid an over reliance on health and social care services, nurses have a pivotal role in helping older people to:

* Understand their conditions
* Learn new or different health related skills
* To work in partnership with health and social care staff
* To feel confident and in control

This support is frequently carried out by community nurses and specialist nurses in many settings. For some older people particularly those who have sensory loss, mobility problems or cognitive impairment as well as long term conditions there is a need for ongoing support from nurses who act as case managers or community matron to assist in their self management. However for the majority of older people self management may be taught by practice nurses, ward staff or community or clinic nurses. There are also a number of programme such as the expert patient programme that can reinforce self management techniques.

Self management involves nurses:

* Engaging and developing a relationship with the older person to assess their readiness to take control of their conditions.
* Helping to develop confidence so that decision can be shared
* Providing access to appropriate information and education
* Planning the care in an individual way that takes into account the persons conditions, preferences and desires.
* Making sure there is a mutually agreed care plan that is based on the best possible clinical evidence and improves the person’s quality of life.
* Negotiating with the person to set realistic goals that can be achieved.
* Helping to mobilise the right staff services and finances to meet the goals of the plan of care
* Monitoring and updating the plan of care when situations change

Self management involves the core nursing skills of communication, assessment, planning, delivering direct care and evaluating outcomes. It also requires a newer skill set such as motivational interviewing, coaching skills and in some cases advanced physical assessment and prescribing. Further nurses can use a strategy involving the five A's approach (assessment, advice, agree, assist and arrange) to help empower patients to help them to change their behaviour to improve their symptoms and outcomes.

This meeting of NPC BDC therefore calls on UK Governments and Health Departments to ensure that all older people have access to skilled nursing support to assist them to take greater control over their management of long term health conditions in order to improve the quality of their life.

**GP SERVICES**

Conference asks the NPC to put pressure on the Government to take measures to improve the ratio of GPs to patients. This could ease their workload and improve accessibility for patients.

**FUNDING OF SOCIAL CARE**

Conference notes the publication in September 2014 of the final report of the Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England issued by the King’s Fund. This report is concerned with the provision and affordability of social care. Some organisations representing older people have already welcomed the fact that the provision of and payment for social care set out in the report should be made out of general taxation and that discussion of this should be placed onto the national agenda. It is estimated that the cost of providing social care in England will rise from 9.6% to 12% of local authority budgets within the next ten years.

Conference agrees that a national debate about the provision and affordability of care in England should take place.

Conference however recognises that some of the proposals in the report such as older people having to pay prescription charges are not acceptable.

Conference agrees to encourage the return of local warden services.

Conference calls upon the Executive Committee to work with national affiliates and other older people’s organisations to initiate a national debate on the provision and affordability of social care in England and to reject any attempt to introduce means-testing to any of the present universal pensioner benefits.

**CARER’S ALLOWANCE**

This BDC recognises that caring for a partner or loved one does not cease just because a carer reaches their state pension age. However, current legislation does not allow Carer’s Allowance to be paid where the level of state pension at the time state pension age is reached is more than the level of the Carer’s Allowance.

This is unfair in terms of natural justice as Carer’s Allowance and State Pension are completely different payments. The reason why Carer’s Allowance is paid is self-explanatory and State Pension is deferred pay that has been accrued over a working lifetime.

The rules and regulations surrounding the claiming of benefits and/or allowances are complicated to say the least. The NPC needs to ensure that pensioners who are also carers are treated fairly and that their role is acknowledged and respected.

This BDC instructs the NPC to campaign for the right for carers to continue to receive Carer’s Allowance beyond their State Pension age without any detriment to their payments of State Pension.

**COMPOSITE MOTION 11. DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE – REMITTED TO THE EC**

This Biennial Delegates Conference calls upon the NPC to campaign for the Disability Living Allowance to be paid to anybody who is registered disabled at whatever age that might be, because people are now required to work longer before receiving the State Pension.

**Proposed: RMT**

This BDC recognises that new applicants for the Disability Living Allowance aged over 65 can only claim Attendance Allowance which does not include a mobility element; where as those under 65 years old do qualify for mobility help.

As this is still the case we are concerned that this issue has not had a higher profile in campaigning. We know of members who were receiving DLA on their 65th birthday and find the mobility element invaluable ad without it would be unable to function within society and would have a severely limited social life.

We feel that this is another example of age discrimination and while we accept that this only affects a minority, and other issues with a higher profile affect all of us pensioners, this issue should not be forgotten.

Therefore we call on this BDC to instruct the NPC executive to campaign actively on this issue, to insure that the mobility needs of people aged over 64 are recognised and a mobility element is included in Attendance Allowance for those qualifying for this benefit.

**Seconded: UNITE**

**DIGITAL EXCLUSION IN ENERGY MATTERS**

This Conference regrets the continuing trend by Government, utility companies and others towards “digital by default” in the form of online access to services, paper-free billing or exclusively digital communications. In particular, it expresses its deep concern at the financial penalties imposed on those who are unable to access, or have difficulty using the internet. This anomaly has resulted in a large majority of pensioners suffering unduly high additional costs, in excess of £275 a year for essential utilities. The resultant energy poverty is totally unacceptable, giving rise to a huge increase in “winter deaths”. The NPC is instructed to elevate its campaign to alleviate this problem, and to ensure that every opportunity is taken to publicise this issue.

**STANDING CHARGES ON UTILITY BILLS**

This BDC calls on the NPC to work with the Government to withdraw standing charges for pensioners from all utility bills. This would enable pensioners to spend a little bit more on the product they supply. This change would show an appreciation for all the years pensioners have paid into the utility companies’ profits.

**INCREASES IN HOUSING BENEFIT & RENT**

This BDC calls on the NPC to support a policy that keeps Housing Benefit and Rents in line with the cost of living as shown in the UK Inflation Rate that is determined month by month by the Office for National Statistics.

**EMERGENCY MOTION ON ADULT EDUCATION CUTS**

This conference is appalled to learn of the latest cut of 25% to the government budget for adult further education.

A concentration of remaining funds for further education on purely vocational training for younger people will effectively drive the final nail in the coffin of a once thriving adult education sector, offering adults not only second-chance education, but also the chance to learn new skills and/or to engage in the pursuit of knowledge, at various stages of their lives, including via a range of publicly funded or subsidised educational activities for older people which contribute to both mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Whilst fully supporting the need for more skills–based and general education for young people, we support the campaign of the University and College Union for the restoration of funding for the educational needs of adults.

**ENHANCEMENT OF THE CONCESSIONARY BUS PASS – REMITTED TO THE EC**

This Conference notes with disappointment the lack of support given to the limited experiment on two First Great Western branch routes, to allow use of the National Concessionary Bus Pass as a Senior Citizen Rail Card. Clearly there was no enthusiasm for this experiment from the rail company.

Conference also believes that resistance to this improvement in travel facilities for older people is orchestrated by the Association of Train Operating Companies which issues Rail Cards and claims it stands to lose up to £30m per annum be accepting the bus pass in lieu of the Rail Card.

Conference however believes that the Train Operating Companies will receive at least double that from new fares paid to them for new travel allowed by the adaptation of the National Concessionary Bus Pass to include trains, and that a similar concession re-introduced for scheduled coach services before being recently withdrawn generated similar significant traffic.

Conference believes, that in order to encourage greater use of public transport modes, the next UK government should extend appropriate rail, scheduled coach and ferry discount facilities to English, Scottish and Welsh National Concessionary Bus Pass holders.

Conference instructs the NPC Executive Committee to pursue this initiative by all practical means, including a leaflet lobby of all Concessionary Pass issuing authorities, by encouraging national debate in the TUC where appropriate and by putting pressure on the next government to implement this proposal.

**NPC MEMBERSHIP**

This Biennial Delegate Conference urges the NPC to make every effort to recruit members from organisations outside of the trade union movement, for example the Royal Voluntary Service and the Women’s Institute in order to widen the issues of pensioners and increase the membership of the NPC.

**POLICIES PASSED AT THE 2017 BDC**

**EFFECTS OF BREXIT ON PENSIONERS**

This Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC) notes the decision of the UK electorate, by Referendum, on 23 June 2016 to leave the European Union (EU) and the implications of that Referendum Vote as set out in the NPC Briefing Paper of June 2016.

In the event that the Government does proceed to invoke Article 50 and commence negotiations on the terms of the UK’s departure from the EU, this BDC agrees that the Government must ensure that the interests of UK pensioners are properly addressed during the course of and in the outcome of those negotiations.

To that end, the NPC is instructed to write to the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, asking that he ensures that, amongst other issues of concern to older people, there is no detriment to pensioners on the following matters, as a consequence of leaving the EU:

* Universal Pensioner Benefits
* The Triple-Lock
* Protection of UK pensioners resident in the EU
* Health protection for UK pensioners holidaying in the EU
* Double Taxation Treaties
* Staffing levels to provide Social & Health Care
* Funding for Housing Associations

This BDC also agrees that the NPC should campaign and work with any other organisation that supports and works in the interests of older people or in pursuit of these goals.

**DEVOLUTION**

This BDC is concerned at the potential dangerous effects of devolvement of services, responsibilities and power. It sees this policy as a means of central government passing on its responsibility for providing services to local authorities and other bodies, and calls on the NPC to oppose any such devolvement of services.

**OLDER PEOPLE’S COMMISSION**

This Conference welcomes the commitment of Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, to establish an Older People’s Commission to prepare a programme of reforms required to meet the needs of an aging population. We also wish and will campaign for all party support for an Older Persons Commissioner established in statute. We ask that the Commission is set up as soon as possible and that the NPC is represented on it

We will engage in its considerations, with the priority for a living state pension that takes pensioners out of poverty that ends the daily struggle by millions of older people to afford essential items such as food, gas and electricity.

We will seek a reversal of cuts to adult social care budgets, with the return of this essential service from private corporations to local government, adequately funded out of taxation.

We call for the housing needs of older people to be an integral part of the national plan to build new houses for social rent.

Until the state pension, which is currently the least adequate in the developed world, 32nd lowest out of 34 countries, reaches a living standard, we refuse to undermine the principles of universalism in pensioner benefits. We reject calls for an end to, or the means testing of, the concessionary bus pass, free prescriptions and eye tests, the over 75s free TV licence and winter fuel allowance. We also call for free access to adult education programmes

We reject the crude attempts to divide the generations. Inequality in Britain is not determined by age, but by class and wealth. Young and old have shared concerns, of housing, transport and pensions.

In supporting the Older People’s Commission we commit ourselves to campaigning alongside all workers, their families, and students to establish a just and equal society.

The NPC each year brings together many hundreds of older people to the Pensioners’ Parliament, to discuss the problems facing older persons in an Austerity driven economy. After reviewing the attacks being made on living standards across the country, pensioners return to their localities and conduct campaigns to protest what is happening.

Our task must be to transform protest into change. We believe it is necessary to mobilise the support already shown through the Parliament, linking up with the trade union retired sections, in to national demonstrations and campaigns, on issues focused by our members. Such campaigns would not just be lobbies of protest, but seeking to meet the needs necessary to improve the lives of our supporters and their families.

Unite therefore calls on the NPC to campaign on these issues. We urge the other main political parties to match the commitment of the Labour Party and set up their own Older People’s Commissions.

**PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY**

The intergenerational agenda to fight austerity can be served by combining with as many organisations as possible. This way the needs of pensioners can be explained while learning how other generations are affected.

The People’s Assembly is a broad, united and national campaign opposed to economic policies based on austerity, cuts to and privatisation of our public services and in defence of and support for a National Health Service free at the point of need and paid for through taxation. A broad united campaign which aspires to support, encourage and co-ordinate joint action based on affiliation by individual supporters and linked to no political party.

This BDC therefore calls on the NPC to affiliate to the People’s Assembly nationally and encourage regions and branches to get involved at a local level.

**TRIPLE LOCK**

Conference agrees that with low inflation and higher earnings the “Triple Lock” allowing Pensioners to “catch-up” on their State Pensions must be defended and maintained.

Conference notes the attack on the “Triple Lock” by the Institute of Economic Affairs and the Institute of Fiscal Studies urging the government to scrap it.

Conference further notes the Report from the Government Actuary Dept adding fears the Government would have to scrap the commitment.

Conference agrees that the NPC will campaign publicly and in Parliament to defend the Triple Lock and to maintain its continued use beyond the life of this and the next Parliament

Conference understands the confusion created by the use of percentage rises in average earnings v increases in basic state pension rates. In order to carry out an effective campaign on the issue of the Triple Lock, Conference instructs the NPC to include in all its information, comparison values of percentages translated into real monetary terms. In this way, it can be clearly seen that the cash value added to the basic state pension is not as great as that added to earnings.

**PENSION PROTECTION**

This conference notes with great concern, the way that individuals are threatened with the loss of part of their workplace pensions because of the actions of individuals such as Philip Green, the former head of BHS. The system that allows companies to avoid going into receivership by ‘packaging’ a sale, in his case to a known bankrupt for £1, is an absolute injustice, especially as he (or his wife) took hundreds of millions of pounds in profit from the company.

His statement that he was going to ‘deal’ with the pension fund deficit of over £500m does little to allay the fears and concerns of the former employees, many of whom stand to lose some of their pension if the scheme has to go into the government’s pension protection scheme. Added to this, we have other companies such as Tata Steel who are looking to off load their pension so they can pay dividends to their shareholders. The danger is that if the government sets a precedent and agrees to this, then no company pension scheme will in future be safe.

We therefore call upon the NPC to join with the TUC, Labour Party and others in calling for legislation to ensure that pensions are not placed behind shareholders if a company gets into financial difficulties. This should also include the right to demand repayment where shareholders have disregarded the rights of pensioners to protection against having to take reduced pensions because of the inappropriate actions of others.

**PENSIONS REGULATION**

On 11 October 2016 the BBC Radio 4 programme in the File on 4 series titled “How safe is your pension?” carried reports of companies unintentionally becoming bankrupt or sold with many people losing significant amounts of their pension if they are already retired, or their expected pension if they have not yet retired.

It also carried reports of companies intentionally becoming bankrupt, often having their ownership transferred to other owners without legal obligations to financially support their pension schemes.

These issues have happened without The Pensions Regulator, the schemes’ trustees, employees, their unions, or pensioners being informed. The result is that people have lost significant amounts of their pension if they are already retired, or will lose significant amounts of their expected pension if they have not yet retired. It can also detrimentally affect beneficiaries who were not employees but are the partners, dependents or children of a member of a scheme after the death of that member.

This is unacceptable and leaves many people poorer than they should be through no fault of their own, and can cost the tax payers money in the increased requirement for social care and benefits.

This Conference therefore calls on the Government to instruct The Pensions Regulator to investigate cases in which companies have become bankrupt or have sold their business with the result that their employer’s pension scheme has insufficient funds to pay the pensions and benefits, including index linking, that were expected under the scheme’s rules, and then to introduce robust legislation to protect pension scheme members and beneficiaries.

**INDEXATION**

This Biennial Delegate Conference notes that the Office of National Statistics (ONS) is pushing hard for the Consumer Price Index Housing (CPIH) to be the official measure to update pensions and benefits. This conference also recognises that the only grounds upon which we can overthrow the use of CPIH are that:

1. The mathematical functions used in the CPIH do not normally give the actual rate of inflation
2. The content of the basket used in the CPIH does not wholly reflect the expenditure of a typical household

As the first reason upon which we are arguing against the use of CPI applies equally to the RPI, we cannot recommend use of the RPI without rejection. It is clear that we can only change the ONS’s view, and that of the government, if we argue for an index that gives the correct value of inflation as seen by a typical household. The policy in this motion does just that and past evidence indicates that it would be beneficial to our members. Hence this BDC agrees that:

The NPC should continue to call for the RPI to be used whilst also campaigning for the inflation index used to uprate pensions and benefits to be an index whose data sources are based on the principles laid down in the “Household Inflation Index (HII)” described by Astin and Leyland in their paper “Towards a Household Inflation Index”, (Royal Statistical Society, May 2015) and calculated using the total cost (Prices times quantities) of all the items in the typical basket at the end of the relevant period, divided by the total cost at the start of the period using sub divisions of items where needed, to deal with known potential problems such as changes in purchasing practice.

**TAXATION**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has requested the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS) make recommendations on the possibility of merging National Insurance into Income Tax. Previous similar proposals have been abandoned because of complications combined with difficulties in protecting pensioners from an up to (at current rates) 12p in the pound increase in the basic rate.

Conference instructs the National Executive to take all appropriate steps to try and ensure that any OTS/Government proposals do not adversely affect the financial position of pensioners.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ISSUES**

**SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PLANS**

**MOTION 12 – REMITTED TO THE EC**

This BDC calls upon the Executive Committee of the NPC to initiate a campaign to oppose the imposition of STPs without scrutiny by Parliament, local health and well-being boards, democratically elected councillors and patient representative organisations.

The introduction of STPs will have a detrimental effect on the provision of acute and primary and other health care services in terms of delivery and financially, adding increased bureaucratic costs to an already significantly underfunded NHS. These changes will inevitably impact on all service users, but are likely to have a greater effect on the elderly and most vulnerable members of our society.

**SOCIAL CARE**

This Conference is appalled that the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement failed to respond to the accelerating crisis in both the NHS and local authority social care.

It therefore agrees that the NPC should launch a national campaign urging all our affiliates and individual members to raise these issues, (either on their own or together with other like-minded groups) with national and local politicians and political parties, and with the general public, using petitions, street stalls, local meetings, local and national leaflets, letters and press releases to local media etc, calling on the government to address the dual crisis in funding as a matter of urgency.

The Chancellor’s subsequent decision to allow local authorities to increase their Council Tax rates in order to deal with the crisis in social care is a further indication of this and this government’s failure to understand the extent of the problem or the need for the complete reform of Health and Social Care which the NPC advocates.

In most cases the additional council tax income will be totally insufficient to enable councils to even begin to deal with the current and future needs of the service, and this decision will only add to the postcode lottery of care provision, while the increase in council tax will hit the least well-off hardest, including many pensioners.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ISSUES**

This BDC reaffirms the call for a National Health & Social Care service (NH&SC) funded from taxation and free of charge at the point of need. In addition, the need for this service to be publicly owned and controlled is a very important issue. The NHS has wasted resources in the constant tendering, bidding and threat of legal action if a private company considers they were not allowed to take over a service. These private providers use the NHS logo but pocket tax-payers money, cherry-pick the most profitable services, reject patients who could present complications, send to the NHS anyone whose health deteriorates due to their treatment and give their employees inferior pay and conditions.

Given the damage done to the NHS by private provision, this Conference calls on the EC to step up the campaign for a NH&SC service funded from general taxation, universally provided, free at the point of need and publicly provided.

**CARERS**

**MOTION 15 – REMITTED TO THE EC**

This BDC believes it is vital that NPC’s strategy on care should be based on uniting the aims and values of the workforce with those of older people and other service users.

This BDC notes that millions of pounds annually are saved to the economy by the efforts of unpaid carers looking after parents and other relatives in their own homes, often on a 24 hour basis. The great majority of those receiving such care are elderly people, many with physical disabilities or mental illnesses such as dementia. The Carer’s Allowance (paid only if the carer does 35 hours a week or more) is £62.10 a week. Attendance Allowance of £55.10 or £82.30 a week is paid to disabled people over 65 in need of 24 hour care.

This BDC also notes that employed carers for what is a strenuous, physically and emotionally demanding job is not recognised as such and is rewarded in most cases at a level far below the National Living Wage.

The Care Act 2014 laid a legal responsibility on Local Authorities to identify carers usually a relative or friend who might have support needs that are not being met. This BDC is concerned many Local Authorities are not doing this and asks the NPC to request the Care Quality Commission look into this.

The Care Act also refers to an Appeal Procedure which the Government are supposed to be consulting on before introduction in 2020.This does not appear to include carers. The NPC is requested to make a submission which would ask for carers to be included.

The NPC should work with the TUC, trade unions and other relevant bodies to seek their backing in mounting a major campaign aimed at improving payments and other help for carers so that our retired members and all other elderly people needing care can have their needs met without their carers being exploited.

**Proposed: PCS**

**AMENDMENT**

Add new paragraph at the end:

“This campaign should include, as a priority, the scrapping of the pernicious ‘overlapping benefit’ rule that means that an older carer reaching state pension age loses their carer’s allowance.”

**Proposed: Silver Voices**

**ELDER ABUSE**

**MOTION 16 – REMITTED TO THE EC**

There is an increasing demand for care in the UK and the proportion of elderly people requiring care in the future will place even more demands on a service that is already struggling.

With year-on-year cuts to local councils, over 1.8 million people are already denied access to care. This will, as time passes, create an increase in the number of people assessed as in critical need. It will also place a further burden on the NHS in the intervening period.

The private sector provision of care – whether residential, nursing or home care – will see growth as budget cuts hit local authorities and hospital trusts. Currently 80% of all social care is delivered by the private sector. Billions of pounds are spent on tendering processes – money that could be invested in hospitals and local service.

Many local authorities do not now own their own residential or nursing homes, with the majority of home care outsourced. Private care homes often use untrained staff or staff with limited training and do not have the necessary ratio of carers to patients. The turnover of staff is high in these establishments.

Although there are many very good and caring staff working in this field, they are amongst the lowest paid. They struggle with the demands of patients and a lack of support from their managers, who themselves are often not trained in the effective management of care. There are frequently not enough staff to be able to afford the care, dignity and respect that should be given to elderly patients, particularly where the needs of patients are complex and time consuming. Stressful situations can lead to heightened incidents of verbal and/or physical abuse.

Although most care homes will display menus with choices, there is, in actual fact, little choice. Food is often scarce and not nutritional in its value to older people. 40,000 elderly and disabled people in the care system are not getting enough food and drink leading to hospitalisation due to malnutrition and dehydration.

You may have seen and read the report ‘Where Does the Money Go?’ which shows how much the taxpayer is giving to private companies and how little actually reaches the individual needing care. It is not acceptable that these private companies can structure themselves in such a way as to lay the risk at the door of staff, patients and councils.

This Conference instructs the NPC to:

1. Continue to promote and raise the profile of a National Health and Care Service which sees social care funded in the same way as the NHS, through general taxation, free at the point of use – a service publicly owned, publicly funded and publicly delivered.
2. Raise awareness with the government of the unacceptable financial structures of large care companies that enable tax evasion whilst placing vulnerable and elderly people at risk.
3. Work with relevant organisations to challenge practices that are against equality and human rights legislation.

**Proposed: NPC Northern**

**RIGHTS OF THOSE IN CARE**

**MOTION 17 – REMITTED TO THE EC**

In February 2016, there was a local story from Blackburn with Darwen about a couple separated and put in different Nursing Homes. The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) were responsible and assured the local paper that everything would be done to try to bring the couple together. The husband died before the CCG did anything about it.

Nowadays few patients actually meet the requirements from NHS Continuing Care, even fewer couples both meet the requirements of Continuing NHS Care. But if a couple, married, living together, same sex or otherwise, we believe for the health and wellbeing it is important that they receive medical support and are placed together.

Even older people who may be suffering from dementia may have months and memories when they recognise their partner and their social wellbeing will be improved by being together.

In as an example in Blackburn with Darwen the CCG supported an administrative team 20 miles away in Leyland, what they did was circulate all the CCGs which they supported and took seven months to get an agreed statement which was anodyne in the extreme as it did not promise anything other than “all aspects will be taken into consideration”.

We want a specific assurance that every effort will be made to house couples who justify Continuing Care via the NHS to be put physically together. We are asking the NPC to demand a specific policy that CCGs will endeavour to place couples, who both justify the need for NHS Continuing Care, in the same physical establishment, in order to prevent the couple dying apart.

**Proposed: North West Region**

**DEMENTIA**

**MOTION 18 – REMITTED TO THE EC**

Dementia is often undiagnosed, misdiagnosed, and there is a widespread myth that dementia is an inevitable part of ageing, when in fact it is a treatable, though not curable disease. The National Union of Journalists recognises that dementia affects and threatens the welfare and employment of journalists.

Research shows:

* Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease are now the leading cause of death in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 14 November 2016)
* Dementia affects 1 in every 14 people over 65 in the UK
* By 2025 it’s predicted more than 1 million people will be diagnosed with dementia
* Dementia currently costs the UK £26 billion a year

Many dementia sufferers and their families are failing to get the support from health and social services they need.

This Conference calls on the NPC to:

* Campaign as widely as possible for earlier diagnosis and more effective treatment of dementia, and lobby UK governments to bring this about.
* Oppose any attempts to divert funds away from the care of those with dementia.

**Proposed: NUJ**

**AMENDMENT**

Delete second sentence and replace with “It is widely recognised in the NPC that dementia affects and threatens the welfare of many of the population.”

**Proposed: Thames Valley Region**

**HOUSING ISSUES**

**MOTION 18 – REMITTED TO THE EC**

An article published in The Independent on 30 September 2016 revealed measures which will be introduced in April 2018 that will result in thousands of pensioners being hit by a new bedroom tax. This is despite the Government’s promise to protect the elderly from the hugely controversial benefit cuts.

Pensioners are poised to lose at least £300 a year because their homes will be deemed to be “under occupied”, slashing their incomes or forcing them to move away from family and friends, or to flats that are unsuitable for older people.

In some cases, the financial pain wil be greater – one housing association has identified pensioners in part of the North who are set to lose a staggering £1,700 a year.

This hardship is the result of housing benefit in social housing being limited to the level of the Local Housing Allowance, the cap used in the private sector. Caroline Abrahams, charity director of Age UK, said: “Imposing the cap on older tenants will not only cause them anxiety and distress, it is also pointless given the lack of affordable housing options available to them”.

Therefore, this Biennial Delegate Conference calls on the National Pensioners Convention to campaign against these proposals.

**MOTION 20 – REMITTED TO THE EC**

Conference agrees that it is totally unacceptable that in a country as wealthy as the UK older people find themselves either threatened by homelessness or are homeless.

Conference notes that often issues around entitlement, complex combinations of benefits and Housing benefit administration can be very confusing and difficult to understand.

Conference also notes that if people believe certain press reports people would believe that older people live in luxury 365 days of the year, when according to Age UK 21% of older people over 55 years of age have no housing wealth at all.

Conference therefore agrees to call on the NPC to:

1. Campaign and raise the issues of homelessness and Housing poverty.

2. Lobby Parliament, MPs and Councillors on this issue.

3. Set up meetings with some agencies operating on behalf of old homeless people and raise these issues with them, and report back to future NPC Executive meetings on the outcome of these meetings.

4. Demand that the UK Government investigate the concerns from the NPC on homelessness and Housing Poverty.

**POLICIES PASSED AT THE 2019 BDC**

**PENSIONS UPRATING**

his BDC reaffirms the need for an inflation index that when used to uprate pensions and benefits will enable them to keep pace with increases in the real cost of living likely to be encountered by pensioners.

The NPC should therefore campaign for the inflation index used to uprate pensions and benefits to be an index whose data sources are based on the principles laid down in the “Household Inflation Index (HII)” described by Astin and Leyland in their paper “Towards a Household Inflation Index” (Royal Statistical Society, May 2015) and calculated using the total cost (prices times quantities) of all the items in a typical basket at the end of the relevant period, divided by the total cost at the start of the period using sub divisions of items, where needed, to deal with known potential problems such as changes in purchasing practice.

**NHS AND SOCIAL CARE**

This BDC notes that about 3 years ago the NHS introduced a system whereby patients were given payment to enable them to source their own treatment. The number of patients involved totalled 350k and their ailments are minor, and can be dealt with by routine treatment. In the spring of 2018 this system was extended to cover a total of 800K patients and extended the range of treatments.

This conference is concerned that this system is nothing less than creeping privatisation and should be resisted. The NPC EC is instructed to commence a campaign aimed at stopping any extension of the scheme and ultimately to get it eliminated.

**INTEGRATED CARE PROVIDERS**

NHS England has consulted on the contract for a new model of health and social care provision that threatens the break-up of the NHS run by ‘Integrated Care Providers’. Each of these ‘business units’ would control spending and rationing of healthcare for populations of up to 500,000 each. They will dis-integrate health and social care and put finance before patient care. These huge contracts will be open to the private sector to compete for. We call upon NPC to work with UCU and other unions representing health care workers to oppose this vigorously.

**INVEST IN SOCIAL CARE**

This BDC calls on the NPC to campaign for all governments across the UK to invest in a level of social care that will ensure that all older people receive the support they need to maintain their independence to live with dignity.

**PERSONAL CARE AND FUNDED NURSING CARE**

Recognising the increased frailty and complexity of the health problems of residents of care homes, and recognising that personal care is nursing wherever it is delivered, NPC calls on government, local authorities, regulators and providers of social care, to abolish the current distinction between personal care and funded nursing care, and to insist that skilled nursing assessment and advice are available to residents in all care homes or who receive or need domiciliary personal care services, through the employment in those services of adequate numbers of  nurses  appropriately trained in the care of older people.

**TV LICENCE CAMPAIGN**

Currently anyone aged 75 or over can apply for a free TV licence. This Biennial Delegate Conference is concerned that this Government’s decision to pass responsibility for the funding of the over 75s’ free TV licence to the BBC will lead to its demise, as they will have to meet the full cost of providing the free licence by the end of June 2020. We therefore call upon the BDC to support this motion and for the NPC to campaign to ensure that the Government takes back full responsibility for funding, and to seek support from the TUC unions and the Labour Party. The TV licence for the over 75s must be kept as a universal benefit and its continuity guaranteed.

**DIGITAL INCLUSION**

The story *Act now on “Digital Divide”* in the NPC’s November *Campaign* newsletter, drew attention to how older people are disadvantaged if they are not online, and it called for a National Strategy to address the impact. Evidence shows that older people who are unable or unwilling to access digital technologies (perhaps because of affordability or poor broadband connectivity) are losing out in many ways – and are getting poorer. It’s not just about being unable to take advantage of cheaper goods and services online, more and more banks and public services are accessible only online. Digital technologies are transforming health and social services, are helping people overcome loneliness and isolation, and improving the health and wellbeing of those who use them.

Yet, according to an Office of National Statistics (ONS) bulletin, published 31 May 2018, older people are less likely to use the internet. It added: “Of the 4.5 million adults (8.4%) who had never used the internet in 2018, more than half (2.6 million) were aged 75 years and over.”

The NUJ is exploring ways in which older and younger members could exchange knowledge and skills through mentoring. The union suggests the NPC looks at how its internet-using members might mentor non-users.

Different government policies and strategies on digital inclusion already exist in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Therefore, Conference calls on the NPC to:

* Set up a Digital Inclusion Working Party asap to produce a report summarising existing policies in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; to highlight successes and failures (e.g. barriers to implementation) and use this information to draw up an NPC campaign strategy with recommendations to help tackle the digital divide across the regions.
* Support and publicise existing policies aimed at enabling older people to get online, use computers, tablets and smart phones; to campaign for action where these policies or strategies are not being implemented, and to explore what could and should be done to prevent older people who cannot, or do not wish to go online – for whatever reasons – being disadvantaged and discriminated against.

**COST OF DIGITAL EXCLUSION**

That this Conference recognises technology changes are happening, and has grave concerns that older people and those with disabilities are not being equally considered in terms of access, competence, creating confidence and keeping up to date with using modern technologies.

That this Conference seeks that the NPC shall also highlight the true costs and effects of Digital Exclusion of older folk, who may:

\* not be able to afford such equipment,

\* not know how to use it,

\* not have means to keep up to date with software and hardware developments, and

\* not feel confident and/or safe using it.

That this Conference authorises the NPC to access external assistance, subject to resource being available, in preparing and delivering these propositions."

**PROVISION OF PUBLIC TOILETS**

For many older people the availability of public toilets facilities, and particularly accessible toilets, is a major consideration when undertaking journeys by public transport. In recent year’s cutbacks by Local Authorities have led to the closure of many of their toilet facilities in towns shopping areas, leaving people reliant on those within shops or hotels, which are not always available and can be restricted to those purchasing goods or meals in an establishment.

The Government’s inclusive Transport Strategy makes a passing mention of those concerns but contains no identified measures to address them. The uncertainty about the potential availability of toilets facilities is a real barrier to travel for older people especially if they need to travel out of their local area. Newer longer distance rail vehicles (provided the toilets are regularly checked and maintained) should improve matters for travellers using those services, but vehicles designed for shorter distance journeys will not have toilet facilities.

This is compounded by the presence of toilets at only the larger station. Facilities on the bus network are poor. Many significant bus stations do not have toilet facilities; neither do most buses used on journeys lasting over two hours which is the generally accepted desirable maximum time between toilet facilities. It ought to be possible to address some of these issues through bus franchising arrangements. Public toilets provision and maintenance in the UK is very poor when compared with the standards provided in other continental European Countries.

This BDC therefore calls on the NPC to campaign, along with trade unions and other organisations to press the Government to:

1. Ensure that all rail franchises and relevant infrastructure operators, include provision for accessible free toilet facilities which match standards set out in the proposed European Union scales of rail station accessibility

2. Recommend that Local Transport Authorities and Bus Station operators provide and maintain suitable and sufficient toilet facilities at bus stations.

3. Issue guidance to Local Authorities recommending that they develop a strategy for the provision and maintenance of free public facilities in town and suburban shopping areas.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

This BDC recognises the work being done by trade unions on climate change and environmental issues. Air pollution in the UK is a public health emergency with over 40,000 people dying each year from the air that they breathe. This is an issue that impacts with particular severity on older people who may find it more difficult to cope with the results of severe weather. We request the NPC publicise to members the objectives and research supporting these issues and progress towards achieving them. They should also stress to other relevant campaign organisations, trade unions and MPs the impact on older people.

Conference recognises the phenomenon of climate change and proposes the NPC should investigate and promote its likely effects and possible damage-limitation on all people as it is an intergenerational issue.

**WORKING PARTY - HOUSING**

This conference seeks an additional Working Party in order to monitor, research and make recommendations in reference to our new NPC housing policy. This conference feels such an additional Working Party would add value to our endeavours.

**WORKING PARTY - LGBT**

This BDC recognises that LGBT pensioners face particular problems and challenges especially in later life. A far higher proportion of older LGBT pensioners face isolation and loneliness because of prejudice and discrimination. This BDC recognises that the NPC could and should be doing much more to support our LGBT pensioners; therefore, as a first step we instruct the executive committee and national council to set up a LGBT working group.

**POLICIES PASSED AT THE 2022 BDC**

**MOTION 1: PROSPECT - STATE PENSION NI CONTRIBUTIONS**

**STATE PENSION ENTITLEMENTS AND LACK OF AWARENESS OF NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION RULES**

At least 60% of workers have no knowledge of the rate of their National Insurance (NI) contributions, nor do they realise that underpaying NI can have consequences for their state pensions entitlements on retirement. 55% of British workers take a career break of upwards of a year at some point in their lives, rising to over 60% for women who are more likely to take time off for childcare. Women can lose out on pay for up to 10 or 12 years during childbearing years. Even those workers, male or female, who believe they have made sufficient contributions for the 35 years (more years needed if born before 1950), may not be entitled to a full pension for whatever reason in their employment history.

Other reasons for career breaks can include redundancy, ill health, moving abroad and full-time education. One major cause of lack of NI contributions is workers who were 'contracted out' during their employment. Although contracted out was phased out in April 2016, many workers over 50 may have been contracted out during their working lives. This means that they paid less NI contributions towards SERPS (this was phased out to become the Additional State Pension in 2002). Any payments may have been paid into a works pension scheme instead. This means that they will not have paid full NI contributions and therefore do not receive full state pension on retirement.

Another cause, which affects only women, is the 'small stamp' or reduced rate for married women. This was the norm up until 1977 when women had the choice of paying the full contributions or to opt in to carry on with the reduced rate. There are still some who pay the reduced rate today, but not many. These women also received reduced pensions on retirement.

Some people with NI gaps are entitled to credits towards a state pension depending on their circumstances - including taking time off for childrearing. Those retired but not yet at pension age can consider making voluntary NI contributions.

MPs and pension experts have called on the Government to provide to all over 50s, an annual automatic state pension statement to combat lack of awareness about what to expect to receive in retirement. The Government has resisted on the grounds of cost and inefficiency of sending out millions of letters. They state they already use other measures to raise awareness.

This Biennial Delegate Conference instructs the National Pensioners' Convention, to lobby the Government to take action thus making individuals aware of this most basic need - a full pension on retirement, by providing a full State Pension statement to include NI contributions, to every worker over 50 years old. This is to be issued well in advance of retirement, in order that employees who have not paid full NI contributions have the choice of making voluntary contributions. It may be too late for those affected who are already of pension age and retired, but it is not too late to save thousands of future pensioners from the same fate.

**Emergency Motion to NPC BDC - Submitted by the Civil Service Pensioners` Alliance (CSPA)**

“This BDC notes that the Government launched a public consultation on 20 February 2022 to consider “the metrics that the Government should take into account when considering how to set the State Pension age” (SPa), as part of the Government`s Second Review of State Pension age, announced on 14 December 2021. The consultation closes on 25 April 2022. This BDC firmly rejects any moves to bring forward the dates of future planned increases in the pension age from the original recommendations of the Pensions Commission (the Turner Report) of 2004, based on future generations spending up to a third of their adult life in retirement. This BDC further agrees that reductions in life expectancy projections should now lead to reductions in the State Pension age.

The NPC Executive Committee are instructed to respond to the public consultation, and campaign to ensure that the SPa review takes full account of the inequalities of life expectancy projections based on health outcomes across the UK. Also, NPC reaffirms its support to the WASPI campaign for compensation due to the detriment inflicted by the Pensions Act 2011 which accelerated the rise in pension age for women, with little notice, causing hardship for many women born in the 1950`s.”

**MOTION 2: SOUTH EAST REGION (SENPEC) - LIVING PENSION**

The 2022 BDC agrees that the NPC state pension policy to be pursued for the future will be a policy for a living pension, including parity of state pension provision, thereby seeking to eradicate pensioner poverty.

**MOTION 4: WESSEX - POST OFFICE CARD ACCOUNT PROBLEMS FOR PENSIONERS**

Pensioners have been deprived of their pension books and were told to open bank accounts in order to receive their State Pension. Those who resisted this move were then given a Post Office Card Account and the state pension is paid into this account weekly. Those who organise their money on a weekly basis have been able to continue to do this.

Recently in April 2021, the Department for Work and Pensions has again written to pensioners asking for details of an account that the state pension could be paid into. This is another attempt to force pensioners to open an account for the payment of their pension and will cause much anxiety to those who are unable to do this and who rely on their money being paid weekly to them.

There are three options: two options are a voucher by email or a text message with a unique reference number and to collect a payment you must show your card, voucher or text message at a PayPoint outlet which means you will have to have a smart phone or email access which many pensioners do not have. The third option is the Payment Exemption Service which will mean having a card which enables you to collect your money from a PayPoint outlet but not the post office.

With banks closing many smaller branches, the Post Office has become a lifeline for many pensioners where they can socialise and feel comfortable when dealing with their finances. Allowing the Post Office Card Account to continue brings the added benefit of trying to keep post offices open.

This NPC Biennial Delegates Conference notes with concern that the Department of Work and Pensions is again trying to change the way that the state pension is paid to pensioners and is discriminating against those who have no email or telephone access. Conference therefore calls on the NPC to urgently campaign to keep the Post Office Card Account for paying the state pension weekly in Post Offices.

**MOTION 5: Civil Service Pensioners Alliance (CSPA) - WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE / CHRISTMAS BONUS UPRATING + PC WHD UPTAKE CAMPAIGN.**

“This BDC notes with alarm the huge and rapid increases in the regulated Energy Price Cap over the past year, with further sharp increases expected from April 2022, it is estimated this could see average combined domestic dual fuel bill increase by a further £550 per year and industry pressure on the Regulator, Ofgem, to permit more frequent price cap reviews. This is having a devastating impact on the fixed income of millions of pensioners and other vulnerable groups, and is increasing deaths from fuel poverty.

This BDC calls on the NPC to campaign for immediate action from Government to halt any further increase in fuel bills, a significant increase in the Winter Fuel Allowance, and in the £10 Christmas bonus payment (which has not increased since its introduction in 1972), to take effect from November 2022 with annual uprating of those allowances in subsequent years. It also calls for a reduction in VAT on energy; a strengthened role for the regulator Ofgem; and for a Government publicity campaign to maximise the take up of Pension Credit and the Warm Home Discount scheme”

**MOTION 6: NORTHERN REGION - FAIRER TAX SYSTEMS**

The recent leak of financial data (the Pandora Papers) has shown how extensive tax avoidance is through tax havens by residents of the UK. Using tax havens to hide wealth avoids paying taxes that could then be used by Government for the wellbeing of all of society, but notably the NHS and Social Care in the first instance.

NPC Northern Region calls upon the NPC Biennial Delegates Conference to campaign for a fairer tax system that compels all members of our society to contribute tax on the basis of actual income and prevent tax avoidance as witnessed in the recent Pandora Papers by ensuring such actions in the UK are treated as tax evasion a criminal offence.

**MOTION 7: UCU - WARM HOMES**

The UK has some 29 million homes and they are the oldest and least energy efficient housing stock in Europe. Energy used in homes accounts for 21% of the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Older people are particularly adversely affected by cold homes and unaffordable heating bills. The problem is particularly severe in private rented housing.

In order to meet UK commitments under the Paris Agreement to stay below 1.5C, and legal obligations under the Climate Change Act 2008, as amended in 2019, emissions from heating and powering homes must be reduced by 78% in less than 15 years and then to zero by 2050.

To do this we need to draught-proof and thoroughly insulate all buildings and replace inefficient boilers with new heat sources. Retrofitting would cut energy use, reduce CO2 emissions and create jobs that will play a key role in tackling the climate emergency as well as improving quality of life for all. We will need to build a workforce of around two million direct jobs in homes retrofit by 2030. To build the necessary trained workforce, a huge expansion of high-quality training will be essential.

For this to work at the necessary scale and speed, it must be free at the point of delivery.

Therefore, we recommend the widespread distribution of Chapter 3 of Climate Jobs; Building a Workforce for the Climate Emergency, the new report by CACC Trade Union group, https://cacctu.org.uk/climatejobs.

**NPC to campaign that the UK government:**

* immediately promises to fully fund and take responsibility for the insulation of all rented accommodation, both private and social housing, by 2025.

• immediately promises to produce within four months a legally binding national plan to fully fund and take responsibility for the full low-energy and low-carbon whole-house retrofit, with no externalised costs, of all homes in Britain by 2030 as part of a just transition to full decarbonisation of all parts of society and the economy

Establish

1. Public ownership of the energy sector

2. The retrofitting of older homes and building of new ones, to be led by the setting up of a national public sector construction direct labour organisation and expanded to local authorities.

**MOTION 8: UNISON - LIVING STANDARDS**

**ENSURING THAT THE LIVING STANDARDS OF OLDER PEOPLE ARE NOT THE PRICE PAID FOR THE COST OF THE PANDEMIC**

We can all recall that prior to the covid crisis there had been a series of attacks on older people's entitlements and standards of living including:

1. The Taxpayers' Alliance report, Pensions Inequality, issued in August 2018, which called for an end to defined benefit pensions for public service workers; the Taxpayers' Alliance which has since called for the freezing of state pensions;
2. The BBC's scrapping of the free TV licenses for over 75s;
3. The Intergenerational Foundation's report, "Baby-boomers' concessions: How ticket discounts for the wealthier generation reinforce unfairness", issued on 17 September 2018, attacked senior discounts at visitor attractions and proposed, instead, free entry for people on Pension Credit and 'Bring a Granny' schemes;
4. The 'Toyboy Tax', announced on 14 January 2019. This has started to deprive couples of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit if one partner is over state pension age and the other under that age. They must apply for Universal Credit instead, typically making a couple £7,000 a year worse off; and,
5. The House of Lords report, "Tackling intergenerational unfairness" released on 25 April 2019 which recommended:
6. Scrapping the Triple Lock mechanism for raising the State Retirement Pension;
7. Abolishing the free TV licence for over 75-year olds;
8. Delaying the Winter Fuel Allowance and Bus Pass until 5 years after Retirement Age;
9. Regarding the Winter Fuel Allowance and Bus Pass as taxable income;
10. Subjecting people over the State Retirement Pension age to National Insurance payments.

Before the COVID crisis, the most costly expense experienced by the country was the 2008 crash. Everyone will recall that the cost of bailing out the financial system was eventually borne overwhelmingly by those least responsible for it and least able to pay. Pensioners are concerned that the proposal by the Social Market Foundation to scrap the triple lock on pensions is a foretaste of policies to come. Those in power are asking the older generation to face cuts in their income, before making proposals to limit higher pay or imposing taxes on extreme wealth.

Such proposals take no account of the fact that the old are already paying disproportionately with their lives, as the Covid mortality rate is significantly higher in the over 70's. We believe that this is a thinly disguised attempt to force those who have already contributed throughout their younger lives to pay twice.

We reject this attempt to divide generations, by setting younger people against retired people.

Instead, we should be opposed to any attempts to introduce a new era of austerity and be committed to introducing measures to bring about a fair and equal society in the post-covid world.

We therefore call on the National Pensioners' Convention to work with all the appropriate bodies to

1. Defend the older generation from attacks on their standard of living; and
2. Promote the key importance of public services and public service workers to stimulate and ensure a healthy economy, as well as providing the essential services that so many older people rely on.

**MOTION 9: YORKSHIRE & HUMBER - BETTER BUSES**

**BRING OUR BUS SERVICES INTO PUBLIC CONTROL**

Buses are a vital service for the most vulnerable in our communities, particularly for older people and disabled people. The national concessionary scheme ("bus pass") is a lifeline for many older people but a pass without adequate services is little use.

**We note that:**

* Since deregulation of bus services outside London in 1986:
* Fares have more than doubled in real-terms;
* Bus journeys have decreased by over 60%
* Drivers’ pay and conditions have plummeted;
* Millions of miles of bus network have been lost.
* The long-term solution to this crisis is a return to full public ownership. This would ensure that public transport is operated as a social benefit, not a source of private profit.
* In the short-term, franchising brings the bus network under the control of the local authority, allowing them to make decisions on timetabling, routes and fares. This must also include centralised resourcing for supply of timetabling etc, and fuel for buses, as well as installing infrastructure for electric buses.
* To address the climate emergency, we need to reduce the number of car journeys, without pushing the costs onto ordinary people, and public control is best placed to deliver this shift.

**This conference resolves to**

* work at national and regional level with other organisations campaigning for improvements in bus services, such as CPRE campaign "Every Village, Every Hour"
* actively support local, regional and national campaigns for the public ownership, resourcing and control of bus services
* support union demands for better pay and conditions for bus drivers, and give full support to any actions they take to win improvements
* oppose any attempt to undermine the national concessionary travel scheme and support local campaigns to enhance its provisions (e.g. increased hours of operation, allowing use on local trains, trams etc)

**MOTION 10: TSSA - RAIL TRAVEL**

That NPC in recognition of the unstable state (in terms of changes to operating principles etc) of UK main line rail travel and services takes relevant steps to secure for train travel:

* No reduction in availability of pensioners’ railcards and access to services;
* Retention and expansion of ‘walk up’ fares (those available at a station’s booking facilities or from train staff where no booking facility exists) for pensioners and older generations in particular, but also for those unable to access digital systems;
* Retention of station booking offices, or in their absence, creation of on-street locations where rail tickets may be purchased at no extra charge;
* No reduction in railcard availability, and a legally-binding refund process to be installed against any government prohibition of railcard use;
* A fair and consistent definition of peak and off-peak times, uniform across all UK rail systems, and
* Continued general acceptance of cash as a means of payment for travel and other facilities offered on rail networks.

NPC is also called upon to seek retrospective refunds for the prohibition of railcard use during the current Covid ‘pandemic’ whereby the government (Chris Heaton-Harris, Minister of State for Transport) claimed such reimbursements would be a cost to the taxpayer, when all railcard purchases were made through the Rail Delivery Group, which is a private body.

Such steps shall include but not be limited to – contacting all political parties represented in national and devolved parliaments where NPC is geographically active, mainstream media (and if deemed appropriate online / digital services), other bodies representing older and disabled people.

**MOTION 11: WEST MIDLANDS - PUBLIC TOILETS**

**The Crisis in the Provision of Public Toilets in the UK**

Over 600 public toilets across the UK have ceased being maintained by local authorities since 2010, and in 37 areas major councils no longer run any facilities. Under the provisions of Section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936, there is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide public toilet facilities.

Relentless Government cuts to local authority budgets for more than ten years have resulted in the increasing closure of public toilet facilities across the UK. The reliance of local authorities on commercial and retail outlets enabling public use of their in- store toilet facilities have become severely restricted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic has given everyone a stark reminder of the importance of personal hygiene in keeping ourselves and our communities safe and healthy. The provision of clean and well-maintained public toilets should no longer be seen as an optional extra by local authorities and by the Government as we all learn the lessons of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We call on the National Pensioners Convention to:

1. Campaign for Section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936 to be updated to make it a statutory requirement for local authorities to provide adequate public toilet facilities that are:
• Publicly owned
• Free and accessible to all
• Accessible to all
• Meet statutory hygiene standards
• Protect people’s safety and dignity
• Staffed by a reputable organisation or as a minimum are inspected on a regular basis; and
• signposted clearly in the local area.

2. Publicise and support the British Toilet Association’s call for a National Toilet Map.

3. Publicise and support the campaign for “Changing Places” toilets to be installed in all public venues, so that everyone, regardless of their access needs or disability or reliance on the assistance of carers or specialist equipment, can use a hygienic toilet facility with dignity.

4. Campaign for local authorities to ensure that public toilets are considered in their needs assessments of older and disabled people and in supporting their independence.

5. Insist that Central Government provides adequate and preferably ring-fenced funding to local authorities for the provision of public toilets.

**MOTION 13: NUJ – DIGITAL INCLUSION**

*Digital inclusion is about ensuring the benefits of the internet and digital technologies are available to everyone.* (Statement from the charity Citizens Online website)

The NPC’s motion on digital inclusion carried at the last BDC in 2019 has only been partially successful. As instructed, a Digital Working Party (DWP) was set up, a 4-Nations research project carried out, and a report produced with a campaign strategy “to help tackle the digital divide across the regions.”

Unfortunately, partly because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it took 23 months before the NPC’s campaign, *Connections for All,* was finally launched on 1st February 2021. Not all of the 9-point plan and recommendations have yet been fulfilled.

Much more has still to be achieved. Much more can be done throughout the NPC at national and regional levels. Time is running out to help our ageing membership in a digital world and with the UK fast heading to a cashless society. Urgent action campaigning is needed now!

*Conference calls on the NPC to:*

1. Launch a stage 2, two-year “Connections for All” campaign, with immediate effect, adding the subtitle, “Making Digital Inclusion Happen.”
2. Prioritise addressing the known barriers to older people getting online, especially fear of scams.
3. Ramp up signposting to the widespread help that is available for helping older people get online.
4. Make resources available to help the campaign succeed.
5. Continue to campaign against the increasing exclusion of those who, for whatever reason, cannot or will not engage with IT.

**MOTION 14: NORTH WEST REGION PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION – DIGITAL ARCHIVE**

As it is now possible to digitise and store the lifetime memories of older people currently held in the form of documents, photographs, oral reminiscences, work-related material, etc., we propose that the National Pensioners’ Convention should investigate the cost of establishing an archive of this material drawn from the members of organisations affiliated to the NPC.

The intention of this archive would be to record the past efforts of the present generation of older people to change society for the better so that they are collected and preserved for future generations. This would be valuable in its own right but could also be of future benefit to researchers in medicine, science, history, and social movements.

**MOTION 15: PCS – VOTER IDENTITY**

This Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC) acknowledges that the Tory Government’s plans to introduce Voter Identity (ID) as a pre-requisite to being able to cast a vote is an obstacle to the UK democratic process. It will exclude those who don’t have passports or photographic driving passes from taking part in the democratic process. This will have a greater impact on poorer, older and BME citizens in our communities. The government tries to bat away this criticism by saying councils will provide ID free of charge but makes no mention who will fund this or how disabled citizens will be able to get out of their homes to have photos taken. This plan is nothing but a blatant attempt to disenfranchise those who are most likely to vote for an opposition party. In essence this Tory Government is putting in place plans for the UK being governed by an elected dictatorship that has already started eroding freedoms under the cover of Covid. In view of this, this Biennial Delegate Conference instructs the National Pensioners Convention to campaign against the introduction of Voter ID, working with relevant groups/organisations such as The Electoral Reform Society.

**Motion to NPC Executive Committee – January 2023 – NPC Northern**

“We call upon the NPC to work with other pensioners organisations to develop and promote an “Older Persons Manifesto” and this to include: cost of living crisis, energy security, NHS and Social Care, public transport and the elderly, digital inclusion & exclusion, the appointment of an older people’s commissioner for England, to lobby all political parties to address these issues as they affect older people and include them as part of their manifesto commitments, ahead of the next general election”.

**Motion to NPC National Council– April 2023 – NPC Yorkshire & Humber**

The NPC welcomes the decision made by the YHPC to initiate a national conference “Campaigning for outstanding bus services” which will take place on Saturday 17th June 2023 from 11am to 4pm, in person in York and on Zoom.

We note that the conference has now been supported by a wide range of organisations from across the UK, including the Unite Retired Members section, the UCU, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, We Own It and the Yorkshire and Humber TUC as well as pensioner groups, trade union branches and climate campaign groups.

We agree to:

1. Add the NPC to the list of supporting organisations
2. Advertise the conference online and in Campaign!
3. Urge all NPC affiliates and regions to support the conference and encourage their members to attend.

For further information and registration details contact yandhpc@gmail.com

**Motion to NPC National Council– April 2023 – NPC East Midlands**

**Decline in Bus Services**

The East Midlands Region Branch of the National Pensioners Convention are concerned about the decline in local bus services in Britain, especially in the East Midlands. The unreliable and infrequent services of those that remain is also a cause of concern. Buses play a vital role in our transport system, and in 2019 were responsible for around 12 million journeys a day. Our buses transport more people than any other form of public transport - getting people to work, to education and to see friends and family, the everyday journeys that make up our lives.

The number of registered services has been falling for the last 10 years and fell by 9.5% between January 2022 and January 2023, equivalent to more than 1,000 registered routes, despite government promises to improve local transport connectivity, being a key pillar of its levelling up agenda.

The Central Government policy of austerity introduced in 2010 has cut 37% from Local Government funding, to zero, which has decimated many service they provide, some of which are mandatory. Many bus services depend on Local Council subsidy, in places where bus operators cannot make a profit. Public Transport has been an easy target for cuts which has resulted in a gradual decline, leading to the latest round of cuts to service, so essential to communities.

Low wages and poor conditions of bus drivers has led to an exodus to the HGV and logistics sector. About 6,700 bus drivers are needed, with roughly 10% of positions vacant,

Margaret Thatcher boldly predicted that privatising Britain’s bus sector would lead to lower fares, new services, and more passengers, while removing any potential future liability on the taxpayer. Today, those claims seem farcical, with much of the bus sector in crisis.

In February 2020, the Department For Transport issued a National Bus Strategy, launching a revolution in bus services that it said would deliver a better deal for bus users that meet the needs and demands of the travelling public, and would tackle air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

The East Midlands Region Branch of the National Pensioners Convention asks the National Pensioners Convention Executive Council to campaign with Age UK, the Trade Union Congress, and political parties, to reverse the decline in bus services and demand a bus service that meets the needs of the travelling public and provides a cleaner environment.

**Motion to NPC Executive Committee – July 2023 – NPC North West – Remitted to NPC Officers and staff**

The North West Pensioners' Association would like to submit the following motion to the next meeting of the NPC Executive Committee:

The NWPA asks the NPC Executive Committee to prepare a Pensioners’ Manifesto for the next General Election as was done for the 2019 General Election. The manifesto should include the following existing NPC policy commitments:

* A National Health and Care Service which is free at the point of delivery and funded through general taxation;
* Public ownership of the energy sector;
* Public ownership, resourcing and control of bus services;
* Opposition to any attempts to introduce a new era of austerity.

**Yorkshire & Humberside amendment**

Delete the first bullet point (From "A National Health and Care Service" to "general taxation")

and replace with 2 new points:

* the reversal of the privatisation and marketisation of our NHS
* the establishment of a National Care Service, fully funded through general taxation

***Eastern Region amendments to add the following points***

* Public ownership, resourcing and control of rail services, and maintain ticket offices at stations;
* Maintain state pension triple lock;
* Set up a Commissioner for Older People in line with Wales and Northern Ireland;
* Return free TV licence for over 75s;
* Free prescriptions for people over state pension age;
* Return Tax Allowance to previous rule (state pension amount) ;
* Support WASPI claim;