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**Campaigning for the rights of older people**

***\*\**NEWS: *Immediate Release\*\****

**Government strategy must be investigated over treatment of elderly in pandemic**

**The UK’s largest campaign group for older people says the government did use ‘secret plans’ to deny proper care to older people during the pandemic.**

The National Pensioners’ Convention believes the recently exposed NHS plan for pandemics, produced in 2017, proves the government took a ‘heartless’ premeditated approach towards the care of older people at the height of the Covid-19 crisis.

The NPC are renewing their call for an urgent Public Inquiry to investigate the government’s actions during the pandemic, which claimed the lives of 130,000 people in the UK, including 42,000 care home residents.

**Jan Shortt, General Secretary of the NPC said: “There is no doubt that this ‘secret’ plan of the NHS was applied to older people who were sent into care homes from hospital without being tested for COVID-19.**

The imposition of Do Not Resuscitate Orders without consultation and without consideration of the individual right to life, shows that the plan was operative.

**“During the pandemic, we saw those of a certain age abandoned in their hour of need. Not by their families or their carers, but by a government strategy that was cold and heartless towards the older generation.**

“The release of this plan – which was never openly debated or discussed by parliament – proves we must have afull Public Inquiry into the government’s handling of the pandemic.”

Details of the NHS plan were obtained by Dr Moosa Qureshi following a year-long freedom of information battle, and were published on CygnusReports.org

He questioned why the plans were never made public and revealed to medical staff before the coronavirus outbreak.

The NHS have commented that the plans are an ‘extreme hypothetical scenario’ and did not form the basis of their response to the pandemic. The government has always consistently denied that the elderly were ‘abandoned’ in the crisis.

**Jan Shortt said: “The release of the ‘secret’ plan to deny care to the elderly has never been a secret within the NPC.** In an inherently ageist country, older people are used to the conversations with health professionals that cite ‘age’ as a reason for something being wrong with them. Granted, there are health issues that come with age, but that is not a reason for not respecting us as people first. But everyone has the human right to life and the right to a good death no matter their age.

There is something wrong in a society that depicts age as rendering a person worthless and a drain on resources. That older people have no value because they are not contributing to the country’s economy. Older people contribute circa £160 billion pound in direct and indirect taxes, childcare, volunteering and unpaid care to family members who are ill.

Older people are not the reason the NHS was failing prior to the pandemic. Decades of underfunding and cuts to services, both in the NHS and care sector, are decisions taken that came home to roost as COVID took hold.”

Jan added that, as a society we are generally living longer and this should be a cause for celebration. However, over decades, successive governments have preferred to put their heads in the sand when we have raised the need to invest in health and care services for future generations.

She said: “Throughout this, and the previous parliament, the NPC has argued for a better deal for older people. A better state pension, reform of social care, and affordable decent homes. What we have received in return is an attack on pensioner income and universal entitlements that prop up the worst state pension in the economically developed world. What we gain or lose now will impact on those who retire in future years.”

**ENDS**

**\*The National Pensioners Convention***was set up in 1979 to champion the rights and welfare of the UK’s older people. It now represents more than 1.5 million people in over 1,000 different organisations across the UK and holds an Annual Convention – a pensioners’ parliament - to debate issues affecting older people****.*** [***www.npcuk.org***](http://www.npcuk.org)

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