

OLD GREY MATTER ARTICLE

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The NPC Resolves to Work for a Fairer Society

Uniting the Generations is one of the campaign aims of the National Pensioners Convention (NPC), Britain's largest pensioner organisation. In recent years, there have been numerous claims that Britain's older generation has escaped austerity at the expense of the young. The NPC considers this view is both inaccurate and divisive. Today's battles on behalf of pensioners will benefit not just them but younger, future generations, and equally, pensioners must stand alongside today's workers in defence of their jobs, pensions and the right to a decent period of retirement. You can resolve to support the NPC by buying a copy of a brand new pamphlet produced with Unite the Union which explains how the generations can campaign together to defend public services and the welfare state. You can also sign up to receive our monthly email Campaign! bulletin simply by emailing us at info@npcuk.org or you can see how to join the NPC at www.npcuk.org

Another NPC campaign to resolve injustice involved testing the safety and fairness for travellers on Britain's railways. Only this week a well known British paralympian has had her complaint about a nightmare journey by train taken up by her Harlow MP, the Rt Hon. Robert Halfon, and highlighted in the national press and on regional TV. There must be many more unsatisfactory journeys made without official complaint from lesser known individuals who just have to 'grin and bear it' – but why should they?

The NPC supports the train guards campaign for safety and fairness for passengers on the railway and also for staffed stations advertised as stops on the timetable. As reported in its 'Health & Social Care' December news letter, on 1st November, Dot Gibson, General Secretary spoke at a rally held by RMT in the House of Commons in support of train guards against driver only operated trains. The NPC had drawn up a report by members of its transport committee: "Three Pensioners on a Southern Rail Journey" which was proudly presented and received with enthusiasm. Free copies can be obtained from the NPC. The conclusion of the report is that if driver-only operation trains run into an unstaffed station with a passenger who is unable to exit the train unassisted, then an offence will have been committed under the 2010 Equality Act.

Southern Rail try to ridicule the railway workers by saying that they are simply arguing about who opens and closes the train doors. The media can always find disgruntled commuters to complain about striking rail workers but they fail to explain the dangers to safety on driver-only operations. The rail union is standing up for the safety of passengers faced with an incident, accident or emergency, and this particularly includes the rights of those with "protected characteristics," those "at a disadvantage" or those "who have particular needs," like our three pensioners on their test journey; one an older passenger with so-called "normal" ageing problems, one a wheelchair user and one a blind person.

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