**Old Grey Matter article for the EADT – Saturday 5th March 2023**

**68 IS TOO LATE**

**An article in the National Pensioners’ Convention (NPC) February Campaign bulletin no. 174 merits serious contemplation for all seniors as it would affect all in the relevant age bracket at the time as revealed by this copy below.**

**It suggests that once again Government finances are being saved or recouped on the backs of pensioners, whilst the actual level of state pension remains bottom of the European league. A recent example was when the triple lock was cancelled for the 2022 increase when it was direly needed for seniors to meet already rising inflation, and can never be recouped! Meanwhile, the government’s two tier system enforces a widening gap between pre 2016 and post 2016 pensioners and those whose entitlement to an annual state pension increase whilst living abroad in Commonwealth countries are completely annulled and the pension frozen in time!**

**The NPC is opposing newly revealed government plans to increase the state pension age to 68 much sooner than originally expected. Reports suggest the Chancellor is set to announce details of the move in his March Budget in a bid to raise billions for The Treasury.**

**NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: “The NPC is fundamentally against further increases in the age at which people can officially retire and take their state pension - it is a false economy. We respect and support the rights of those who are healthy enough, and who want or need to work beyond retirement age. Employers ought to make it easier to retain and hire older workers. But, with UK life expectancy stalling and a huge increase in the number of those over 50 not healthy enough to continue in work, the NPC believes the government is wrong to bring the retirement age forward to 68 earlier than planned. We will be writing to them and calling for a re-think.”**

**Currently men and women can take their state pension–which they have contributed to throughout their lives - at 66. Plans were already in place to increase this to 67 between 2026-2028, and to 68 between 2044-2046. But recent reports suggest the government is looking to bring in the rise to 68 much sooner - possibly by 2037. Jan said: “Latest figures show that in Blackpool’s Bloomfield ward the average life expectancy of men is 67.3 years. So as it stands most men there would never live to claim their state pension at 68.**

**The retirement age was originally increased to reflect the fact that more of us are living longer. But that trend has dramatically paused, and in some areas started to reverse.” The age at which we can expect to live in good health, has also reduced. Men in Richmond-on-Thames will on average, live healthily until 71, while in Blackpool it is just 53. Ill health often makes it impossible for many to work, yet they are unable to retire. This and more can be checked out on the national website at: npcuk.org**

**Christopher J, Brooks, Chair,**

**Suffolk, & Anglia, Pensioners Assns.**