



Campaign!

Fighting for the rights of older people

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WANT TO JOIN THE NPC?

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

Beating digital poverty could save thousands of lives and transform millions more if we act now

An NPC webinar to mark Dignity Action Day on 1st February 2024 heard how moving older adults out of digital poverty could save 18,000 to 24,000 lives through better health literacy. It would also reduce in-patient cases by 2,000-3,000 a year, substantially reduce isolation among older people, and save billions of pounds, according to research by the Digital Poverty Alliance (DPA) and Deloitte.

DPA chief executive officer Elizabeth Anderson (below) outlined the findings in a briefing for the webinar, which is part of the NPC Connections For All Campaign. The Alliance is bringing together organisations from the private and public sector, like NPC to campaign to end digital poverty—which affects 13-19 million people over the age of 16. But worst affected are older people with the research estimating that 1 in 2 are in digital poverty, and 1 in 5 are in severe digital poverty—in other words they have no laptop or smartphone, no internet access, and no skills to go online. In a society moving at



NPC Dignity Action Day Webinar

speed to digital-first and digital-only—including everything from your bank to your GP, and your energy provider to your supermarket, millions are being left behind and unable to use essential services. Elizabeth Anderson said: “Digital access is



no longer a luxury—it is a basic necessity. That is why DPA is campaigning to end digital poverty by 2030.” DPA is looking to the government, the tech industry and network providers to help tackle the issues. But like the NPC, DPA acknowledges that digital accessibility should be a choice, and that not everyone will want to, or even be capable or going online, so alternatives are essential. NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt, who chaired the session, welcomed Elizabeth’s presentation and pledged that we will work closely with DPA towards ending digital exclusion. Violet Rook of NPC Digital Working Party outlined their work in highlighting issues and informing members on news and advice. **LINK: www.npcuk.org/post/connections-for-all-2024**

Join the Club! Chances to WIN & Help the NPC

Welcome to our new NPC 250 Club. For just £2 a month or £24 per annum, you will be entered into the monthly NPC 250 Club prize draw. Your payment buys you one membership number, which enters you into the draw. However, you can buy more than one number to increase your chances of winning. The draw will take place at the start of the month (date tbc) and the total prize fund will be 50% of the membership fees received that have been received by the closing date.

There are three prizes: 1st prize will be 50% of the prize fund, 2nd prize will be 30 % of the prize fund, and 3rd prize will be 20% of the prize fund. The remaining 50% will go the NPC to support our work promoting the interests of retired and older people. Find out more/sign up for NPC 250 Club at: **www.npcuk.org/post/npc-250-club** **OR: Write to NPC at the address on Page 1.**



Sign up for Better Buses today - campaign calls for services overhaul



The Better Buses campaign has launched a petition calling on the government to urgently deliver safe, accessible and high-quality bus services in England.

The campaign was set up last year to address serious public concerns about continuing reductions and cuts to bus services across the UK. Supported by members of the NPC, trade unions, and climate campaigners among others, Better Buses, is also developing petitions for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland which have their own devolved transport systems. Urging the government to

take urgent action on bus services, the Better Buses petition states: ‘Buses are the best used form of public transport and vital for all ages. They enable people to lead fulfilling lives, connecting them with friends, family and the services they need. Unfortunately, due to ongoing austeri-

ty, services have been severely degraded, with some places having no

buses at all. Increasing traffic has also taken its toll on services with buses caught in congestion,

causing costs to rise.

While the £2 bus fare cap has had a positive impact, some people can still find bus travel expensive. This has led to many people being socially excluded with a lack of transport options, while others are being pushed into transport poverty. A radically different approach to bus services would create

Better Buses wants the government to deliver:

- **Guaranteed long-term funding to make public transport the most efficient, reliable, affordable and attractive travel option-**
- **A move away from the current commercially led model to franchising & public ownership.**
- **Services that run from early morning to late at night seven days a week in all areas and communities.**
- **Full integration with rail and other transport.**
- **Simplified ticketing and improved information on and off buses.**

more inclusive, affordable and accessible services, particularly for those with disabilities.’

You can join the Better Buses network at: better-busesnational@gmail.com

Sign the petition at: www.megaphone.org.uk/

Fighting ageist attitudes

A survey to launch a new anti-ageism petition found that half of over 50’s in England experienced age discrimination in the last year. Ageing Better’s Age Without Limits campaign aims to change the way we all think about ageing, to tackle prejudices and empower people to age with confidence. Figures show that 37% of those over

50 surveyed experienced ageism at work. Of those aged over 70, 44% felt age discrimination most keenly on social and broadcast media, 43% as consumers, and 29% in health or social care and on public transport. The campaign aims to spark debate and to challenge the way we all think about ageing. Read more at: www.ageing-better.org.uk

Winter deaths demo 6th March

NPC members are invited to attend a major fuel poverty demonstration in Westminster on Budget Day 6th March 2024. Full details of the demo, organised by NPC London Region, the Fuel Poverty Coalition, the FPA and others, will be announced soon and circulated.

The protest follows analysis by the End Fuel Poverty Coalition of the latest government statistics that show there were 4,950 excess winter deaths in the UK caused by living in cold homes during winter 2022/23. The Government continues to rely on limited Warm Homes Discounts, Cold Weather Payments and Winter Fuel Payments. But they have refused calls for emergency support which NPC deems as very dangerous.

UK Poverty Report—a shock start to 2024

Six million in the UK now live in such deep poverty that they would have to double their income to escape hardship.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) UK Poverty Report has found that not only is poverty in the UK increasing, the depth of deprivation is far worse. Unsurprisingly, older people, along with children, are among the hardest hit, with single pensioners — especially women – particularly impacted.

JRF is calling for the next government to introduce a ‘essentials guarantee’ on pensions and entitlements to reverse the trend. And the NPC warns urgent action is needed if millions more of our ageing population are to avoid a destitute future. **For the first time the JRF UK Poverty Report calculates how much extra income would be needed to escape poverty.**

JRF define poverty as having household earnings below 40% of the UK median income after housing costs. This means most would have to double their income to just make ends meet. With older people largely on low and relatively fixed pensions we have little chance of doubling our income, particularly as prices continue to rise, and the Triple Lock protecting future state pension increases



The reality of pensioner poverty.

remains under threat of the axe. The Report also shows how the situation has worsened over time—*it's 20 years and six prime ministers since there was a sustained fall in poverty.* NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: “This

JRF UK Poverty Report—statistics extract

Group	Number in poverty	Poverty rate (%)
People in Total	14,400,000	22%
Children	4,200,000	29%
Pensioners	2,100,000	18%
Single pensioners	1,100,000	25%
Couple pensioners	1,000,000	14%
Working-age lone parents	800,000	42%
Children in lone-parent families	1,500,000	44%

is a crisis that is blighting people from birth to old age. Unless there is a rethink on how we ensure an essentials guarantee for all ages, millions more pensioners will face a miserable later life in abject poverty. JRF found that overall, more than one in five people in the UK

(22%) were living in poverty in 2021/22, which amounts to more than 14.4 million people. Of these 8.1 million were adults, 4.2 million were children and 2.1 million were pensioners.

Consumer champion Martin Lewis warned that the "problem is getting worse: "Once people are in the deepest mire, it's not a Money Saving Expert you need, its policy makers."

National Assembly of Women combat the stereotypes

NPC President Rosie MacGregor told the National Assembly of Women how retired people play a big role in the fight for better rights.

Rosie (pictured far right) addressed the NAW Weekend Seminar at the NAS UWT Centre in Birmingham last month. She spoke to delegates about the work of the NPC and how we support women’s and workers’ campaigns as well as retired people’s issues. She said: "Retired women can have a significant impact in cam-



paigns. Showing our solidarity is one of the key areas where retired women can remain active by assisting in campaigning, attending rallies and visiting picket lines. This has been evident in the work undertaken by the NPC in supporting striking rail workers and the fight to keep railway ticket offices open.” The Secretary of NAW is NPC Vice President Sandra Durkin (pictured above left). The theme for the busy seminar was ‘Combatting Stereotypes.’



Every signature counts for Commissioner petition



The NPC thinks it's time older people had a champion to raise our concerns at the highest levels. If you agree, then please sign our petition today calling for a Commissioner for Older People in England and Scotland, as they have in Wales and Northern Ireland. Life has never been more challenging for our ageing population. The rocketing cost of living, higher food and fuel bills, long NHS waiting lists, failing public transport and poor housing are all issues affecting our quality of life as we age. The NPC is working with Age UK, Independent Age,

and the Centre for Ageing Better, as well as more than 80 other organisations, to campaign for an independent Commissioner who can speak up for older people with senior public and private policy-makers. And you—and your friends—can support our call for a Commissioner by signing our petition below. Just sign, print and cut it out to send to the address below — we'll present the full petition to the government this spring.

Cut Out, Sign & Send!



**Commissioner
for Older People
& Ageing**



**Independent
Age**

Show your support for a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing

Add your name to our petition by filling out your details below. Please write clearly in CAPITAL LETTERS, and check over your details before sending this form back to us.

First name	Surname	Postcode	If you're online and you'd like us to email you about Independent Age campaigns, please add your email address* here

*We will never sell your data and promise to keep your data safe and secure. Find our privacy policy at independentage.org/our-privacy-policy. You can change your mind by writing to our Freepost addressor emailing campaigns@independentage.org.

To send this form back to us, please scan it and email to campaigns@independentage.org or post to:

**Independent Age Campaigns
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