

# Campaign!

The NPC's monthly bulletin for activists in the pensioners' movement

## Time to save the over 75s' TV licence

The NPC has called on the government to take back responsibility for funding the concessionary TV licence for the over 75s, ahead of a protest in March.

The call comes as part of the NPC's response to the BBC's consultation on the future of the concession.

The broadcaster has made it clear that it does not wish to maintain the current arrangement, and is looking at raising the age of eligibility, introducing a means-test or removing the concession altogether.

When the free TV licence was introduced, it was part of a package of measures brought in to offset the UK's low level of state pension.

Today, the state pension is still ranked as 37th out of 37 OECD countries and very little has changed:

- Half of all individuals 75 and over are disabled and find it difficult to be active
- 1 in 4 say the TV is their only companion
- 18% of all individuals 75 and over live in poverty, compared to 11% of the population

as a whole, and the figure is now rising

- At least half of all pensioners have an income of less than £12,000 a year, with millions more receiving incomes of just above that level
- There are around three times as many single, older women as men, and they would be disproportionately affected by any change

It is estimated that losing part (or all) of this concession will mean a further 50,000 individuals being forced into poverty.

In any democracy, access to information is crucial to enable citizens the opportunity to be informed and make decisions.

Means-testing by age or income is also totally unacceptable.

All the evidence shows that the cost far outweighs any savings means-testing may eventually bring.

Crucially, the BBC should take a critical look at itself before it makes a decision that affects the most vulnerable of the older population.



**GOVERNMENT SHOULD FUND THE OVER 75S' TV LICENCE - NOT THE BBC!**

**1 IN 4 OLDER PEOPLE ARE LONELY AND RELY ON THEIR TV FOR COMPANY**

**BBC PLANS WILL PUSH 50,000 MORE PENSIONERS INTO POVERTY**

**WWW.NPCUK.ORG**



**SAVE THE OVER 75 s' TV LICENCE DEMO**

**Thursday 7 March 2019, 12 noon  
Dept for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport  
100 Parliament Street, London**

**Nearest tube: Westminster**

**Followed at 1pm by a meeting in  
Portcullis House (speakers tbc)**

It needs to look at the salaries paid to some of its top employees and on-screen talent and the way in which the Corporation pays inde-

pendent production companies.

All supporters and affiliates are urged to join the protest on Thursday 7 March.

*The attack on the over 75s' TV licence started when the government passed responsibility for funding to the BBC. That decision must be reversed*

© NPC



## National Pensioners Convention

Marchmont  
Community Centre,  
62 Marchmont St,  
Bloomsbury,  
London WC1N 1AB  
T: 020-7837-6622  
E: info@npcuk.org  
W: npcuk.org  
Facebook: NPCUK  
Twitter: @NPCUK

## Campaign Dates

**Save the over 75s' TV licence demo**  
Thursday 7 March,  
12 noon, Dept Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 100 Parliament Street, near Westminster tube station. Bring banners

**Biennial Delegate Conference 2019**  
NPC regions and national pensioner groups gather in March to debate policy and elect officers. A report of the event will be issued shortly.

**Pensioners' Parliament 2019**  
Tuesday-Thursday 11-13 June, Winter Gardens, Blackpool. Cost £10 or £5 for one day. Speakers include Dave Ward (CWU), Zita Holbourne (PCS), Richard Wilkinson (author) and Eddie Lynch (NI Older People's Commissioner)

## Mind the pension gender gap

**T**he gender pension gap is bigger than the gender pay gap, according to the latest government figures.

Women in the UK receive 39.5% less in pension income than men – twice as large as the difference in pay between the sexes.

This equates to an average shortfall of £7000 a year and was twice the level of the gender pay gap in 2017, which was 18.4%.

Women workers clearly suffer from generally having lower wages (and therefore lower pension), breaks in National Insurance or pension contributions due to caring responsibilities or insecure/part-time employment.

Jan Shortt, NPC general secretary said: "The reality is

that if you are low paid – you will have a poor pension in retirement and for many women struggling to make ends meet doesn't stop when they retire."

On average, pensioner women receive 25% less state pension than men – including many of those who before 1977 paid the Married Women's Stamp (which didn't entitle them to a state pension).

As a result, women's median overall pension income was just 57% of men's.

Married women are the poorest in terms of personal income and previously-married women are twice as likely as similar men to be on means-tested Pension Credit.

The NPC will be publicising these issues at the Women's TUC in March.

## Cuts affect human rights

**V**ulnerable older people in England are at risk of being denied their human rights because of failures in the way the government allocates care resources since budget cuts, Human Rights Watch has said.

After a 13-month inquiry, the global campaign group has concluded that people are facing physical, financial and psychological hardship and are at risk of being denied adequate help to live independent, dignified lives.

It accuses the government of a lack of oversight of a system which is largely devolved to local councils and voices concern about a 140% increase in adult social care complaints since 2010 following a cut of almost 50% in central government funding for councils.

Under the Care Act 2014 and the Human Rights Act, the government is obliged to ensure people's rights to live independently in the community, to health and to private and family life, but an ageing

population, rising care costs and government cuts mean adult social care services face a £1.5bn funding gap by 2019-20.

Dot Gibson, NPC deputy general While we wait for the Green Paper on social care at least 1.4m people are no longer getting the support they need because of the spending cuts."

NPC groups across the UK marked Dignity Action Day on 1 February by calling for a new National Care Service to be funded by general taxation.

## Funeral poverty challenge

**T**he cost of dying has risen up the political agenda recently following announcements that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and HM Treasury are looking into the industry.

Funeral director prices have increased by 68% and crematoria fees rose by 84% over the last 10 years.

By comparison, inflation (CPI) increased by around 25%

over this time.

People generally spend between £3,000 and £5,000 organising a funeral, but campaigners are concerned that such a bill would cost those on the lowest incomes nearly 40% of their annual outgoings, more than they spend on food, clothing and energy combined.

The Scottish government is planning more support on this issue and the NPC will be pressing Westminster to introduce something similar.

**Sign a friend up to receive copies of the Campaign! E-Bulletin - simply send an email to: info@npcuk.org or follow us on Facebook and Twitter**