

# Campaign!

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

## New campaign for tax funded care

The issue of social care is beginning to rise up the political agenda.

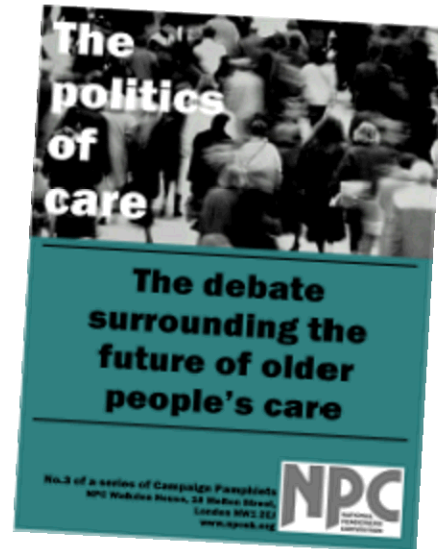
Recent reports from the Care Quality Commission into the standards of care, the Equality and Human Rights Commission's investigation into home care services, the Dilnot Commission's report into care funding and the government's anticipated Care White Paper have all helped to bring the issue to the fore.

Given the importance of this issue, the NPC has agreed to launch a *Fair Care Campaign* calling for:

- The creation of a National Care Service alongside the NHS; funded through general taxation and based on medical and care needs rather than ability to pay
- Holistic assessments to determine need to be carried out by medical and social care professionals in consultation with the individual
- Introduction of a UK-wide Dignity Code to uphold the rights and maintain the personal dignity of older people who are less able to care for themselves or to properly conduct their affairs
- Improved standards of care, through better monitoring and regulation and enhanced training and staff conditions
- Greater protection and specific legislation covering the issue of elder abuse
- A return of the majority of social care provision to the public sector

To support the campaign the NPC is also publishing a new pamphlet, entitled *The Politics of Care* that will give a detailed analysis of the current situation, what needs to be done and how it can be funded.

In addition, the



The NPC's Fair Care Campaign will be supported by detailed analysis in a new pamphlet entitled *The Politics of Care* © NPC

NPC's Dignity Code will be launched in Parliament on 22 February supported by a host of prominent signatories and a national lobby of Parliament is planned for 20 March with a rally from 1-3pm

in Committee Room 14, House of Commons.

Support the campaign by signing the online Dignity Code petition at: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/27050>.

## Warm Homes scheme too restrictive

The NPC has warned that the government's new Warm Home Discount (WHD) scheme needs urgent reform to prevent hundreds of thousands of older people missing out on

much needed support with their energy bills.

Under the scheme, participating energy suppliers give a rebate of £120 on their electricity bill to those receiving Pension Credit Guarantee,

but they also have discretion to extend support to other vulnerable households.

However, many of the companies have adopted different criteria for giving this extra help, and some

have even closed the scheme to new customers that might benefit.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: "The WHD scheme is a sham; it hasn't been properly publicized, it's too com-

plicated and pensioners are unsure whether they qualify for extra help or not."

The NPC is calling for the scheme to be widened and advertised more widely to all pensioners.



## National Pensioners Convention

Walkden House,  
10 Melton Street,  
London NW1 2EJ  
T: 020-7383-0388  
E: admin@npcuk.org  
W: npcuk.org

## Campaign Dates

**20 March 2012**  
NPC Care Lobby  
Rally in Committee  
Room 14, 1-3pm  
before lobbying  
MPs as part of the  
Fair Care Cam-  
paign.

**12 April 2012**  
Second Annual  
Jack Jones' Lecture  
The National Pen-  
sioners' Education  
and Welfare Centre  
will stage the sec-  
ond Jack Jones'  
lecture in Liverpool,  
with TUC general  
secretary Brendan  
Barber. More de-  
tails to follow.

**19-21 June 2012**  
NPC Pensioners'  
Parliament  
The 2012 NPC Pen-  
sioners' Parliament  
will again take  
place in the Winter  
Gardens, Black-  
pool. It will include  
an opening march  
and rally, various  
discussion groups,  
exhibition stands,  
guest speakers and  
entertainment.  
Tickets priced £5  
are available from  
the NPC office.

# Changes to Blue Badge scheme

**F**rom 1 April anyone who becomes disabled after reaching 65 and applies or re-applies for a Blue Badge will now have to see an Independent Mobility Assessor, under new England-wide guidelines.

This is likely to be a private occupational or physio therapist who is employed by the local authority.

Whilst assessors should follow the guidelines, each

individual assessor might view things slightly differently.

Off the record discussions have revealed that before the assessment even begins - individuals will be viewed arriving at the assessment centre and if they get out of their car easily or climb the stairs to the assessment office they will not get a badge.

A crude rule of thumb, if an individual is able to go to the shops on

their own, they are unlikely to be awarded a badge.

It is estimated that 66% of the 2.5m Blue Badge holders are likely to be re-assessed and there is a concern that those that received the badge under the old rules may now have them removed.

The NPC is hoping to compile a list of cases where this is happening and is asking supporters to send details to the NPC office.

# Legal Aid under threat from Bill

**T**housands of older people could lose valuable legal support under government plans to cut legal aid, campaigners have warned.

Under the Legal Aid Bill, welfare benefits, housing and debt issues and private family matters will be removed from the system.

Those without sufficient income to pay for a lawyer will not be able to access any legal

advice on these matters.

The Bill will also introduce a telephone gateway, so that for issues such as community care, individuals will have to explain their case to someone who will decide whether they are eligible for legal aid.

However, this adviser will not be a specialist.

These changes also come as hun-  
dreds of local councils are cut-

ting services so that vulnerable adults will now find it harder to access legal advice to challenge any wrong decisions that their councils make.

Frank Cooper, NPC president said: "The combination of cuts and changes to legislation could deny legal protection to thousands of older people."

For more information visit [www.justice-for-all.org.uk](http://www.justice-for-all.org.uk).

# Elders to downsize homes

**H**ousing ministers are set to offer help to pensioners to move from their homes to smaller properties and allow councils to rent their homes out to families struggling to find a property.

Under the scheme, local authorities would manage the properties and any profit from the rent would go back to the older person.

The individual would still own their property, but would move elsewhere.

The local council would pay for any moving costs, renovations and financial advice.

The government believes this is the best way of tackling the housing shortage, rather than building new homes for young families.

However, ministers have yet to recognised that there is still a lack of suitable accommodation available for older people.

**If you know of anyone who would like to receive this bulletin please send their email address to the NPC**