



National Pensioners Convention Wales Manifesto 2021

Getting the NHS back to business as usual

- The Welsh Government must ensure the retention of adequate General Practice and hospital capacity beds, clinics, phlebotomy testing etc., X ray and scanning capacity to enable patients receiving out-patient treatments to continue to do so and also allow for new referrals. Podiatry services need to be restored.

Many older people told us they need reassurance about the measures used to safeguard against Covid 19 transmission. Their confidence in engaging with the outside world has decreased. Many have worries about access to healthcare and other public services, shopping, cash, exercise, libraries and entertainment.

- Welsh Government must deal with the barriers preventing access to those services such as lack of public transport, public toilets and clear easily available sources of information.
- Free prescriptions for all people in Wales should be maintained.

The Welsh NHS and Social Care

We want a promise of safe long-term care for all frail, elderly and disabled people.

Recovery from Covid 19

- There is now the prospect of a vaccine being available. NPC Wales wants the vaccination programme to be based on starting with the most vulnerable i.e. key health and social care workers followed by a risk assessed programme.

Fuel Poverty, Energy, Housing and Environment

- The next Welsh Government should start a major home energy 'retrofit' programme. Such a programme would have wider benefits for income inequality, public health and climate change. It would also address the problem of fuel poverty faced by many older people in Wales.

Developing 'One system of seamless health and care for Wales'

The Covid 19 pandemic has exposed the lack of resilience in our Health and Care System. It has also highlighted the fact that deprived areas have suffered the worst.

- For too long Social Care has been a poor relation of the NHS. This needs to change.

NPC UK in their pamphlet "Goodbye Cinderella" make a strong case for a UK National integrated Health and Social Care system

- NPC Wales calls upon the next Welsh Government to start a process, including any necessary legislation, to enable the development of an integrated National Health and Social Care system in Wales. There should be a timescale plan, with key milestone indicators, as to how to move toward that objective.
- The next Welsh Government should enter into discussions with the UK Treasury to seek ways of securing an appropriate form of funding for an integrated Health & Social Care system.

Fuel Poverty, Energy, Housing and Environment

- Retrofitting homes - as proposed by the Institute of Engineering and Technology, installing insulation, heat pumps and rooftop solar voltaic - should be the dominant component of a new green economy for Wales.
- The next Welsh Government should enter into discussions with the UK Treasury to seek ways of securing an appropriate form of funding for a new Green Economy.
- Meantime NPC Wales calls for a Welsh Government, grant funded, expanded programme of home improvements for older people living in energy inefficient homes throughout Wales.

NPC Wales also supports Decent State Pensions

The basic state pension should be set at 70% of the living wage (outside London rate) and above the official poverty level. This is currently around £220 a week in 2020. This should be paid to all men and women, regardless of their National Insurance contributions. Every year the state pension (basic and second such as State Earnings Related Pension Scheme SERPS) should rise in line with the best of earnings, the Consumer Price Index, the Retail Price Index or 2.5%.

Universal Pensioner Benefits

NPC Wales supports the maintenance of universal pensioner benefits such as free bus travel and a £500 winter fuel allowance.

Free TV Licences for the over 75s

During the lockdown NPC Wales along with other older people's organisations helped with the Age Cymru survey of the experience of older people. It found that 80% of older people in Wales relied on the public TV News service to keep themselves informed.

It cannot be right that the over 75s now have to pay £157.50 per year for that – it's like being fined for being over 75.

Digital Inclusion

Digital access now needs to be considered as a right and as an essential utility in the same way we consider the need for gas and electricity.

- Action must be taken by the Welsh Government to remove the barriers that prevent older people from getting online.
- Health boards and Local Authorities should be required by Welsh Government to build digital confidence for older people to access digital public services.
- For those older people who cannot access on line services, or do not wish to go on line, Welsh Government must ensure that non-digital options remain available and accessible.
- Welsh Government must create a Wales where full participation in their community and family life is within the reach of all older people and their contribution is recognised and valued. We must have communities that are age-friendly.

Transport

- The bus pass for people aged 60 or over free to use 24/7 should remain and be developed to become a Wales Travel Pass for use on all modes of transport. It should be extended to other age groups such as young workers on apprenticeships.

Older Peoples Rights

The NPC stands for intergenerational fairness. All men and women shall be entitled to dignity and security in retirement.

- The Older People's Commissioner in Wales makes an important contribution in making sure that our rights and dignity are maintained. NPC Wales want a commitment from all Political Parties that they will retain and support the role of the Older People's Commissioner in Wales.

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