



Are the pensioners of today getting a better deal than the Younger Generation?

That is a question that a House of Commons Work and Pensions committee are looking at by launching a major new inquiry on intergenerational fairness. The Select Committee is to investigate so called "intergenerational fairness" and assess whether existing pensioners have enjoyed and accumulated much more housing and financial wealth, public service usage and welfare and pension entitlements than more recent generations can hope to receive. The inquiry is targeted at reforming both the winter fuel allowance and the state

pension 'triple lock', as well as considering whether the entire welfare system is sustainable. Before the investigation has even begun, the committee seems to have accepted the view that older people have been protected from austerity whilst the rest of society has had to pay.

The report goes on to say that those born between 1956 and 1961 have been forecast to receive 118 per cent of what they contribute. This of course relates to those are to receive the new state pension not those of us receiving the current state pension.

The committee will investigate the extent to which this disparity is a consequent of government policies such as the triple lock on our state pension which protects pensioners incomes, and broader economic and demographic trends.

So they will be looking at what is the long term viability of policy measures such as the triple lock in the context of financial pressures on younger groups. They will also be looking at how the Winter Fuel Payments be reformed.

Older people are being blamed for the fact that their homes have risen in value over the last 30 years, rather than there being any recognition that many are still struggling with the rising costs of living.

Pensioners give back to society over £40bn every year in taxes by performing voluntary work in the Community and unpaid caring of relatives, there is a need for this to be recognised by the committee.

This document has been discussed at both NPC and the South East TUC Pensioners committees. The NPC have made a detailed submission to the inquiry. A copy of this large document is available on request.



The members of the Unions Retired Members Advisory Committee have been alerted to this document, and I will be asking for this item to be discussed at our meeting in June.

You will see from the Retired Members Conference report on page two that a resolution was carried at this conference which has called upon the Union to work with other interested parties to campaign to maintain the Triple Lock on pensions.



Retired Members Conference Manchester 21st January 2016.

58 Delegates 25 visitors and 47 Branches were present at the Retired Member's conference held in Britannia Hotel Manchester.

Carl Webb the North West Regional Secretary addressed the conference saying that it was a great privilege to be able to host the conference in the North West Region. He said he would like to congratulate all members who aspire to become retired member's secretaries of the union, and the NW Region thank you for all the work that you do on behalf of the Retired members. He went on to say you can always rely on the retired members to turn out and support us when we have events, I thank you all.

Dave Ward in his address to the conference said, "With the austerity measures and public service cuts that this government is implementing, I understand the difficulties that retired members face. We should ensure that we seek the views of the retired members on all issues that are of concern to them. I want to work with the RMAC to see what we can do to support the retired members of the union. I also want to work with the RMAC to see how we can strengthen the retired members sections. Also I want to see more involvement of the retired members within branches, and we need to improve communications and look how we can improve the Retired Members Webb site."

On the subject of companies providing retirement seminars, He said it is very unlikely that we could achieve this, but let's see what the CWU can do.

Conference Motions Carried.

- 1. The Triple Lock.** This Composite Motion called for the RMAC to work with the NEC to campaign through the Labour Party, the NPC and the TUC and other organisations to defend the Triple Lock, and maintain the commitment during the life of this parliament and the next one.
This was one of the Motions selected to go before the General Conference in April
- 2. NPC** .Due to the published accounts of the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) that forecast a deficit this year, this motion called for the RMAC to work with the NEC to appeal to Branches to voluntary donate 60 pence annually per Retired Member to the NPC.
- 3. The SW Regional Council viewed with concern the falling numbers of retired members.** The council is concerned that Branches are not affording the treatment of recruitment of retired members with the time and priority it deserves. The RMAC is instructed to make representation to the CWU Headquarters in order that our concerns are known and sent to all branches.
This was the second Motion elected to go to the Unions Annual Conference.
- 4. Prostate Cancer.** With 30,000 men living with terminal prostate cancer, this Motion instructed the RMAC to request the NEC to join with other interested organisations to obtain from the Government their agreement to Prioritise Prostate Cancer care as the number of sufferers are more than double those with breast or bowel cancer. Research funding for prostate cancer falls well below other cancers.
- 5. NHS Funding.** This motion concerned the continued underfunding of our NHS. This underfunding has resulted in the local NHS trust having to outsource to private companies who in turn make a profit from the sick. The government sent Lord Prior to the USA to see how their private healthcare operates. This shows that the Conservative Government are not interested in the public funding of the NHS. Conference therefor instructs the RMAC to work with other organisations and bodies to put pressure on the Conservative Government to increase the funding for the NHS.
- 6. Bedroom Tax.** Conference instructs the RMAC to work with the NEC to lobby the present government to repeal the under occupancy charge, otherwise known as the Bedroom tax.
- 7. Care Homes.** This motion instructed the RMAC to request that the NEC join with other relevant organisations to maintain close liaison with the CQC and local authorities to ensure that where a Care or Nursing Home is deemed to be failing to meet required standards, every effort is made to remedy the perceived issue in order to preclude the closure of the establishment and the effect to both residents, staff members and family members.

8. **Care Home Financing.** The conference instructs the RMAC to work with the NEC to achieve the following: In terms of the CWU affiliation with the Labour movement, seek greater influence with the Government and Local Authorities to take greater interest and responsibilities when promoting financial restraints on Care Homes and retirement accommodation, and to help prevent the evolving process of passing care services in to private and uncontrolled agencies.

SDGS Tony Kearns Closing address to conference.



In his closing address to the conference, Tony thanked the members of the RMAC for all their work on behalf of the retired members of the Union.

He said the CWU retired members play an important role within the union. Within a review of the structure of the union we will be looking at how the Retired Members sections are structured.

He went on to say that the Government Trade Union Bill if carried un-amended will cause Unions many problems, it would mean that as retired members you would not be able to support colleagues on picket lines. It will take money from unions and give it to private firms.

The problems that we face today do not just affect the pensioners of today, but all those

who will be retiring in the future.



BBC to ask over 75s to give up free licence

The BBC has been reported to be considering how it can cut back on the free TV licences for the over 75s, two years before it takes over responsibility for providing the concession.

In December, the broadcaster hired Frontier Economics, the company is chaired by former cabinet secretary Lord O'Donnell, to look at a range of options including how to "reform" the free deal.

Options could include raising the age threshold for receiving a free TV licence or taking away the right to those who are over 75 but live with younger people.

The BBC has also considered using well known celebrity pensioners to encourage older viewers to give up their free licence, worth £145.50 for the good of the corporation.

Some of those backing the move include Dame Joan Bake-well and Melvyn Bragg.

Appearing in the media, NPC general secretary Dot Gibson said: "The minute the chancellor announced passing responsibility for the free TV licence over to the BBC, we knew its future would be in danger."

"The BBC is under tremendous financial pressure and will look to make savings wherever it can, but it really isn't the job of a broadcaster to start administering the government's wider welfare policy."

The report of the BBC's intentions has again raised calls to end other universal benefits such as the winter fuel allowance and the free bus passes and instead introduces a means test.

Campaigners point out that one of the main reasons for such benefits remains the low level of the UK state pension, ranked as 32 out of 34 OECD countries.

Dot Gibson said, the government must reverse this decision; otherwise the chancellor will have managed to privatise government cuts at the expense of Britain's older generation,"



Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership.

You may not be aware of this organisation which has not received a lot of publicity, but this is what it stands for. Our local businesses, environment and democracy are under threat from a trade deal currently being negotiated between the EU and the USA. Below is a report in the Guardian newspaper on how it may affect the NHS.

The controversial transatlantic trade deal set to be agreed this year would mean that privatisation of elements of the NHS could be made irreversible for future governments wanting to restore services to public hands, according to a new legal analysis.

The legal advice was prepared by one of the UK's leading QCs on European law for the Unite trade union, which will reveal that it has been holding talks with the government about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) deal between Europe and the US.

Unite believes the government has been keeping Britain in the dark over the impact of the deal and argues the NHS should be excluded from the trade deal. The government dismissed the idea that TTIP poses a threat as "irresponsible and false".

TTIP would give investors new legal rights, which extend beyond UK and EU law as well as NHS contracts, according to Michael Bowsher QC, a former chair of the Bar Council's EU law committee who was tasked by Unite to prepare the advice. Mr Bowsher said he had concluded that the deal poses "a real and serious risk" to future UK government decision making regarding the NHS.

"We consider that the solution to the problems TTIP poses to the NHS – and which is likely to provide the greatest protection – is for the NHS to be excluded from the agreement by way of a blanket exception contained within the main text of TTIP," Bowsher has also warned that it could allow private companies with links to NHS contracts to win higher levels of compensation through bypassing domestic courts.



The South East Regional Retired Members Section, How are we doing?

At the retired members Conference in Manchester this year, the General Secretary Dave Ward said that he wanted the Retired members of the union to be more involved in matters that are of concern to both them and other members of the Union.

You will be aware that our Region plays an active role when it comes to raising concerns of our retired members through our affiliation to organisations such as the NPC and the South East Trade Union Congress. As the South East Regional Retired Members Secretary and as a member of the Unions Retired Members Advisory Committee, I am able to raise issues at both Regional and National Levels.

Over the past year we have been campaigning to have the National Retired Members web page up graded to allow two way information to be exchanged between the RMAC and the retired members. The Head of the CWU Communications Department is due to attend the next meeting of the RMAC where I will be raising this issue.

If you have issues that you think we should be raising, such as problems with care or Bus services are cut, or problems with your doctor's surgery, then please contact your retired member's secretary, who can then raise these issues at our Regional Meetings.

The more information we receive the better we able to bring these problems to the Attention of Campaigning bodies that we are affiliated to. No matter what part of the UK you live in, we want to hear from you.
Rod Downing.

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