

SCOTTISH PENSIONERS' FORUM

Annual Report 2019-2021

Established 1992



CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1992



Chairperson's Foreword

Since our last annual report in 2019 it has been an extremely turbulent time for everyone. For the past 16 months, we have been caught amidst a global pandemic which has had a devastating impact on social interaction and everyday life, impacting heavily on the health and quality of life of older people.

Due to the pandemic, the SPF has had to adapt the way we carry out our work on behalf of older people across Scotland. We have embraced new technology by holding our meetings and events through Zoom and other digital platforms, allowing us to continue our campaigns and to promote the aims of the organisation.

However, we are acutely aware that not all the people we represent could be involved in our work during this time, either through digital exclusion, social isolation or other issues, and we want them to know that we have continued to work on their behalf, highlighting the issues that are of importance to them.

During the past two years, the SPF have continued their campaigns on issues including the reinstatement of the free TV licence for all over 75's and the abolition of prescription delivery charges as well as making demands on the UK government on the UK's inadequate state pension provision. We have also carried out new research on the health and safety of older workers during the coronavirus pandemic and published a report calling for the need for a publicly funded National Care Service. We have also worked closely with other older people's organisations through the Older People's Strategic Action Forum and continued to serve on Scottish Parliament Cross Party Groups to make older people's voices heard.

Sadly, last year we lost our Chairperson Maureen Gardner, a long-standing member of the SPF. Prior to Maureen's passing we were delighted to attend a presentation by Unite the Union to celebrate her 60 years as a serving member and activist. Maureen will be sadly missed. As Vice Chair I have stepped into the role of Chair during the interim period.

I would like to thank our Administrator and emphasize her hard work and commitment during what has been a difficult and challenging year. Thanks must also go to our committee for their support and their valuable input to our work

I just wish to end by saying that the SPF acknowledges that social isolation and loneliness was a huge problem prior to the pandemic and is one which has been exacerbated further as a result of it, and so we will be striving to hold in person events as soon as health and safety guidelines allow.

Let's hope the coming year brings more light at the end of the tunnel for all of us.

Rose Jackson.
Interim Chairperson.

SPF ANNUAL CONFERENCE, DUNDEE 2019



The SPF Annual Conference took place on Tuesday 4th June 2019 at Best Western Queen's Hotel, Dundee with 128 delegates in attendance. Guest speakers on the day were Christina McKelvie MSP, Minister for Social Security and Older People, Ian Tasker, Scottish Hazards Campaign, John McAllion, Dundee Pensioners' Forum and Mick Rice of Unite the Union Song Club. We were also joined by activists from GMB and UNISON who spoke on the Glasgow Equal Pay Strike

Formal business on the day included the election of the Executive and Standing Orders Committee for 2019/2020 (carried through until 2021), the SPF's campaigning work on the free TV licence for over 75s, state pension issues and a discussion on the *A Fairer Scotland for Older People* National Framework.

Motions to conference seen delegates discuss and debate a series of amendments to the SPF Constitution which aimed to make the composition of the SPF Executive Committee more diverse and inclusive, and we were pleased to note that all of these amendments were carried. There was also the continued commitment that the SPF would work with the STUC, Trade Union Councils and the National Pensioners' Convention to campaign for better state pension provision.

Our thanks go to Dundee City Council for their donation and support for the event and to our delegates, who travelled across Scotland to join with us on the day.

Executive Committee 2019-2021

Helen Biggins	Individual Member	
John Boyle	Individual Member	
Jim Bradley	Individual Member	
Surjit Chowdhary	Mel Milaap/Central Gurdwhara	Treasurer
Pauline Frazer	Individual Member	
Maureen Gardner	STUC-Unite (David Edwards from 2020)	Chairperson (2019-20)
Sam Gibson	Individual Member	
Rose Jackson	STUC-UNISO/N	Vice Chair/Chair (20/21)
Allan MacKenzie	STUC - PCS	
Bill Martin	Johnstone Seniors Forum	
Christine McGiveron	Individual Member	(Until March 2020)
John McGiveron	Civil Service Pens Alliance	(Until March 2020)
Dorothy McHugh	Dundee Pensioners' Forum	
Elinor McKenzie	Individual Member	
Alex Morrison	East Kilbride Seniors Forum	
Jeanette Pieper	Age Scotland	
William Quigley	GMB	
Rosemary Smith	Individual Member	
Alan Spinks	National Fed of Occup. Pensioners	
Jim Symons	National Union of Journalists	
John Taylor	STUC - Prospect	
Colin Wakeling	NASUWT	
William Welsh	RMT	
June Whitelaw	STUC – USDAW	Assistant Secretary

OUR WORK THROUGHOUT 2019-2021

The SPF continues our campaign on the Free TV Licence for all over 75s



During the pandemic, the BBC took the decision to extend the eligibility for the free TV licence to all over 75s until August 2020. Although this decision alleviated some of the concerns of many older people at that time, it did not go far enough as lockdown was still in force when notices to pay began dropping through letterboxes again.

Despite BBC Chairman, Sir David Clementi, stating that due to exceptional circumstances now was 'not the right time' to implement change, implement it he did robbing up to 3.7 million older people across the UK of an essential lifeline during one of the worst global crises of our time.

With levels of loneliness and isolation in older people reaching record heights, the decision of the Westminster Government to outsource the capacity to change social policy to third parties could not have come at a worst time with the UK government feigning disgust at the BBC's decision to enforce the change. You really couldn't make it up!

There has been a lot of toing and froing between the BBC and the UK Government recently with urgent talks between both parties still taking place but where does this leave over 40,000 older people across Scotland who are now having to pay up or switch off?

The SPF continues our demands that the UK Government retake ownership of the scheme and offer the concession to all older people over 75 instead of passing the buck to the BBC. We have enlisted strong support from the Scottish Government and will continue to prioritise working with other older people's organisations across the UK on this important issue until the relevant parties take note.

Watch this space!



The SPF wishes to thank all members and friends who have supported our campaign.

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SPF Report Highlights the Need for a National Care Service in Scotland



In light of the tragic number of care home deaths in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic, the SPF carried out extensive research on the issue culminating in a report being published in October 2020 calling for the introduction of a publicly funded National Care Service. This report has been fully endorsed by the STUC.

Rose Jackson, SPF Chair stated:

“Covid 19 has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable members of society with many older people losing their lives prematurely due to the inadequate measures in place within residential care settings – things must change as a matter of urgency to ensure that more older people don’t lose their lives as a consequence of this going forward.”

The report also highlights the vast profits being made by private companies and overseas investment in the care home sector with many of the homes being shown to be unfit for purpose. The SPF are demanding that there is an urgent overhaul of this practice.

Rose argued:

“We must replace a profit-based system with something more akin to the NHS to avoid taxpayers providing grossly inflated profits to shell companies and overseas speculators.”

The SPF have also set out a plan for a care service which would be beneficial for care home residents whilst also protecting the rights and welfare of employees in the care sector. We have always maintained strong links with the STUC and its affiliates and welcomed their support in highlighting the report.

Roz Foyer, General Secretary of the STUC, welcomed the report and stated:

“Older people in Scotland have suffered greatly during the pandemic. Reports that half of all Covid deaths in Scotland have been from people living in care homes is a disgrace that should shame Governments and employers.”

“The STUC has repeatedly called for a National Care Service and we must continue to push for a fully nationalised service that puts service users and care workers before profit and greed.”

A full copy of the report can be found here at

<http://www.scottishpensioners.org.uk/files/National%20Care%20Service.pdf>

Covid 19 and the Safety of Older Workers

During the first several months of the pandemic, the Scottish Pensioners' Forum were contacted by older workers, many of them key workers and frontline staff working at the very heart of the crisis. These workers shared with us their concerns over their own health and wellbeing as well as that of their families during this troubling time.



Statistics showed that the impact of Covid-19 on older workers could be significant with them often at greater risk of developing serious illness. Many in the 55+ age group were also more likely to have the kind of underlying health conditions that made them particularly vulnerable to Covid 19 thereby resulting in them being forced to shield in order to protect themselves.

To find out more from the workers themselves, the Scottish Pensioners' Forum once again teamed up with Scottish Hazards to put out a survey asking questions on issues of the greatest concern to an older workforce.

We launched our survey in September 2020, running for 4 weeks until early October 2020. During that time 548 responses were received, an average of 140 per week. Views were sought from individuals in four age categories; 50 to 54; 55 to 59; 60 to 65 and over 65s.

The survey was designed to substantiate existing anecdotal evidence regarding Covid 19 and the impact it was having on older workers, their experiences of lockdown and employer engagement throughout the pandemic and when developing Covid secure workplaces.

The survey was circulated to our own membership, our networks, trade unions and health and safety activists through our colleagues at Scottish Hazards. Out of the 548 responses, the majority came from women (411), 136 responses from men and one respondent identified as other. The largest number of responses came from workers employed in health and social care (175), education (77) and the NHS (37).

Our research took the form of a report which was fed into the work of Genanalytics, who had reprofiled their work on the Festival of Ageing to instead carry out extensive research on older people during the pandemic.

A copy of the report can be found here at
<http://www.scottishpensioners.org.uk/files/Covid%2019%20Older%20Workers.pdf>

Prescription Delivery Charges

During the pandemic, the SPF launched a successful campaign against the introduction of prescription delivery charges to those unable to order their prescriptions online. After several discussions with the head office of Boots UK and also by highlighting the issue on social media, the SPF were assured that charges would be withdrawn, in the interim period, and all deliveries made free of charge. We have kept on top of this campaign and have not yet seen any evidence of this charge being reinstated – if you know of any please let us know! The SPF hope to hold further negotiations with Boots UK to have this charge withdrawn completely.



We'll be sure to keep you informed!

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SPF call for 'The Big 6' to slash service charges.

At the start of the pandemic, the Scottish Pensioners' Forum contacted The Big 6 energy companies Scottish Power; SSE; Npower; British Gas; E.on and EDF asking that they make concessions on standing charges and tariffs in order to avoid more and more people falling into fuel poverty.



Our Chair, Maureen Gardner argued that as more and more people were having to heed the government's demands to stay at home, the surge in energy usage would see many people unable to meet the cost of increased energy bills while profits would soar.

Whilst in the past the SPF have challenged energy companies mainly in relation to older people's welfare, this current crisis helped emphasise the many similarities between younger and older generations in terms of fuel poverty. We argued that an intergenerational approach had to be adopted during the crisis and any challenge made be done as a collective.

We were happy to note that some energy companies did indeed offer concessions however we still feel they haven't gone far enough. It's time for the whole system to be re-evaluated and we will continue to seek meetings with the energy companies to ensure that a fairer system is adopted and that profits don't come at the expense of people's lives.

UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS



On 1st October 2019, the SPF held their yearly demonstration outside the Scottish Parliament to mark United Nations International Day of Older Persons. Supported once again by our affiliates and friends, the theme "The Journey to Age Equality" drew attention to the existence of inequalities in old age, many of which are a result of accumulative disadvantages throughout a person's life.



Maureen Gardner, SPF Chair, gave a heartfelt speech on her own experiences growing up and the inequalities she faced throughout her life, speaking mainly on education, religious bias and the gender pay gap. As well as Maureen's contribution, other speakers included Christine Grahame MSP; Claire Baker MSP; Tam Wilson from the STUC Better Than Zero Campaign; Tommy Brennan, North Lanarkshire Trades Council; Irene Graham, Unite Scotland Retired Members' Branch and campaigners from the WASPI campaign. As has been common practice over the years, Convenor of the Cross-Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing, Sandra White MSP put forward a motion to parliament on behalf of older people in Scotland.

In 2020, due to government restrictions, we were unable to hold our usual lobby of parliament however we marked the day by hosting our first digital event in celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations and the 30th Anniversary of the International Day of Older Persons. The theme of the event was "Pandemics: Do They Change How We Address Age and Ageing?" and we were delighted that the STUC and many of our OPSAF colleagues were there to celebrate with us.

We're keeping our fingers crossed that it will be business as usual in 2021.

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OUT AND ABOUT (and Online too)

In addition to the work highlighted in this publication and our recent newsletters, the volunteers, and staff, of the SPF Executive Committee have attended various conferences and events throughout 2019-2021 and listed below is just some of those we have attended:

- NPC Pensioners' Parliament
- Intergenerational Housing/Age Friendly Places, Dumfries
- Contact the Elderly: A Connected Forth Valley
- Challenge Poverty Week events
- Glasgow's Golden Generation AGM
- Holyrood Conference on Health and Social Care
- Festival of Ageing
- UN Older People's Day, Edinburgh and Online
- STUC Black Workers' Conference
- National Transport Strategy (Meetings with Transport Scotland)
- Guest Speaker, STUC Dementia in the Workplace event, Inverness and Glasgow
- Cross Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing
- Cross Party Group on Funerals and Bereavement
- Older People's Strategic Action Forum meetings
- STUC Congress and Fringe events
- International Women's Day events
- Scottish Enterprise Covid Renew Scenarios Project
- Westminster Employment Forum: Next Steps for UK Pension Funds
- Poverty in Scotland event
- STUC Disabled Workers' Conference
- Scottish Funeral Poverty Working Group
- Action on Elder Abuse Conference (Hourglass)
- STUC Congress Dundee.
- SPF Outreach meetings Galashiels, Prestwick, Glasgow
- Winter Heating Benefits Stakeholder Reference Group
- Women in the Workplace Conference, London
- Age Scotland Conference, Glasgow
- The Future of Primary Care in Scotland
- STUC Equalities Conference: Mental Health Awareness (Speaker)
- National Taskforce for Human Rights
- Digital Round Table on Healthy Ageing
- Ageing and Ageism in the Commonwealth event
- General Election Hustings
- Scottish Election Hustings

SPF MEMBERSHIP

Our members are very important to us and their commitment allows us to carry out the work that we have been doing over the past 29 years. Through our membership we represent over 315,000 older people across Scotland

We presently have 3 categories of membership of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum and new members are always welcome. These categories of membership are as follows:

- Individual Pensioner Members
- Other Individual Members
- Organisations and Local Forums

We thank you for your continued support to the work we carry out on your behalf.



Thank
You

Join the Scottish Pensioners Forum
Application forms can be requested from:

Suite 11, Red Tree Business Centre

24 Stonelaw Road

Rutherglen G73 3TW

Telephone 0141 337 8113

CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1992

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT As at 31st March 2020

Balance As at 31/03/19		22,579.74
INCOME		
<u>MEMBERSHIP FEES</u>		<u>1752.50</u>
<u>DONATIONS</u>		<u>1002.07</u>
<u>GENERATED INCOME</u>		
Conference Fees	780.00	
Impact Funding Partners	30,000.00	<u>30,780.00</u>
<u>Total Income</u>		<u>33,534.57</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Executive Expenses/Catering		<u>876.31</u>
POSTAGE/PRINTING/OFFICE		<u>1901.23</u>
CONFERENCE FEES		<u>3211.84</u>
Outreach Meetings		<u>2255.63</u>
<u>Salary and Overheads</u>		<u>26,628.73</u>
<u>Miscellaneous</u>		
Watson & Co Audit	612.00	
Survey and Reports	631.00	
Pic Rights Licence	122.00	
ICO Registration	40.00	
34SP Domain	15.00	
Remuneration	20.00	
Petty Cash Float	200.00	<u>1640.00</u>
Total Expenditure		<u>36,513.74</u>
Year End Balance 31/3/20		<u>19,600.57</u>

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT As at 31st March 2021

Balance As at 31/03/20		19,600.57
 <u>INCOME</u>		
<u>MEMBERSHIP FEES</u>		
Organisations	770.00	
Individual Pensioners	270.00	<u>1040.00</u>
 <u>DONATIONS</u>		
<u>GENERATED INCOME</u>		
Conference Fees	40.00	
Inspiring Scotland	30,000.00	
Emergency C-19 Funding	2,800.00	<u>32,840.00</u>
 <u>Total Income</u>		
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
<u>POSTAGE/PRINTING/OFFICE</u>		
Report/Publications/Survey	903.59	
Postage Costs	1059.26	
ICO GDPR Registration	40.00	
Stationery and Sundries	256.51	
Survey Expenses	555.50	
Office Hardware	448.96	<u>3,263.82</u>
 Salary and Overhead Costs		
<u>Total Expenditure</u>		
<u>Year End Balance 31/3/21</u>		



Scottish Pensioners' Forum

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Funded by the Scottish Government