



SCOTTISH PENSIONERS FORUM: GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO 2017

Across the UK, there is an assumption that older people have come out lightly in comparison to the attacks on the standard of living to those of working age.

All too often older people are being viewed as a burden on society however along with lone parents, pensioners, and in particular women, they are actually the poorest within society. Over half of pensioner households are poor and most are even eligible for a means tested top up..... a fifth of pensioners live below the official UK poverty level of approximately £170 per week for a lone pensioner, with 90% of those in persistent poverty.

Bearing in mind that pensioners have no opportunity to increase their income like those of working age, this means that pensioners who are poor, remain poor.

The bulk of pensioner spending goes on essentials like heating costs, food and clothing,, equating to approximately 50% of their spend. Add into this the costs of rent and council tax there isn't really that much left to spend. As the cost of heating and food continues to rise much more than the rate of inflation, many older people are left to the decision of whether to eat or heat. Even if pensioners do have some modest savings these are being used up to pay for essentials.

It is often forgotten, or largely ignored, that society benefits from the contribution from older people in unpaid care costs, whether they be looking after children, grandchildren or spouses. Along with the voluntary work undertaken by older people this actually saves the government in excess of £34 billion per year.

There is no denying that the threat to public services is a real one but rather than blaming those most in need, more must be done by the Westminster government to ensure that these needs are met.

Government and local authorities must stop looking at soft targets by pitting young against old, workers against the unemployed and most importantly they must stop trying to deflect the blame away from the real social issues at hand.



CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1992

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What we at The Scottish Pensioners' Forum hope to secure is a fairer society, based on social justice and equality for all.

We believe that older people should not have to suffer by bearing the brunt of the current economic crisis.

This manifesto calls for all candidates to support the concerns of older people, now and in the future.

- An immediate increase to the Basic State Pension to at least £190 per week
- The abolition of means testing and the provision to ALL pensioners of a living pension above the UK's own official poverty level.
- Better provision for women pensioners.
- A guarantee that the triple lock system be retained.
- The prevention of further closures of defined benefit schemes
- The protection of public sector pension schemes
- An end to fuel poverty with the increase of the winter fuel allowance.
- Free TV licences for pensioners over 75
- As the pension age continues to rise, older people should not to be discriminated against in the workplace as a consequence of age
- Older people be free from the threat of violence due to their age or vulnerability
- An end to the undermining of communities with the introduction of more community empowerment initiatives to allow older people to actively participate on issues affecting them
- The provision of affordable energy schemes, via social tariffs, from all energy suppliers.
- Safe and affordable housing for older people, to suit all their needs
- The safeguarding of essential public services which many older people rely heavily upon.
- Additional funding designed to improve accessibility to transport for older and disabled people and their carers
- The Concessionary Travel Scheme to be extended, and made valid, throughout Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland and to include rail and ferry travel.
- Community awareness programmes to help combat loneliness and isolation for older people
- Maintain the current agreement under the Barnett formula.
- Defend the NHS.