

SCOTTISH SENIORS



Campaigning for a better deal for older people since 1992

Newsletter of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum Issue 35/March 2014

COMING HOME: ARE THE CORRECT PROVISIONS IN PLACE FOR YOU?

Recently, members of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum Executive Committee met with Health Minister, Alex Neill MSP, and representatives from COSLA, at Holyrood, to discuss various issues surrounding the health needs of older people, including home from hospital care packages and hospital transport needs.

The SPF highlighted the growing concern amongst older people, and their families, over the belief that there were inadequate provisions in place for home care on discharge from hospital and, in addition to this, reports suggested that older people were being discharged from wards at unsociable hours, with some pensioners being sent home at 2AM.

Concerns were also voiced over hospital transport, with some older people being picked up from home, for outpatient appointments, at 8AM and not being taken home again until 6PM, with many going without their medication and nutritional needs. Another issue in relation to transport was that as many outpatient appointments were being outsourced to hospitals out with local areas, it was becoming increasingly difficult for older people to arrive for their appointments on time and as well as this, with many local authorities withdrawing free bus services for hospital visits this was leaving many older people without a much needed visitor.

The SPF also asked that there be a demand from the Scottish Government to Westminster that the

winter fuel allowance should be increased and safeguarded as a matter of priority, as the severe winters in Scotland meant that more and more older people were being plunged into debt in order to keep themselves warm during winter.



SPF Chairperson, Cathy Leech, informed the Minister that she and several other representatives from the SPF had called a meeting with Scottish Hydro highlighting the need for cheaper fuel for older people, however their demands fell on deaf ears with Scottish Hydro recording record profits the day after the meeting was held.

Cathy informed the minister that the SPF felt that the current winter fuel allowance was based on inaccurate temperature measurements and these must be reassessed in order that older people are properly provided for.

Other issues for discussion were:-

- Calls for the Minister to speak on behalf of the SPF and older people to try to reevaluate and stop the closure of day centres for older people across Scotland which were a much needed lifeline for many.
- That was there any plans for a Scottish Government initiative which would look at promoting active ageing, which in turn could have a positive effect on the health budget in the long term.
- The Scottish Government's position in support of the Liverpool Care Pathway

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(Cont'd)

- The need for all older people to be supplied with personal alarms, if needed, free of charge as there are presently varying rates across all local authorities.
- A call for all renewals of disabled blue parking badges to be met and renewed, without condition, for older people with health issues.

Overall, the meeting was a very positive one with Mr. Neill agreeing to a follow up meeting in relation to the points raised and the possibility of a joint paper between COSLA and the SPF highlighting some of the issues affecting older people on a daily basis.

SPF EVENT ON INDEPENDENCE, ADELAIDE'S GLASGOW

The SPF recently held an event in Adelaide's, Glasgow looking at what independence will mean for older people in Scotland.

Guest speakers included Stephen Boyd, STUC, who discussed the economic impact of independence for Scotland; Mary Lockhart, who spoke on the 'bedroom tax' and how it affects the most poverty stricken within society



and Sharon Edwards, STUC Women's Committee.

The afternoon session saw Blair Jenkins, Yes Scotland, and Greg McClymont, Better Together, engaged in a debate and a short question and answer session from the floor followed.

The event was well received by all in attendance.

AGE SCOTLAND HELP LAUNCH ADVICE LINE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

In recent months, a helpline for older people has been launched in partnership between Age Scotland and The SilverLine Helpline.

Silverline Scotland is a free national helpline providing information and advice to older people, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year and its aim is to assist older people to be happy and healthy, supporting them in independent living and helping to overcome the barriers of loneliness and isolation.

Its founder Esther Rantzen, had this to say:-



"The Silver Line Helpline has revealed a truth about our older people which is shattering. The stigma attached to admitting loneliness and the reluctance in older people to ask for help because they don't want to be looked upon as a burden has meant that they have been ignored and neglected and we hope that this new helpline can change that."

SCOTTISH OLDER PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

The Scottish Older People's Assembly was held in Edinburgh on 5th December 2013 and unfortunately, due to inclement weather on the day, many of the delegates and speakers were unable to attend due to travel disruption and other factors.



Due to the fact a reduced programme was delivered on the day, much of

the formal business, including the issues surrounding recent welfare reforms, could not be carried out and a decision was taken to hold a series of seminars in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen over the following months to obtain the views and feelings of older people on the impact these new policies had on their lives.

STUC CONGRESS 2014

The SPF will have an information stall at the STUC Congress 2014 which takes place in the Caird Hall, Dundee on 14th-16th April 2014. This year's theme is 'A Just Scotland' and we hope to meet as many of you as possible at this event.

Over the coming months, it is also our intention to organise more outreach meetings throughout Scotland so if you're interested in having us along in your area, please get in touch.

Your views and opinions are important to us so if there are any issues you would like to see us cover in future editions of our newsletter, please get in touch

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23rd ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 23rd Annual Conference of the Scottish Pensioners Forum will take place on **Tuesday 10th June 2014**, in Stirling.

The event is open to all SPF members and affiliated organisations, with this year's conference concentrating on the forthcoming independence referendum with guest speakers from both the Better Together campaign and Yes Scotland

We hope that you can come along and celebrate another successful year for the SPF.



PENSIONERS' PARLIAMENT

Delegates from the SPF will be attending the NPC Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool from 17-19 June 2014, and like last year, it is our intention to hold an SPF fringe meeting over the course of the event.

As this is still at the preliminary stages, further details will be made available over the coming weeks.



Join the Scottish Pensioners' Forum
Campaigning for a better deal for older people since 1992

Application forms can be requested from:

**Scottish Pensioners' Forum,
333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6NG**

**Telephone 0141 337 8113
or at: www.scottishpensioners.org.uk**