



RCN Council

Date of meeting:	05 April 2017
Title of Paper:	National Pensioners Convention update
Presented by:	To note
Is a decision required? No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

1. Introduction

This is the fourth report of the 2015-2017 cohort of the members elected to represent the RCN at the National Pensioners Convention. It covers the period January- March 2017.

2. Activities

During this period there have been two major events in addition to the regular meetings of the working parties and the NPC Executive Committee. They were:

- Round Table on social care held at the House of Commons on 21st February
- Biennial Delegate Conference March 21/22.

2.1 Round Table on social care held at the House of Commons on 21st February

The meeting was chaired by Sharon Hodgson MP on behalf of the National Pensioners Convention and the NHS Support Federation, and attended by about a dozen people, a mixture of MPs, research staff from the various policy think tanks, and representatives of organisations concerned with older people. The aims of the meeting were:

- To consider what is the best model for funding our health and social care system in the future
- To discuss how this solution can be promoted politically

Agenda Item 7.2

In trying to obtain a RCN briefing in preparation for the meeting, I was surprised to discover that RCN policy on core issues (eg how should the NHS be organised and what is the best model for funding our health and social care system in the future) is very vague, generally consisting of responses to various specific government proposals. The Network is currently trying to stimulate an emergency motion for Congress to remedy this deficit.

Adam Roberts (Health Foundation) presented updated statistical and financial information. Norman Lamb MP (former Care Minister) presented information about a cross party coalition of MPs who are trying to find cross-party solutions, including his own panel set up to discuss shaping health and social care via national insurance remodelling. In Wales an independent parliamentary review is in progress

Discussion ranged around methods of risk pooling, confirming the commitment to a unified health and care system funded from taxation and free at the point of use, and how to break through the barrier of political will.

2.2 Biennial Delegate Conference March 21/22.

The BDC is the NPC's vehicle for determining NPC policy, electing officers and committees, and reporting on the past year's activities. Based on membership numbers, the RCN is entitled to four voting delegates. Three of the RCN representatives were able to attend (June Clark, Dr Joyce Forge, Kate Fitzsimmons). The RCN supported the nomination of Jan Shortt for the position of General Secretary Jan, who spoke at our 2016 Congress fringe has been elected. Motions covered constitutional matters, effects of Brexit on pensioners, pensions (including the triple lock), sustainability and transformation plans, social care, elder abuse, dementia, housing issues, and confirmation of the commitment to a unified health and social care service funded from general taxation and free at the point of use. Our motion to enable casual vacancies on working parties to be filled by appointment (to avoid the muddle within NPC which last year cost us our membership of the health and social care committee) together with changes in eligibility of affiliated organisations, have now secured our position within NPC. One challenge for the RCN representatives, however, was, in the absence of any mandate, how to vote on issues on which the RCN policy is silent or ill-defined (eg on the shape and funding of the NHS and social care) and we were almost alone in voting against the motion opposing STPs. Our ability to represent the RCN in the absence of a means of obtaining the views of retired RCN members and feeding back to them (we still do not have access to members' email addresses, nor an interactive webpage) remains a challenge which we hope will be resolved at the meeting scheduled for 3rd April.

3. Forthcoming activities.

3.1 RCN Congress

The next major activity will be RCN Congress. We have no voting rights and no funding for attending Congress, but June Clark will be attending as a voting member representing the Glamorgan Branch. We will also be holding a Fringe meeting on Sunday on the topic "Harnessing the voice of older and retired nurses".

3.2 Pensioners Parliament

The Pensioners Parliament will be held in Blackpool 6-8 June. It is a large event which brings together several hundreds of pensioners from across the country. We hope to send at least two of our RCN NPC representatives. The annual Pensioners Parliament is similar to our own RCN Congress in that like Congress, the Parliament does not make policy decisions (that power rests with the Biennial Delegate Conference) but the programme covers:

- Education :
- Networking
- Debate – providing a forum for people to discuss ideas and have their say

The event always starts with a colourful and noisy march through the town centre, followed by a rally with a number of well- known speakers. Day two will include sessions on the future of state and occupational pensions, the NHS, what Brexit means for older people, the impact of devolution on services, transport issues and local campaigning. There will be expert speakers, and delegates will also be able to ask questions and give their own views. There will also be a lively exhibition area, extra activities going on during the conference and a popular social evening. The final morning we hope will feature a panel of MPs to discuss the crisis in social care and debate what can be done to find a solution.

Submitted by June Clark (co-ordinator), on behalf of:

Kate Fitzsimmons
Dr Joyce Forge
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Jackie Burns
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March 23rd 2017