National Pensioners Convention Network

Pensioners Parliament
Cordelia Okwusogu and Joyce Forge were among the hundreds of pensioners from across the UK gathered in Blackpool during the middle of June for the annual NPC Pensioners’ Parliament. Unfortunately Kate Fitzsimmons had to pull out due to illness. Dawne Garrett (RCN Adviser for Older People and Dementia) was also in attendance as a speaker.

The theme was the need to unite the generations in the struggle for better state pensions, proper health care and an end to austerity. Addressing the rally, NPC general secretary Dot Gibson said:

“The current pension, health and social care and housing policies mean it is going to be even worse for this new era of pensioners than it has been for us. We have to do everything we can to encourage them to join the fight today and for the future of their children.”

Over the three day event, delegates also took part in sessions on the future of the NHS, pensions and retirement, the funding of social care, digital exclusion, public transport and older people and housing. RCN’s Dawne Garrett shared the platform with Jan Shortt (Vice President of NPC) in the session on the NHS.

It was clear from the various discussions that delegates were keen for the NPC to expand its campaigning efforts, but there was also a recognition that the organisation needed to bring in more individual members as well as pensioner groups, and improve its financial position. There are already plans for nationwide activity on 1 October UN Older People’s Day, a national lobby of MPs on 2 November, a demonstration to coincide with the release of the winter death figures and events to promote the NPC’s Dignity Code on 1 February next year. Alongside this, the organisation is planning to expand its profile on social media, set out a detailed case for a National Health and Care Service, press the government to set up its Older People’s Commission and develop a new relationship with trade unions on key issues, such as pensions.

For all this to be a success, the NPC will need the support of all its members and affiliated groups. A full report of the event is available on the NPC website www.npcuk.org

The Parliament finished with a look at what the next five years could hold for society, with contributions from Prof Tina Beatty from Sheffield Hallam University and CWU general secretary, Dave Ward.