

SCOTTISH SENIORS



Campaigning for a better deal for older people since 1992

Newsletter of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum Issue 50 December 2018

Save the Free TV Licence for Over 75's

In 1999, free TV licences for the over 75's were introduced and it was agreed that the cost of providing this universal benefit should be paid by the Department of Work and Pensions to the BBC



In 2015, the Conservative Government struck a deal that would see the responsibility for payment of this benefit no longer be that of the government but instead responsibility would now be with the BBC to shoulder the cost of the scheme from 2020 onwards, thus ensuring that any unpopular decisions on charging pensioners have to be made by the BBC Board rather than government ministers.

We do not believe that the government should have privatised welfare policy in this way, nor do we support means testing of the benefit.

A consultation has been put out by the BBC calling on comments from licence payers and consumers which

highlights the cost of the scheme to them but says nothing about the detrimental impact that withdrawing this benefit will have on those over 75.

The consultation can be found here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/yoursay> and may we suggest that if you agree with the SPF's approach that the present system exempting over 75's from paying a TV licence fee should be retained, you indicate this as your only preference by only ticking the boxes which emphasise this preference.

38 DEGREES
people. power. change.

The SPF believe that the over 75's TV licence is an essential lifeline for many older people and have created a campaign through 38 Degrees emphasising this. We would be obliged if you would sign our petition, which can be found here: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/open-letter-to-bbc-director-general-save-over-75-s-tv-licence>

Open Letter to Tony Hall, Director General of the BBC

Dear Tony

The organisation that you head is currently consulting on the possible removal of the free television licence for people aged over 75

Pensioners are being expected to pay what amounts to a new tax to plug the gap left by the removal of Government funding for this concession, and the BBC World Service, following your acceptance of a renewed Charter at a time when the operations of the Corporation were under considerable critical scrutiny.

Your consultation document repeats tired suggestions that younger generations are being expected to subsidise the old, It claims that pensioners are living longer and are better off than ever before. This is not the case. Life expectancy in the UK has stopped improving. Over 300,000 more pensioners are living in poverty now than 5 years ago.

The UK state pension is the lowest in the developed world. If our pensioners received a living pension, concessions such as the free TV licence would be unnecessary.

The free TV licence is not a luxury. Please think again. Scottish Pensioners' Forum.



Seasons Greetings to all of our readers and Best Wishes for 2019



Thousands of Workers Take Strike Action over Equal Pay Dispute



On 23rd/24th October 2018, over 8,000 workers from Glasgow City Council marched through the streets of Glasgow in one of the largest equal pay strikes the UK had ever seen.

The majority of both UNISON and GMB members, who represent the striking workers, voted in favour of carrying out the

48 hour strike action in order to help speed up negotiations between council leaders and unions over equal pay claims stretching back to 2006 when a job evaluation scheme was implemented to solve issues of equal pay.

This job evaluation scheme was supposed to provide a fair and unbiased pay structure by grading different roles

at a similar level however it has been argued that the measure introduced to help eradicate bias and inequality in pay had instead ingrained discrimination even further by paying roles predominately carried out by women like catering, cleaning and care at a lesser rate than roles dominated by men such as refuse collection – despite these jobs being deemed as equal value. In addition to this, the scheme also offered three year protection for men losing out on bonuses, whilst women were not awarded the same benefit.



The Executive Committee of the SPF issued a message of solidarity to the striking workers in support of their cause.



I have worked as a carer for over 20 years and I love my job helping to look after older people in Glasgow but it can also be very tiring with not enough time to properly look after clients before having to rush off to the next one.

At first I felt guilty about going out on strike but many of my clients and their families value the job that carers do and were very supportive over the women's need to strike for equal pay with many of them coming along to support the demo on the day. **Susan, UNISON member**



Message of Solidarity from the SPF

The Scottish Pensioners' Forum, would like to send a message of solidarity to the 8,000 workers who are having to strike over equal pay,

Our members believe that it is only right that workers should be paid for the job that they do and that there should be no discrimination or disparity in pay on the basis of gender, as has been the case for many years.

We hope to continue working with trade unions who represent the striking workers to ensure that older people are cared for in the manner they deserve and by workers who are being paid fairly and honestly for the work that they do.

Motions to SPF Annual Conference 2018

At our Annual Conference in Dundee in June, two motions were put to, and subsequently passed, by conference and the SPF are committed to working on these important issues over the coming months.

Motion 1

“The SPF Executive is urged to campaign for the removal of VAT from Gas and Electricity charges. Heating is a service essential to life and with our withdrawal from the European Union, there is no necessity to pay this tax. We ask that this issue is raised with the STUC, the Scottish Government and other appropriate bodies such as the Labour Party so that it can be incorporated in the latter’s Manifesto for the next General Election.”

Proposed by Maureen Gardner, Individual Member

Motion 2

“Conference notes that according to The Sunday Times UK Rich List ‘ the country’s 1000 richest individuals and families have seen their combined fortunes surge by 14% or £83 billion, to £658billion over the past year.

The 73 Scots in the Rich List have seen their wealth increase by 12.64% more than the 72 Rich List Scots of last year. The wealth of the top 50 Scots this year is more than the total wealth of all Scots in the UK richest 1000 last year.’

Clearly, the billionaires are getting richer and the multibillionaires too.

Conference notes that against this backdrop poverty, including pensioner poverty, is rising throughout the UK. In Scotland there are 160,000 pensioners living in poverty after housing costs, up from 110,000 in 2007-08. Conference calls on the SPF Executive Committee to work with the STUC, Trade Union Councils, The Poverty Alliance, other anti-poverty groups, and the National Pensioners Convention, to commit to redoubling our efforts to eliminate poverty. In a rich country poverty is not an accident. It’s a political choice that we can change.”

Proposed by Elinor McKenzie, Individual Member.

SPF Executive Committee 2018-2019 Elected by Conference

Helen Biggins

John Boyle

Jim Bradley

Surjit Chowdhary – Treasurer

Pauline Frazer

Maureen Gardner – Chair

David Gavin

Sam Gibson

Rose Jackson – vice Chair

John McAllion

Christine McGiveron

John McGiveron – Minute Secretary

Allan Mackenzie

Elinor McKenzie – Vice Chair

Bill Martin

Alex Morrison

Jeanette Pieper

William Quigley

Rosemary Smith

Alan Spinks

John Taylor

Colin Wakeling

William Welsh

June Whitelaw – Asst Secretary

CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1992



The Scottish Pensioners Forum are always keen to hear about what our members are getting up to, so don't be shy, please get in touch. The more we know, the more we can help publicise your event and help get you the recognition (and audience) you deserve for your hard work and effort. So whether it's an event in your local area or you are planning a campaign on a much larger scale we'd

like to hear about what you're doing on behalf of older people.

If there is something you would like us to include in our next newsletter, for example a certain forthcoming event or a particular issue you are campaigning on, please get in touch with us to have your say



Congratulations



The Scottish Pensioners' Forum would like to congratulate our Executive Committee member and Treasurer, Surjit Chowdhary on his recent MBE award from the Queen for his charity work.

Our best wishes go to both Surjit and his family on this worthy award.

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