



SCOTTISH PENSIONERS FORUM: GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO 2024

Across the UK, the assumption remains that older people are consistently better off all round in comparison to the standard of living of those of working age.

Of the over 12.6 million people aged 65 or over living across the UK, statistics show that just over 2.1 million people of state pension age are living below the official UK poverty level. In addition to this, 6.6% of those aged 65+ are considered materially deprived meaning they can't afford things like warm clothes in winter, things which many people take for granted. According to the latest Scottish Government data, in Scotland alone 1 in 6, approximately 120,000 pensioners, are living in poverty. Rural communities and those without access to mains gas, isolated by poor transport links and overall service provision are particularly vulnerable

As pensioners have no real opportunity to increase their income like those of working age, this ultimately means that pensioners who are poor, remain poor.

The bulk of pensioner spending goes on such essentials as heating costs and food and clothing, and in the current cost of living crisis this now equates to approximately 63% of their total spend. This is simply not good enough!

Factor into this the costs of rent and council tax and there isn't really very much left to spend. As the cost of heating and food continues to rise at a rate much higher than the rate of inflation, many older people are left with the decision of whether to eat or heat. Any modest savings older people may have are being used up in order to just survive.

The primary aim of the Scottish Pensioners Forum is to successfully campaign, with others, to bring an end to the scandal of pensioner poverty.

Whilst the SPF has and will continue to fully support workers in their campaign for a living wage, the SPF also fully endorses a campaign for a living state pension, putting an end to the 'cap in hand' mentality of Pension Credit and allowing pensioners dignity in their old age. Older people, just like people of all ages, deserve a decent standard of living.

The SPF recognises that the campaign for better pensions is not just for the pensioners of today and our slogan '**campaigning now to secure your future**' is ever more prevalent as we continue to fight against brutal cuts to wages, benefits, living conditions and services.

CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1992

Published by the Scottish Pensioners' Forum, June 2024

www.scottishpensioners.org.uk



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.

A LIVING PENSION FOR ALL

A living state pension to be established at a level sufficient to provide a decent standard of living. The present two-tier system should be abolished.

The abolition of means testing and the provision to ALL pensioners of a living pension above the UK's own official poverty level.

The Triple Lock must be maintained.

The protection of public sector pension schemes.

Changes to the terms and conditions of auto-enrolment.

There should be no further increases in the state pension qualifying age - 68 is far too late!

As the pension age continues to rise, older people should not be discriminated against in the workplace as a consequence of age.

WASPI women should be awarded financial compensation appropriate to losses incurred by unjust changes to their qualifying age to receive state pension.



BETTER HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SYSTEMS

The NHS is near to breaking point due to years of chronic underfunding and mismanagement. This crisis must be addressed as a matter of urgency. People deserve an adequately funded, resourced and properly managed NHS that must improve both the quantity and quality of care received

Ensure full accessibility to GP and hospital services

The social care system, mainly under private ownership and run for profit, is failing to meet society's needs. A publicly, owned, administered and fully accountable system of social care must be established, to be run in parallel with the NHS, and providing care, free at the point of use.

Ensure that the care workforce receive proper funding, wages and training in order to develop the time and skills needed in delivering a quality service for older people's social care needs.





BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Privately owned bus companies do not provide adequate and accessible transport for people's needs. Buses must be brought back under public control, and invested in, to extend and improve on services in both urban and rural areas.

Additional funding is needed to improve accessibility to transport for older and disabled people and their carers.

Ensure fuller and better access through integration of services

The Concessionary Travel Scheme to be retained and be made valid, throughout Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland and extended to include rail and ferry travel.



AN END TO STANDING CHARGES

Consumers are not responsible for the energy crisis but are bearing the brunt of mistakes made by regulators in the domestic market. We are calling for an end to fuel poverty, an increase to the winter fuel allowance for those in need, the provision of affordable energy schemes, via social tariffs, fully funded by the public purse rather than subsidised at the expense of other consumers, from all energy suppliers and the total abolition of standing charges – we should not be paying the price for energy companies' profits.



STOP THE CLOSURES AND RESTORE PUBLIC AMENITIES

Older people need, and appreciate, access to local banks, post offices, libraries, community centres and leisure facilities.

Years of austerity and cost cutting measures have resulted in far too many closures of public amenities. Post-pandemic, the problem has become even worse with higher incidences of loneliness and isolation in both urban and rural areas. This must stop! It is high time to put an end to these closures by restoring access to public amenities and to make a start in restoring communities.

We call for 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.





BETTER HOUSING

The Scottish Government has recently declared a 'State of Emergency' in housing and this is the same across the United Kingdom.

Far too many people are living in damp, hard-to-heat, sub-standard housing and rental accommodation. The housing crisis must be addressed as a matter of urgency, by providing accessible, affordable, sustainable and energy efficient housing, by upgrading existing housing stock and by building new social housing.



LONELINESS AND ISOLATION

The SPF calls for the introduction of community awareness programmes to help combat loneliness and isolation for older people.

DIGITAL EXCLUSION

Older people should have access to information in preferred formats. There is an ever-increasing push towards digital use however we must ensure that no one is being left behind. Access to training in digital services should be rolled out for older people. Alternatives to payment by smartphones and digital apps must be made available in order to avoid digital exclusion.

ADDITIONAL DEMANDS

- Access to NHS dentistry must be reinstated as a matter of urgency to help combat incidences of malnutrition in older people.
- The full reinstatement of the free TV licence for over 75's.
- Older people to be free from the threat of violence due to their age or vulnerability.
- Older people should be afforded the right to participate in, and contribute to, the decision-making process on issues affecting their lives at all levels.
- Encourage intergenerational fairness.

SCOTTISH PENSIONERS FORUM CAMPAIGNING NOW TO SECURE YOUR FUTURE

8 Landressy Street, Glasgow G40 1BP
Tel: 0141 337 8113

www.scottishpensioners.org.uk
@ScotPensForum