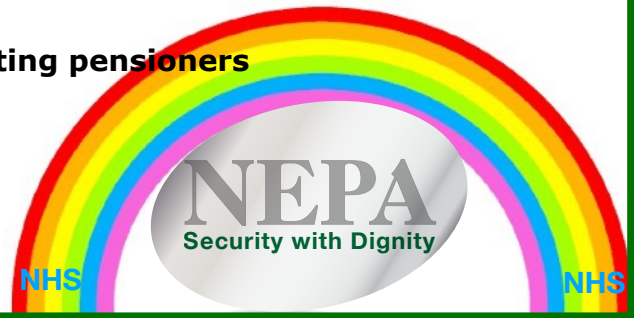


North East Pensioners Association

Regional impact report on issues affecting pensioners wellbeing in January 2022 including :

1. Care Homes & Housing,
2. Economy, 3. Health & Welfare,
4. The NHS, 5. Politics, 6. Poverty
7. Security and 8. Transport.



1. CARE HOMES & HOUSING.

Nurse shortage - Dipton Manor Care Home in Stanley. This will close its 20-bed nursing unit in February. The home cares for up to 70 older people. It had been "battling" to keep the unit open but had struggled to employ its own nurses and compete with staff agencies. Latest data for the sector in England suggests the number of registered nurses in adult social care is down by almost 17,000 (33%) jobs since 2012 ([Nursing Times](#)).

Unlimited visitors for residents. The Health Secretary acknowledged care homes have "a lot of discretion" over the rules they set, urging providers to do "everything they can to allow as many visitors as they can". He said: "If a care home needs to act differently because of an outbreak, then that is understandable as long as they are doing everything they can to allow the maximum number of visitors." ([ITV](#)).

2. ECONOMY.

Levelling up the North. The Government says the policy - which helped the Conservatives win a number of seats in the North East at the 2019 General Election - will seek to "change the economic geography of the country". It will aim to increase pay, employment, and productivity around the UK, while also narrowing the gap between top and worst performing areas of the UK ([Chronicle](#)).

Levelling Up White Paper unveiled with 12 'missions'. The Secretary of State admitted the long-awaited government plan will allocate money already announced in the spending review - as Labour blasted the lack of 'new ideas' despite the 12 missions (see annex A) to be achieved by 2030 ([Mirror](#)).

Levelling Up White Paper - No new money claim. The Levelling Up Secretary of State Michael Gove says that is a bogus argument ([SkyNews](#))?



Teesside Air Show returns Saturday 11th June 2022. It promises to be "bigger and better than ever", with plans to attract up to 25,000 people after being grounded for the past five years ([TeessideLive](#)).

Sunderland Airshow 2022 cancelled. This as Covid forces Council to "rethink" ([S/Echo](#)).

Arctic Wolf cyber security firm sets up HQ in Newcastle. It's anticipated that the new headquarters will bring hundreds of new jobs to the North.

NewcastleGateshead Quays welcomes The Sage - An international venue for world class business and entertainment. Opening in 2024, The Sage will be a 54,500 sqm pioneering community-focused, state-of-the-art business and entertainment destination, bringing the world to the North East ([Gateshead Council](#)).

New gigafactory Northumberland. The Government has backed plans for a Northumberland electric vehicle battery gigaplant which will employ 3,000 people and create another 5,000 jobs ([Hexham Courant](#)). **Nissan** also plan to launch battery production at its Sunderland plant in 2024. It should create 909 jobs at Nissan, and 750 at [Envision](#), as well as 4,500 new green jobs in the region by 2030 ([BusinessLive](#)).

3. HEALTH & WELFARE.

UK's over-85 population. The number of people aged 85 and over was estimated to be 1.7m in 2020 (2.5% of the UK population) and this is projected to almost double to 3.1m by 2045 ([ONS](#)). To meet this increase we need to be readying our social care services.

North East's top sewage overflow black spots. Worst Amble links, Seaham/Seaham Hall Beach and Seaton Sluice. This according to the Surfers Against Sewage ([Water Quality Report 2021](#)). Hopefully this can be fixed. Mind where you plodge.

Dementia increasing. Dementia worldwide is expected to nearly triple, from an estimated 57m in 2019 to 153m in 2050, due primarily to population growth and population ageing. The Global Burden of Disease study is the first to provide forecasting estimates. The study also looks at 4 risk factors —smoking, obesity, high blood sugar, and low education—and highlights the impact they will have on future trends ([Lancet](#)).

New Skin Cancer Test. First melanoma test to offer reassurance of low risk of cancer spread. The test identifies a patient's true risk of disease progression and provides anyone diagnosed with a non-ulcerated early stage melanoma - accounting for around 75% of all new diagnoses - more accurate information about the risk of the disease spreading ([Newcastle university](#)).

Dentistry myth busting. Healthwatch teams across the North East have seen a significant increase in concerns around patients getting to see their local dentist. They have produced a helpful short guide which you can access by [clicking here](#).

People in England's most deprived neighbourhoods work longer hours have shorter lives with more years in ill health. This according to [Newcastle University](#) research costs £29b per year. Its recommendations include developing a national strategy to reduce health inequalities through targeting multiple neighbourhood, community and healthcare factors and increasing NHS funding in more deprived areas.

Shildon - New £5.6m Locomotion buildings - The new collection building is expected to open in 2023 ahead of celebrations to mark the bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 2025 ([Darlington&Stockton Times](#)).

4. NHS.

Samantha Allen. She is the Chief Executive designate of the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board ([ICS](#)).



No more vaccine mandate. The Health Secretary announced a U-turn on the NHS vaccine mandate policy that will prevent the exodus of thousands of health workers who were unwilling to get a Covid-19 jab ([Guardian](#)).

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to provide home care services. The Trust has confirmed that it intends to directly provide home care services in Northumberland and North Tyneside creating up to 250 jobs. ([NHNFT](#)).

Psychiatric beds - 90% lost. Scientists at Newcastle University have found a 90% fall in the number of NHS psychiatric beds is linked to a trebling of the total prison population. The research, published in the British Journal of Psychology, takes in nearly 60 years of data ([ITV](#)).

Hospitals will be able to use spare capacity in the private sector. This under a new deal struck with the NHS ([Northern Echo](#)).

Rothbury Hospital beds return. There will be 12-to-15 NHS beds providing care for those who need "respite care, rehabilitation services or end-of-life care" ([Chronicle](#)).

South Tyneside District Hospital new diagnostic hub. Health chiefs have unveiled plans for a new state-of-the-art £10m integrated diagnostic centre at South Tyneside District Hospital. The new centre will include MRI and CT scanning equipment and clinical consultation rooms. ([Shields Gazette](#)).

5. POLITICS.

Women's state pension shortfalls a shameful shambles, MPs say. A £1bn shortfall in state pension payments to women has been branded "a shameful shambles" by a committee of MPs. A total of 134,000 pensioners missed out on their full entitlement owing to errors at the DWP dating back to 1985 ([BBC](#)).



Lord Agnew of Oulton. A Conservative minister who quit in what has been described as "one of the most dramatic moments ever seen" in the House of Lords has claimed that fraud is rampant in the Government. "Total fraud loss across government is estimated at £29bn a year. Of course not all can be stopped but a combination of arrogance, indolence and ignorance freezes the Government machine ([N/Echo](#)).

Covid-19: Government writes off £8.7bn of pandemic PPE. The DHSC documents show items costing £673m were unusable, while £750m of equipment was not used before its expiry date. The largest write-off - £4.7bn - was because the government paid more for it than it is currently worth. The spokesman said that "97% of PPE ordered was suitable for use and we're seeking to recover costs from suppliers wherever and whenever possible" ([BBC](#)).



Gray Report - PM apologises for No 10 Party. What does that mean to all those that did the right thing under lockdown? The PM's own party MP Aaron Bell, recalled abiding by coronavirus restrictions, for his grandmother's May 2020 funeral before asking: "**Does the Prime Minister think I'm a fool?**" He captured the sombre mood and for many in parliament and those watching on TV he hit the spot.

6. POVERTY .

Heat or eat: Many forced to ration food and heating amid surging energy prices. West End of Newcastle short January video profiling entrenched poverty ([4News](#)).

Rising energy bills to 'devastate' poorest families. According to new analysis from the foundation, soaring energy bills could take up more than half of household incomes when the consumer price cap is increased later this spring to potentially £2,000 per year for average use. ([Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)). Confirmed £1,971 ([The i](#)).



Jack Monroe - campaigner against poverty victory. She has led the Office of National Statistics experts to reassess how cost of living is measured. See the short video explaining the importance of this change to those on modest or low incomes ([Good Morning Britain](#)).

OFGEM ANNOUNCE ENERGY PRICE CAP WILL INCREASE BY 54% (£693) FROM APRIL 2022

Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director at Age UK, said: "On behalf of older people on low and modest incomes we are bitterly disappointed by what we have heard today. With average energy bills now set to rise by a whopping £693 per year - and almost certain to increase further in a few months' time - the support the Chancellor has announced simply does not go far enough. It will still leave many of these pensioners facing energy costs surging by an extra several hundred pounds that they cannot afford to pay. What does the Government expect them to do? Forgo their heating, ration their food or go into debt? These are the only choices that millions of the less fortunate will face, if they have no savings to draw on or family to help them out ([Age UK](#)).



7. SECURITY.

Are pensioners seen as soft targets? We followed the crimes against the elderly headlines in the January Chronicle and there were some horrific crimes. These brought serious punishments in the courts to the perpetrators:

- **Frail Gateshead pensioner injured** after being shoved into wall at cashpoint by drug addict. In the victim impact statement the pensioner said "this made me very worried and nervous and I don't feel confident going out on my own anymore" The perpetrator was given a 3 1/2 year jail sentence.
- **Drug addict pair kidnap pensioner - Seaton Delaval.** Blyth drug addict bullies kidnapped terrified pensioner from his home to steal money from him. The 2 perpetrators were given a 6 year and a 2 1/2 year sentence.
- **Walker pensioner subjected to 90 kicks, stamps and punches in ferocious attack by savage thug.** Victim had 11 broken ribs, and multiple facial fractures and extensive soft tissue to the head and face. Gateshead man jailed for 9 years.
- **Jesmond pensioner left bloodied and battered by neighbour after feud over noise.** The aggressor was given 10 months suspended for 18 months.

The Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner. Calls on local people to help shape new plans for local policing. The current Fighting Crime, Preventing Crime plan can be viewed [here](#). The survey runs until Friday 18th and you can take part [here](#).



8. TRANSPORT.

North East bus journeys could be cut by 17%. As passengers left 'stranded in public transport deserts' An email seen by [ChronicleLive](#) reveals the first routes Go North East could axe in March, with warnings of more to follow. Both private bus companies and Tyne and Wear Metro operator Nexus are set to take major hits at the end of March when the government ends Covid bailout funding.

Average speed cameras on 2 major roadwork are now live. Cameras on the A1 between Junction 65, Birtley and Junction 68, Coal House Roundabout and on the A1(M) between Junction 59, near the A167 turnoff and Junction 61, near Amazon Durham. Watch your speed ([N/Echo](#)).

Ongoing Problems with the new Tyne Tunnel fee system. Councillors from across the river have added their voices to calls for changes to be made to the Tyne Tunnel's charging system which has led to 11,000 fines being dropped on appeal. ([Shields Gazette](#)).

Leamside line faint hopes still remain after business and leaders meet. The line's reopening is strongly supported by the region's political and business leaders. They will press ahead with the case even though its not current Government policy ([N/Echo](#)).

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