

North East Pensioners Association

Regional impact report on issues affecting pensioners wellbeing in June 2023 including: **1. Care Homes & Housing**, **2. Economy**, **3. Health & Welfare**, **4. The NHS**, **5. Politics**, **6. Poverty**, **7. Security and 8. Transport.**

(Note for more reading [click underlined words](#))



1. CARE HOMES/CARERS & HOUSING.

The big renter squeeze. Millions of renters across the UK are being squeezed by landlords passing on higher mortgage costs to their tenants, contributing to record rent increases amid the cost of living crisis. This could potentially trigger a wider crisis in affordable housing ([Guardian](#)).

On a knife edge. The sharp increase in the cost of mortgage borrowing has put house prices at risk of crashing by as much as 35.5pc from 2023 to 2027, according to worst case scenario forecasts from Lloyds published in May ([Telegraph](#)).

The heart-breaking map of home reposessions. An interactive tool reveals where homeowners have had to hand over their front door keys after falling behind on mortgages over seven years some 28,000. County Durham and Northumberland feature in the top 10 worst list ([D/Mail](#)).

2. ECONOMY.

Community bank loan of £50,000. Northumberland County Council has agreed to provide £50,000 to the Northumberland Community Bank as part of a loan to be repaid over the next decade. The Community Bank, which provides lending [services](#) for local people and helps keep them away from unscrupulous loan sharks. ([N/Gazette](#))

Church of England clergy demanding a pay rise for first time. This as members struggle with the higher costs of living ([Independent](#)).

North East unemployment drops below national average for first time ever. The latest Office for National Statistics employment figures show the unemployment rate in the North East for over-16s was 3.6%, compared to 3.8% nationally ([S/Echo](#)).

CBI: Scandal-hit business group wins survival vote. The CBI said that 93% of the 371 members who voted backed its plans to reform the organisation ([BBC](#)).

3. HEALTH AND WELFARE

Demand for social care continues to rise – The Local Government Association (LGA) comments on the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services Spring Survey said:

“It is deeply concerning to see that most councils are not confident they can meet all of their statutory duties required by law. This, partnered with the increase in the number of unpaid carers reporting burnout, could have serious impacts for many people who draw on care and support” ([LGA](#)).



Explaining dementia to children and young people When a close family member or friend develops dementia, children and young people need support. You may need to help them understand what dementia is, and what a diagnosis means for their relationship. See Alzheimer's Society guidance on line you may find it useful ([Alzheimer's Society](#)).

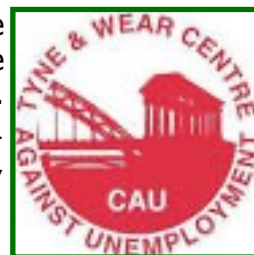
Social care recruitment campaign costing millions branded 'ineffectual'. The staff vacancy rate is at a record high, with 165,000 vacancies in the social care sector in 2021/22. The Government was criticised for announcing earlier this year that social care workforce funding would be halved from a previously pledged £500 million ([Independent](#)).

Smoking-related cancers kill one person every two hours in the North East. Cancer Research UK spokesperson for the North East, said: "Smoking causes around 150 cases of cancer a day across the UK and in the North East 14.8% of people still smoke. This is above the national average ([Chronicle](#)).

Sewage Overflow Rates. The Marine Conservation Society has found by using the Freedom Of Information Act that less than 10% (686) of Emergency Overflows in the sewerage network are monitored for sewage discharges, of 7,016 across England ([MCS](#)).

Sewage on your Beach. You can check before you go by downloading the interactive map provided by Surfers Against Sewage - [Click Here for the App](#) ([ShieldsGazette](#)).

Pension credit - are you missing out? The Tyne and Wear, Centre Against, Unemployment are now offering free assistance and advice on claiming this benefit and other matters relating to the DWP. Contact details: Email enquiries.twcau@gmail.com, Tel 0191 629025911 or at the Interchange Centre, West Street, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 1BH ([CAU](#)).



4. NHS



£2.4B Long Term Workforce Plan.



The certainty of confirmed funding up to 2028 allows the NHS to take the actions locally, regionally, and nationally to address the gaps in the current workforce and meet the challenge of a growing and ageing population.

These actions fall into three priority areas:

- **Train:** significantly increasing education and training to record levels.
- **Retain:** ensuring that we keep more of the staff we have within the health service by better supporting people throughout their careers.
- **Reform:** improving productivity by working and training in different ways, building broader teams with flexible skills, changing education and training to deliver more staff in roles and services where they are needed ([NHS](#)).

NHS £160m funding cuts. Samantha Allen, who leads the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, has warned funding decisions disadvantage our area. She blamed this on falling funding, combined with inflationary pressures and a PFI legacy ([Chronicle](#)).

Deaths in A&E skyrocketed during 'twindemic' winter NHS crisis - with one North East NHS trust seeing mortality triple. The figures obtained by [ChronicleLive](#) show that 52 people died in A&E at County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust during December. That is almost triple the average of 18 A&E deaths across the previous four Decembers.

Oral health deserts and care review. Urgent review to consider 'dental deserts' in the North East amid 'significant risk' to public health ([Integrated Care Board](#)).

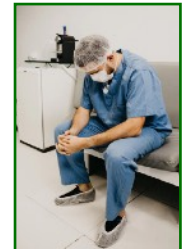
The £10m Integrated Diagnostic Centre. This has now opened at South Tyneside District Hospital meaning patients no longer need to travel to Middlesbrough's James Cook University Hospital or Newcastle's Freeman Hospital ([Integrated Care Board](#)).

A record 7.4 million people are now waiting for routine NHS treatment. This as a leading medic said “unacceptable” A&E delays have made corridor care “normal practice”. The number of people waiting at least 18 months for a non-urgent operation has also risen ([i News](#)).

Junior doctors vow to strike for three days each month 'for as long as it takes'. Junior doctors accused ministers of failing to value their work ([Mirror](#)).

Cancer Breath Test. Simply blowing into a bag at a GP’s surgery could show that a patient has cancer. This new test could be available in a few years. Primarily aimed at detecting cancers of the gut, including oesophagus, stomach, pancreas and colon, also possibly liver ([Observer](#)).

NHS Staff sickness in England at record levels. Figures for 2022 show an absence rate - of 5.6%, meaning the NHS lost the equivalent of nearly 75,000 staff to illness. This higher than during the peak pandemic years of 2020 and 2021 - and a 29% rise on the 2019 rate ([BBC](#)).



5. POLITICS

Threats to the Pensions Triple Lock. Jan Shortt, general secretary of the National Pensioners Convention, said: “There are those in our government who want to get rid of the lock completely, exposing many more of us to hardship ([Express](#)).

The state pension could increase by 17.8 percent over a two-year period. This if high levels of inflation remain and mean payments will get another boost next year. Provided the triple lock policy is kept in place ([Express](#)).

Pension Fund Reforms. The Chancellor is expected to outline highly anticipated pension reforms in July 2023, the Financial Times reported. The proposals include new rules to encourage UK pension schemes to invest in lucrative, but potentially riskier British assets, such as equities, early stage companies and infrastructure ([Telegraph](#)).

Windfall tax to be scrapped if prices drop. Tax has raised £2.8bn to date to fund energy support schemes, government says but will end if oil and gas prices return to normal by 2028 ([Sky News](#)).

6. POVERTY.

Average number of people in poverty and poverty rates by UK nation/region, 2018–21

Nation/Region	Poverty rate (%)	Number in poverty
North East	26	680,000
North West	21	1,540,000
Yorkshire and The Humber	24	1,300,000
East Midlands	20	930,000
West Midlands	23	1,350,000
East	19	1,170,000
London	25	2,260,000
South East	20	1,760,000
South West	19	1,060,000
Wales	24	750,000
Scotland	18	950,000
Northern Ireland	17	320,000

This chart is from the [Rowntree Foundations Essential Guide to Understanding Poverty in 2023](#)

The North East gets specific coverage on pages: 6, 31, 34, 35, 37, 38, 44, and 67.



Retailers accused of not passing on falling wholesale costs to consumers. They deny profiteering. Morrisons and M&S have become the latest supermarkets to cut the price of basics. Retailers face pressure to do more. These cuts follow similar cuts by Tesco, Sainsbury's and Aldi and comes as food price inflation is stubbornly high ([BBC](#)).



Note fuel profiteering claims. Profiteering supermarkets' £1bn fuel bonanza ([Mail](#)).

Greggs Foundation and Everyturn Mental Health. They are launching a 12-month pilot scheme to help those people supported by the Everyturn "together in a crisis" team given vouchers of between £30 and £50 to help with cost-of-living related pressures when it comes to energy bills or the prices of food and clothing ([Chronicle](#)).

9. SECURITY.

North East police forces facing budget shortfalls of more than £16m. The union UNISON states that the worst affected force in the region is Northumbria Police, with £10.2m in cuts, Cleveland Police with £3.4m and Durham Police with £2.9m. The union states tackling and preventing crime could be compromised ([Shields gazette](#)).

Scams. We thank Chris Balfour from Age UK who gave an excellent talk to NEPA's Area Committee in June. This on the 4 main areas of scam risk and how to avoid them i.e. online, telephone, postal and face to face. Chris can be contacted by [clicking here](#).



10. TRANSPORT.

More than 20 councils across England are removing pay and display parking machines. They are asking people to pay using an app. But charities say the changes are "disastrous" for people without a smartphone, especially the elderly ([BBC](#)).

£12m rescue package to save at-risk North East bus services amid threat of major cuts. Councils leaders have agreed to protect routes that are under threat, but will have to use funding that should have been spent making bigger improvements to public transport ([Chronicle](#)).

Haymarket Metro station. It is scheduled to re-open fully for customers at the beginning of July when the escalators are fixed. This has been confirmed by [Nexus](#).

A big thank you from Independent Age to all the many organisations and individuals that made the Campaign for a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing sessions such a success in June

NEPA
Security with Dignity

ageUK

Centre for Ageing Better

NPC

NHS NOT FOR SALE
Keep our NHS public

Join us on 5th July 2023 to celebrate the NHS birthday

MADE IN 1948
75 YEARS OF BEING AWESOME

- 10.30am at Seaburn Beach, Sunderland. Help draw our large sand picture and sign our giant birthday card to the NHS staff.
- 3.00pm-4.00pm Sunderland Minster. Join our tea party. Enjoy a cuppa and a cake and reflect on the achievements of 75 years.

Sean Fahey
NEPA Secretary

The NEPA Website can be accessed by [clicking here](#) or google "NEPA Pensioners"
If you want to know more contact the NEPA Secretary at :
Email: nepacontact@gmail.com or Tel. 01670 361981

Feel free to share.