

North East Pensioners Association

Regional impact report on issues affecting pensioners wellbeing in JULY 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.

Billions of pounds allocated to tackle Britain's housing crisis has been returned to the Treasury. Figures released under the Freedom of Information Act show the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities was unable to find projects for the £1.9bn of funding budgeted for 2022-23 ([Skynews](#))

Northumberland County Council has approved a further £20.7m investment by the Government into Blyth housing. The town is set to benefit from additional government investment to level up the town by upgrading poor quality housing, improving access to local jobs and cutting crime ([bdaily](#)).

Home extensions to become easier in the UK under new plans. The Government says the introduction of these new rules is to provide greater density of housing in inner cities, rather than encouraging urban sprawl ([D&S/Times](#)).

2. ECONOMY

Tourism bounces back to past £5bn mark. Figures for 2022 have revealed that the tourism sector in the North East is worth £5.4bn – the first time it has exceeded £5bn since 2019 – while also supporting more than 58,000 jobs ([Chronicle](#)).



New Amazon depot in Stockton to employ 2000 people. The online giant is spending £450 million on its latest fulfilment centre in Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham, due to open in October ([D&S/Times](#)).

Construction on £13.6m Energy Central Learning Hub in Blyth. The facility, due to open in September 2024, will also have event hosting spaces to allow conferences and careers events promoting clean energy employment and research to take place ([N/Gazette](#)).

Blyth Keel Row Centre. In July the council announced that a deal had been struck to purchase the centre from [Northumberland Estates](#) and redevelop the site. According to the opposition leader the decision was made without any cross-party discussion ([N/Gazette](#)).

UK one of worst economies this year. International Monetary Fund says the UK economy's performance in 2023 will be the worst among the 20 biggest economies, which includes sanctions-hit Russia ([BBC](#)).

UK inflation fell further than expected in June to 7.9%. This amid a sharp drop in petrol prices, easing forecasts for how aggressively the Bank of England will raise interest rates over the coming year ([Guardian](#)). Bank of England rate now 5.25%.



The Tees Valley Energy Recovery Facility raises concern. This to be built on land west of Tees Dock Roa in Grangetown. The facility would scupper Redcar and Cleveland Council's aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and was being 'dumped' on the area according to a councillor ([TeesideLive](#))

3. HEALTH AND WELFARE



UK gripped by 'sickness explosion costing economy £15 billion a year'. A report "A Covenant of Health" has found that Britain has some of the worst health in Europe which is damaging growth and the NHS ([skynews](#)).

Speeding up Dementia and Alzheimers diagnosis. A simple but revolutionary test ('Fastball') to improve early detection for dementia and Alzheimer's disease could soon be helping patients and their families, thanks to a £1.5m funding boost to the universities of Bath and Bristol ([Bath](#)).

New Alzheimer's Drug. Donanemab has been found to slow "clinical decline" by up to 35%, allowing people with the disease to continue performing day-to-day tasks such as shopping, housekeeping, managing their finances and taking medication ([Skynews](#)).

National Health. The Health Foundation has found that 9.1 million people in England are projected to be living with major illness by 2040 – 2.5 million more than in 2019. This with significant implications for the NHS, other public services and the public finances ([HealthFoundation](#)).

A British Health Scandal. Patients given contaminated blood by the NHS decades press for compensation. The PM's firm insistence at the enquiry that he would not bring forward compensation despite being urged to by the Inquiry Chair prompted boos from a number of onlookers ([Politico](#)).

Drug gives hope for fight against cancer. A study found the drug, called MOv18 IgE, shrank a tumour in a patient with ovarian cancer and reported that it was well tolerated in patients ([Metro](#)).

4. NHS

Private treatment. According to a report by the IPPR think tank 1 in 6 people have paid for care since the pandemic. The most common reason (2 in 5) was to avoid NHS waiting lists ([IPPR](#)).



NHS Sex Health Clinic to be run by private firm. An NHS-run sexual health service in Newcastle is set to be taken over by two private companies. New operators will take on the city's service, based out of New Croft House clinic, from October ([BBC](#)).

Staff turnover in NHS cancer services has risen significantly. More than 4,000 left the workforce last year. Data from NHS England shows the leaver rate for the cancer workforce in hospital and community health services hit 12.1% in the year to September 2022, as 4,378 staff left ([Independent](#)).

The government is set to finish only 32 of its promised new 40 hospitals by 2030. This as part of an over-budget and hard-to-deliver scheme, that might result in medical facilities that are "too small", according to a "damning" report by the [National Audit Office](#) ([Skynews](#)).

£35m to improve health of most deprived areas in the North-East. Our region has faced inequality issues for decades and this has been a major factor in a number of its locations having populations with higher than average poor health and the worst levels of preventable mortality. ([N/Gazette](#)).

NHS GP Survey. Best and worst GP surgeries in the North East according to patients. If you are on line you can check out, how your surgery was rated, by clicking the [NHS App Here](#).

North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust Inspected again CQC. They found some improvements since last year, when they issued a warning notice. NEAS have now been rated as "Requiring Improvement" ([CQC](#)).



North East Ambulance Service Investigation. A report reviewing NEAS' handling of 4 cases where coroners were either not told of investigations or not given a full picture of what had gone on made 15 recommendations. The families and whistleblower have said that key questions have not been answered ([Chronicle](#)).

Funding confirmed for Middlesbrough Urgent Treatment Centre.

They will soon have its own integrated Urgent Treatment Centre This £9m investment will see the new UTC built next to The James Cook University Hospital ([NHS](#)).

NHS dental practices across the UK. 9 out of 10 practices are not accepting new adult patients for treatment under the NHS according to a BBC investigation has. In County Durham 100% and in Northumberland 97%. of dental practice contacted were not accepting new adult NHS patients ([BBC](#)).

Dental services in the North East and North Cumbria. These are set to get a £3m boost thanks to a new plan that could provide an extra 27,000 appointments this year. This will focus on our regions deprived communities ([NHS](#)).

Regional Integrated Care Strategy. This describes how ICB they will deliver the Strategy for the NHS delivered or commissioned services ([NHS](#)).

5. POLITICS

State Pension payback. The planned end date for the State Pension Legal Entitlements Administrative Practice exercise remains on schedule to be finished by the end of 2024. Revised estimates from the DWP indicate that 165,000 State Pensioners have been underpaid £1.2billion due to historical official errors ([D/Record](#)).

The controversial Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act came into force in July 2023 The governments view: ensuring workers maintain the ability to strike whilst giving the public access to the essential services they need ([GovUK](#)). Seen also [Silkin's analysis](#) of the Acts complexities and specific regulations required.

Social care funding of £600m 'will relieve hard-pressed councils and struggling staff'. But sector leaders warned there remains a need for a genuine plan for change and reform in the long term ([Independent](#)).

6. POVERTY.

The numbers of households and children in temporary accommodation in England are at record highs. This according to the latest official homelessness statistics. Some 104,510 households were in temporary accommodation by the end of March – a 25-year high ([Independent](#)).

Supermarkets told to make major pricing changes. This to help slash food shop bills. The Competition and Markets Authority has launched a new crackdown after it warned some retailers are not displaying prices as clearly as they should ([Mirror](#)).

7. SECURITY



Police Check 70 Lorries. More than three-quarters of lorries and heavy goods vehicles stopped during a road safety operation in the North East were found to be dangerous or unlawful, according to Northumbria Police ([H/Courant](#)).

Northumbria Anti Social Behaviour. A scheme that will see hundreds more police patrols on public transport for the summer holidays has been launched in an effort to “stamp out anti-social behaviour” in the North East ([N/Echo](#)).

8. TRANSPORT

Newcastle parking payments using cash will be gradually phased out. This from all council-owned car parks and on-street parking locations as ticket machines are upgraded to accept cards and the PayByPhone service is expanded to cover all locations ([NewcastleCC](#)).

Ticket Office Protests Supported By Pensioners Across The Region

De-staffing railway stations. The National Pensioners' Convention is calling for government and rail operators to urgently scrap plans to close virtually all rail station ticket offices. The NPC says the proposal to shut hundreds of ticket offices discriminates against our oldest and most vulnerable people ([NPC](#)).



New Sunderland train station ticket office could be 'closed before it even opens'. Passengers may never get to use the new ticket office being built as part of Sunderland's forthcoming £26m new railway station ([S/Echo](#)).

Darlington Railway Station staffing Protest. Jane Mitchell, who uses a mobility scooter due to her disability joined the protest. She is worried about the impact on ticket office closures for people like her ([D&S/Times](#)).



Only 2 rail ticket offices to remain in the North East. The leader of Newcastle City Council said that proposals announced by industry body the Rail Delivery Group were "led by greed" ([Chronicle](#)).

Be aware of possible disruption. Train Drivers will refuse to work overtime from Monday 7 August until Saturday 12 August. The union Aslef has accused the train companies of failing to employ enough drivers to "deliver the services they have promised passengers, and the government, they will run" ([Independent](#)).

Tyne Bridge repairs. Plea to boost bus and Metro services as fears mount over huge congestion. Drivers will face years of disruption as two of the Tyne Bridge's four lanes are closed off during the crossing's first major maintenance works for two decades ([Chronicle](#)).



North East behind in drive to install vehicle chargers. Serious concerns have been aired about whether transport bosses can hit a target of having up to 28,000 publicly accessible chargers. Currently only 846 such charging devices at 403 different locations around the region ([N/Echo](#)).

Government Bus Funding. The North East Joint Transport Committee, will receive £45.6 million for the region's Bus Service Improvement Plan. This to improve local bus services and deliver lower fares ([S/Gazette](#)).



Draft Strategic transport plan for the North. NEPA attended the Newcastle consultation. The strategic priorities outlined as: a) Rail investment, b) Enhancing social inclusion and health, c) Decarbonisation and d) Sustainable roads. It of course depends on available funding but the plan we think was welcomed by attendees ([TFN](#)).

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