

In this newsletter

1. February 2017 branch meeting
2. More information
3. Fighting for the NHS
4. Yet again on State Pension Age
5. Elder Social Care Still in Crisis
6. WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequalities)
7. May Day Events
8. UCU Conference Report
9. Midlands TUC Pensioner Network
10. Pensions Postscript – The Cridland Report
11. UCU Retired Members Branch

Please inform us of change of address or email

We encourage retired members to use their **home** e-mail for when you give up your work e-mail address. We send out a quarterly newsletter by email, but only an annual newsletter by post. Sending the newsletters by post is increasingly expensive.

National Pensioners Convention (NPC):

<http://npcuk.org>

East Midlands NPC:

<http://leicesternpcgroup.btck.co.uk/>

Your branch now has its own website at

<http://www.ucu-em-rmb.org.uk>

3. Fighting for the NHS

Dr. John Lister, who is a key figure in Keep Our NHS Public (KONP), treated us to a very entertaining as well as informative talk at our February meeting.

He began by referring back to October 1987 when the NHS was in a similarly precarious position, having been starved of funds. Strong campaigning, including a petition by senior doctors, forced Thatcher to back down and inject more money into the NHS. He pointed out that May is in a weaker position than Thatcher was then and so campaigning with big demo's, pressure on MPs etc. is really important.

One of the useful things that the Blair Government did in 1999-2000 was to increase funding for the NHS above the rate of inflation to bring spending on health in line with other countries within 10 years. Since 2010, however, funding has been flat in real terms. Support for the banking sector after the crash totalled £1.2 trillion – that is now debt and is described by the Government as public

1. Branch meeting

Tuesday April 25th 2017

11.00 – 13.00

(Speaker at 12.00)

Speaker: Liz Lawrence

Defending Further and Higher Education.

Liz is a UCU Past President.

The Gothic Warehouse,
Mill Road, Cromford, DE4 3RQ

2. More information and news can be obtained from these websites. We suggest you have a browse.

UCU National Website: <http://www.ucu.org.uk>

AgeUK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

68 is too late: www.68istoolate.org.uk

sector debt, therefore justifying cuts to public sector spending which is, of course, what the party that believes in 'small government' wants.

Spending on the NHS has increased less than 1% p.a. in real terms since 2010 while costs have risen by 3-4% above inflation due to new drugs and treatments and while the population has grown by 4 million, including a growing proportion of older people. By 2020, we will be back to the low funding levels of 1999 as a proportion of GDP. There have been even bigger cuts in central government grants to local government which have meant that local authorities have scaled back spending on social care to the statutory minimum. This means that, in many areas, eligibility criteria have been tightened so that social care is only provided to those with the highest level of need. This is, of course, problematic for the NHS because money is not being spent on keeping people healthy and out of hospital.



(Photo: Helen Chester)

If spending were to be increased by the necessary 4% pa + inflation, the cash injection required would amount to £137 billion whereas we're looking at an increase of only £108bn.

The Stevens Report, taking a 5-year forward view, suggests that the gap can be filled by efficiency savings. This is questionable. The changes brought in with the 2012 Health and Social Care Act (setting up 207 CCGs, requiring services to be put out to tender) were very expensive to set up, but the extra money put in to support that has largely been spent on reducing deficits. These changes have also been estimated to cost an extra £3 billion pa. Stevens has tried to simplify the new system by setting up 44 Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs –

they're like the old Area Health Authorities and include the CCGs, trusts and local authorities).

Some local examples of cuts recommended by the STP are:

Leicestershire – a reduction of 3 acute hospitals to 2, 8 community hospitals to 6; overall a cut of 2 in 8 beds.

Notts – downsize the City Hospital, lose 200 acute beds and a net reduction of 562 staff .

Derbyshire - cut 535 beds including 188 at the Royal Derby which only opened in 2010.

These things depend upon expensive community care plans which are not yet in place. Some trusts are already putting off closures because they don't have enough capacity to cope with demand.

The plan is to begin implementation this year which means that those hospitals earmarked for closure are blighted and if deemed not safe can be speedily closed. An example of this is a hospital in Sidcup which had to close because it was no longer safe due to lack of staff. Social care should be provided within the NHS – at the moment the 'home help' service is 90% privatised and the service is very poor.

All this means we need to campaign for social care and health. We need a widely supported campaign with all the pressure groups (like KONP) and unions taking part. Councillors and MPs also need to stand up to the STPs because of the effects on their constituents.

[Helen Chester](#)

4. Yet again on State Pension Age

John Cridland, the retired Director of the CBI, heads the State Pension Age Review which is due to conclude its work by May. Ministers will then decide what level the State Pension Age should be after 2028.

Already a number of people and bodies have been piling in to influence the work of Cridland. An effort in this direction is the research of the Institute for Fiscal Studies for the Work and Pensions Select Committee. This places the public policy choice as the population ages, as a trade-off between State Pension Age, on the one hand, and the level of the State Pension, on the other.

The Committee purports to be driven by the needs of Intergenerational Fairness. The young are poor and pensioners are rich. So the meagre attempts to

raise the very low State Pension's ability to replace previous earnings compared to other European pension schemes should cease. As a thought experiment, let us imagine pensioners demanding that babies be infected with very early Alzheimer's to aid "Intergenerational Fairness". The logic of both exercises is disgraceful.

The Committee's analysis does make a number of important points. In particular that there are stark inequalities in life span. Life expectancy at birth for men in the Parkhead West and Barrowfield area of Glasgow is just 62.5 years. In the centre of Blackpool it is just 67.5 years. This, the Committee concludes, means many will die without receiving a state pension. The social gradient in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between rich and poor areas is stark. Further increases in the State Pension Age could push it to the point where many working people die before qualifying for it!

It therefore suggests that if State Pension Age is to rise less quickly than is expected, the only way to keep the State Pension "affordable" is to end the triple lock on the State Pension. In place since 2010, the lock ensures that the State Pension rises by at least 2.5 per cent. This is an attempt to rebuild its value after a massive real-terms fall since the 1980s. The Committee recommended in 2016 that the triple lock be replaced from 2020 by a smoothed earnings link. This would benchmark the State Pension to a fixed proportion of average earnings in the long run.

Citing figures from the Institute of Fiscal Studies, the Committee said the State Pension Age would need to rise to 70.5 years by 2060 to make the triple lock affordable, "meaning today's young would face working lives of over 50 years before receiving a state pension". The Committee obviously believes that raising the proportion of GDP spent on pensions up to the European average is so evidently stupid as to not be worth considering. So it isn't!

But this binary choice pays insufficient attention to the consequences of such an approach. Simply to do a trade-off between the triple lock and an acceleration rise in State Pension Age risks giving a misleading sense of the policy options in front of us. Almost one in five people planning to retire this year will be below the 'Minimum Income Standard' defined by poverty campaigners the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which is £8,600 for a single person or £12,500 for a couple.

Women are more reliant on the State Pension than men. The State Pension will make up 42% of women's expected retirement incomes, compared to just 28 per cent for men. Compounding this issue, women are less likely to have built up full

State Pension entitlements than men, making them more vulnerable to reductions in the real value of the State Pension.

While many of those retiring today have good workplace pension provision, this will fall thanks to the near collapse in workplace pension provision in the private sector from the 1980s. This means younger workers will rely more on the State Pension in their later years. It is crucial that the triple lock remains to protect the young. This is genuine Intergenerational Fairness

We need to think about how to expand revenues going into the Exchequer. Tax avoidance and lowered Corporation/Employer taxes have diminished the take. The employee tax take has fallen as the quality of work has diminished. If we want a sustainable basis for State Pensions (and other benefits and services), then ensuring people are in decent, well-paid work is a key. And the forcing of people into ersatz "self-employment" so that employers are saved money adds to the problem.

Governments make policy choices all the time, balancing different priorities. Our present and projected spend on pensions is low by European standards. The argument that any increase in the proportion of GDP on pensions is insupportable whilst other expenditure is sacrosanct is merely a political choice.

[Julian Atkinson](#)



Socialising and discussion after the February Branch Meeting.
(Photo: Helen Chester)

5. Elder Social Care Still in Crisis

The Chancellor recognised that there is a major problem with Social Care for the elderly and then he offered a pitifully inadequate solution. A mere £2bn will be made available for adult social care over the next three years - £1.2bn in 2017-18, £800m in 2018-19 and £400m in 2019-20. Dot Gibson, NPC General Secretary, said: "For many older people and their families who are struggling with the confusing social care system, the extra funding announced today will be seen as little more than a sticking plaster on the crisis. The additional £2bn from the Chancellor won't reverse the **£5bn cut that the service has suffered since 2010**".

The real inadequacy of the response is underlined when the recent Age UK report 'The Health and Care of Older People in England 2017' is considered. There are now nearly **1.2 million** people aged 65+ who don't receive the care and support they need with essential daily living activities. This represents 1 in 8 older people in the entire population: a **17.9 per cent increase on last year and a 48 per cent increase since 2010**. Worryingly, the report suggests that however tough things are now, they threaten to get a lot worse over the next few years for a number of reasons which the report details.

The social care crisis described in the report is also creating a significant burden for other forms of support. People are waiting longer to be discharged from hospital, putting more pressure on hospital resources and capacity and leading to increased spending. Waits for residential care have also increased.

More people are also providing unpaid care for loved ones, especially older people themselves. People are also caring at greater levels of intensity than in the past and meeting increasingly complex needs. There are now over two million carers aged 65 and over, yet nearly two thirds of these carers have a health condition or disability themselves.

"The Government has tried to prop up older people's social care in three ways: through financial transfers from the NHS, a social care precept in local areas, and by calling on families and friends to do more. Unfortunately, our analysis shows there are problems with all three approaches, which in any event are not enough to make up for the chronic shortfall in public funds." - Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director at Age UK.

The real answer has to lie in a tax-funded social care system that's fair, shares the cost and risk across everyone and gives dignity to those who

need looking after in their later years. It also demands giving local authorities sufficient money to do the job they have been tasked with. And that is what the Government has consistently refused to do.

6. WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequalities)



WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequalities)

This is a campaign group begun in 2015 to fight the injustice done to all women born in the 1950's affected by the changes to the State Pension Law (1995/2011) Acts.

In 1995 the Conservative Government's Pension Act included plans to increase women's SPA (State Pension Age) to 65, the same as men's.

WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequalities) agrees with equalisation, but does not agree with the unfair way the changes have been implemented. "That is with little/no personal notice (1995/2011 Pension Acts), faster than promised (2011 Pension Act), and allowing no time to make alternative plans. Retirement plans have been shattered with devastating consequences".

The campaign was started by just five 'ordinary women' who got together to do something about it and started the WASPI campaign. The aim of the campaign is: "to achieve fair transitional arrangements for all women born in the 1950s" who are affected by these changes.

They are asking for a 'bridging pension' to provide an income until women affected reach the new pension age and to compensate those who have already lost out, but have now reached their State Pension Age. They are not asking to go back to the old system of women's pensions at 60.

Personal stories by women involved, show how devastating the result of this can be. For example: One woman, just before she became 60 was told she would not get the pension until she was 62, but the pensionable age then moved again to 65. This has had a major impact on her finances as well as

the loss of expected free travel passes and free prescriptions.

Another woman, born in 1954, expected to get her pension in 2014, but will now have to wait until 2020.

Other examples show sad stories of the many who worked hard while supporting families, caring for elderly parents and minding their grandchildren. These women have made valuable contributions to society, paying taxes and national insurance as necessary, but who will now be getting back much less than they expected or planned for.

Protest action by WASPI in 2016, involved:

A London Demonstration in June 2016

Rallies at the Scottish and Northern Irish Parliaments in September 2016

A paper petition presented to Parliament in October 2016

A demonstration at the Conservative Party Conference also in October 2016

Participation in a big London Rally on March 8th this year (International Women's Day 2017).

The organisation is now supported by The Joseph Rowntree Reform trust and UNISON and is considering a legal challenge in discussion with leading QCs.

They are calling for more volunteers and funding contributions and according to their website, there are several local groups in Derbyshire, and Leicester but for more information see:

www.waspi.co.uk

[Rowena Dawson](#)

7. Mayday Events

Chesterfield Mayday, 1st May

With so many current assaults on the working conditions, education, health and welfare systems that we've all helped support and defend through the years, it's easy to feel alienated and despondent. There's no better way to regain hope and energy than to join others who know that, "If we fight, we may lose, but if we don't fight, we will certainly lose" (Bob Crow)

This year, 2017, will see the 40th annual Chesterfield May Day People's Gala and Demonstration. Over the years Chesterfield May Day has developed into one of the best attended and well supported May Day events in the country.

With a large and colourful march through the town, led off by the Ireland Colliery Band, inspiring Labour Movement speakers from the platform, bustling campaign stalls filling New Square and a great selection of some of the best artists around providing live music into the afternoon, this is an event not to be missed.

So if you are one of the many tens of thousands who have been before, make sure you return in 2017; and if you've never made it before, make sure you come along. Our UCU RMB Banner will be there for the start of the march at the Town Hall at 10.30am. Please come and help bear it along.

[Angus McLardy](#)



Chesterfield Mayday 2016.

Mansfield Mayday Event, Saturday 29th April.

Nottinghamshire, Mansfield and Nottingham Trades Union Council

Assemble from 10.30am,
Civic Centre, Chesterfield Road, Mansfield

Derby Unison Teaching Assistant Striker
Sir Alan Meale - Labour MP for Mansfield
Cllr Sonya Ward - Leader of Mansfield District Council Labour Group
Louise Regan - NUT National President
John Dunn - Justice for Orgreave Campaign
Lee Barron - Secretary Midlands TUC
Kathryn Salt - NASUWT NEC
Paul Frost - Frack Free Mansfield
Local Trade Union and campaign speakers

8. UCU Conference Report

UCU Conference - Saturday 11th February - Congress House - London

Education from Cradle to Grave - Education without borders?

The Conference opened with a welcome from the UCU General Secretary - Sally Hunt. The opening address was made by Shadow Chancellor - John McDonnell MP followed by Q and A to talk about creating a knowledge economy which works for all.

Other keynote speakers on the day were Malia Bouattia, President of the NUS, Stephen Hale, Chief Executive of Refugee Action and Claire Moseley - Care4Calais.

The day was mostly about the UCU launch of issues relating to refugees and the publication of the Refugee Action booklet. Conference was taking place on the day after the Government had announced the denial of access to the UK for child refugees.

A Conference photograph was taken to mark the UCU unanimous rejection of the Government strategy on refugees and to mark the UCU protest of the policy. The other main issue that was addressed in the morning was the persecution and execution of fellow academics across the world. Conference spilt into workshops groups dealing with issues more specifically related to FE and HE. Conference was addressed in the groups by keynote speakers such as Sir Peter Scott - University of London, Jenny Gilruth, SNP MSP, Parliamentary Liaison Officer to the Education Secretary, and Professor Kalwant Bhopal - University of Birmingham. There were further speakers leading some of the smaller workshop groups.

After lunch the plenary session of Conference addressed the issue of 'how should UCU respond to Brexit?' It was discussed by the panel of keynote speakers and some lively Q and A ensued.

Personal Observations from a Retired UCU member:

Conference was both interesting and informative. Most of the speakers were dynamic and well-informed and most had, clearly, prepared their input to Conference.

However, the opening address did become a little unsettling and somewhat obscure when John McDonnell insisted on starting with how he wanted to state that Jeremy Corbyn had been very positive

and active on the "Remain" side of the EU Referendum Campaign last year. This did give the feeling of "going off piste" from the start of proceedings and begged the question - Why? It was not well received by Conference as it was not the remit as listed on the agenda for the Opening Address.

The location was superb - being in Congress House was a far better facility for Conference than a hotel conference suite. However, nothing was mentioned about the significance of the building - an opportunity sadly missed - being in the purpose-built TUC HQ complete with Henry Moore sculptures and excellent facilities.

The age group of most delegates was very young - many concerned about their contracts of employment. Like so many public events today - people were arriving and leaving throughout the day.

Rosemarie J. B. Nightingale

9. Midlands TUC Pensioner Network



The newly constructed Midlands TUC Pensioner Network Banner.

Rowena Dawson

10. Pensions Postscript - Cridland Report

John Cridland's report (released early enabling Government policy on the State Pension to be produced in May and consequent savings to be in place quicker) has said State Pension Age (SPA) increases should be accelerated and should rise from 67 to 68 between 2037 and 2039.

Under current legislation, from December 2018, the SPA for men and women will increase to 66. It will then rise to 67 between 2026 and 2028 and to

68 between 2044 and 2046. Cridland has recommended the SPA rises accelerate and reach 68 between 2037 and 2039 – this is seven years sooner than the Government’s current plans. Cridland also advocated a universal SPA. This ignores the huge differentials in healthy life expectancy. However, he did say one year prior to SPA there should be means-tested support for people who are unable to work because they are ill or caring for someone, allowing them some early access to pension income. This is totally inadequate! The failures of Universal Credit and PIP, the latter especially where issues of mental health are involved, means that those who carry out manual jobs or jobs involving stress and breakdown (very relevant to teaching) face a bleak future.

The other recommendations in Cridland’s report were:

State Pension should not increase by more than one year in a ten-year period.

More flexibility in universal credit for those nearing SPA.

The triple lock should be scrapped after 2020, thus reducing State Pension spending to 5.9% of GDP by 2066/7 (current projections are 6.7% by this time). Cridland said he wanted to balance having a sustainable State Pension from a fiscal perspective and also one which sees ‘people living longer spend the same proportion of time in work and retirement’. Cridland acknowledged that increasing the SPA will hit those most disadvantaged the worst. ‘In this review, I have sought to address how we can afford to live a longer pensionable life, how we can work longer, where this is necessary and possible. Where it is not, I have sought to continue to give assistance to those who need it,’ he said.

Released, “coincidentally”, on the same day as Cridland, was the Government Actuary’s Department (GAD) report on the SPA. GAD was asked to look at two scenarios, one where 32% of an adult’s working life is spent in retirement, and one where 33.3% is spent in retirement.

Under the first assumption, the GAD said SPA should hit 69 between 2040 and 2042, while the second assumption would see the SPA reach 69 between 2053 and 2055. Under the 32% scenario the GAD report said the SPA should then move from 69 to 70 between 2054 and 2056.

The bidding up of SPA continues and is likely to be continued in the future.

[Julian Atkinson](#)

11. UCU Retired Members Branch

-Our branch has been meeting since 2008 and now has over 300 members. Our aims are listed below. We meet three times a year, often in places of interest to make part of a day out. Meetings focus on important issues for UCU pensioners and provide a chance to talk with other retired members.

A termly newsletter with articles of interest to retired UCU members is e-mailed to all branch members for whom we have addresses and to UCU branch secretaries in the East Midlands.

Please let us have your personal e-mail address and let us know if it changes.

RMB Roles and Functions

- To represent the interests of retired members within the union.
- To represent the interests of retired union members within the wider union and pensioner movements.
- To provide a forum within the union for retired members to come together to consider and debate matters of mutual interest.
- To provide a resource of collective memory, advice and expertise in support of the union, in particular to those still in active employment.
- To provide active support, where appropriate, by involving the broadest section of the branch in support of the wider interests of the union and its members, including support for those still in active employment.

For more information

please contact Julian Atkinson

e-mail: secretary@ucu-em-rmb.org.uk

telephone: 01773 532105

East Midlands Branch officers and committee

Chair: Angus McLardy chair@ucu-em-rmb.org.uk

Vice-Chair: Rowena Dawson vice-chair@ucu-em-rmb.org.uk

Secretary: Julian Atkinson secretary@ucu-em-rmb.org.uk

Assistant Secretary: Rob Kirkwood
asst-secretary@ucu-em-rmb.org.uk

Treasurer: Brian Hambidge treasurer@ucu-em-rmb.org.uk

Equalities officer: Vacancy
equalities-officer@ucu-em-rmb.org.uk

Membership: Greg Cejer membership@ucu-em-rmb.org.uk

Newsletter: Bob Haskins
newsletter@ucu-em-rmb.org.uk

East Midlands regional UCU committee
representatives: Brian Hambidge, Rowena Dawson

40th People's Gala & Demonstration



ASSEMBLE:

Town Hall 10.30am

March off at 11am

RALLY:

New Square

11.45am

MAY DAY

CHESTERFIELD TRADES COUNCIL

Monday 1st May 2017

Music from 12.30pm at New Square:

- aNNika • We used to make things
- Mas Y Mas

*Market Stalls & Street Entertainment
in New Square*

SPEAKERS:

Ian Hodson (President Bakers,
Food & Allied Workers Union) BEAWU

Roger McKenzie
Assistant General Secretary UNISON

Toby Perkins MP Chesterfield

Maria Antonopoulou
Greek Trade Unionist

Louise Regan
President National Union of Teachers

Not to be reposted

Further information: Chesterfield TUC, c/o 34 Glumangate, Chesterfield

Tel: 07870 387 999 Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ChesterfieldMayDay/>

Free parking to Chesterfield Borough residents displaying the yellow RESIDENTS FREE PARKING disc on the DONUT Car Park.