

York Older People's Assembly

Unit 24, SPARK: YORK

17-21 Piccadilly, York YO1 9PB

Registered Charity 1101018

Email: yorkolderpeoplesassembly@outlook.com

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Tel: 07856 908586

Website: www.yorkassembly.org.uk



Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year

PENSIONS FROM APRIL 2023 - TO RISE BY £870

In 2010 the Government introduced the “triple lock” on pensions which guaranteed increasing pensions by the highest of the following:

- Increase in the consumer price index
- the average increase in earnings
- or 2.5%

*The current
Chancellor,
Jeremy Hunt*



The formula received all political party support.

However, the Government decided it could not afford the increase in the spring of 2022 and restricted the uplift to 3.1%. It was stated the triple lock was suspended not abolished.

The current Chancellor has kept his word. Pensions will be in line with the level of inflation measured in September 2022 of 10.1% and apply to pension changes from April 1st 2023.

The current weekly pension of £141.85 will rise to £158.58, an increase of 16.73p a week, the biggest rise ever. Those in receipt of Pension Credit see an increase of £1470 for a couple and £960 for a single pensioner.

However, starting in April means we will all have to face a winter with grocery prices alone rising by 14%!!

TACKLING POVERTY IN THE UK IN THE PRESENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Paul Kissack Chief Executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation was our guest speaker at the Annual Meeting in October. He joined the Foundation in the Autumn of 2020 and previously held several senior posts in the Government, most latterly working on the national response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Paul focussed on the work of the Foundation as an anti-poverty and social change organisation. Overall poverty in the UK has been stable over the past 20 years, affecting over 1 in 5 of the population (some 14.5million) who live in poverty households.

However, pensioner poverty fell hugely from the mid 1990's to 2010 (from 30% to 15%) affecting 2.1 million pensioners.

In contrast, the most extreme form of poverty called “destitution” has rocketed to over 1 million households. An increase of 54% since 2017. The definition of Destitution is “lacking two or more essential items in the past “ i.e. shelter, food, heating, lighting, clothing and basic toiletries.

A recent survey by the Rowntree Trust showed 7 million low income households were skipping meals and unable to heat their home. Rough sleepers have doubled in the past 10 years and the use of food banks is at an all time high.



DAVID LAVERICK- NEW TRUSTEE FOR THE ASSEMBLY

David (picture) has, since his retirement, taken a major interest in training guide dogs with his wife, Margaret. They have been puppy-raisers for 10 guide dogs - which stay with them for about 18 months before being matched with their eventual permanent home.

Prior to retirement David was a Regional Director of the Ombudsman Service before becoming the UK Pension Ombudsman.

Not content with that David, was also a member of the Mental Health Review panel and President of the Disciplinary Tribunal overseeing Councillors in Local Government.



Council Members beware!!

David pictured with one of his beloved trainees

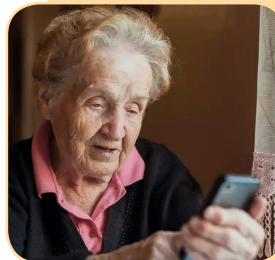
LEFT IN ISOLATION

As day to day services increasingly move on-line, thousands of older and vulnerable people who cannot, or chose not to use a computer or smart phone can feel stranded.

Routine essentials from paying bills to booking a vaccine appointment, may require lengthy periods on the phone and are impossible without a computer or a mobile phone.

Most GP surgeries no longer accept repeat prescriptions requests over the phone. Patients must either drop a note into the surgery, which if mobility is a problem, no car or other person is available, may require downloading an app to order on-line as the only alternative.

Age (UK) found that 42% of those aged over 75 do not use the internet. Unless there is someone who can provide help – then many older people who live alone are even more isolated. “Everyone should be able to access information without undue hassle, whether on-line or not” says Caroline Abrahams of Age (UK).



Locally for information and advice - Age (UK) York - ring 01904 634061 Monday-Friday 9.30am to 3.30pm.

YORK HOSPITAL - A LONG WAY TO GO

When Simon Morritt, (Chief Executive of York Hospital) was the guest speaker a year ago he warned that following the COVID-19 pandemic it could take up to 3 years for things to get back to normal.

In some areas things have got worse. In October 2021 – 1644 patients had been waiting for over a year for treatment. In November 2022 the figure has risen to 3102.

The time taken between a doctor at Accident and Emergency deciding a patient needs admission has resulted in 924 people having to wait on a trolley for over 12 hours before a bed became available. Staffing shortages at the hospital have resulted in 30 beds being unfilled.

It should be remembered that the Hospital Trust gets 127,000 attendances at Accident and Emergency, 690,000 outpatient appointments and 160,000 citizens become “inpatients” during the year.

This has been made worse by the fact that 120 patients were fit for discharge from the hospital but prevented from doing so by the lack of Social Care in the Community.

There is much to do to get back to the standards of care we all expect from the NHS.



York Hospital's main entrance

SOCIAL CARE CRISIS

Proposals to “cap” the care costs falling on an individual have been shelved again. The former Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said, “no one should have to sell their home to pay for social care”. Sir Andrew Dilnot, who chaired the Government’s social care funding report, proposed capping lifetime care costs at £86,000 and lifting the level of current assets held from £23,250 to £100,000 before state funding is provided to help with costs.

As life expectancy continues to grow, demand on social care levels becomes more intense. Currently, over 400,000 people live in care homes in England and more than 800,000 receive care

at home. But services are struggling to cope with over 160,000 staff vacancies at a time of rising demand. Nationally 5,400 requests for help are received every day.

In the Autumn Statement, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt, announced a relaxation for funding by local councils to allow them to uprate council tax bills by 5% including a 2% social care levy, an uplift from the current 1%. As this is discretionary, it is not known what the City of York Council intend to do.



The staff pictured outside the care home

IVY LODGE CARE HOME

Ivy Lodge Care Home has been rated outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (the independent regulator of health and social care in England). Not content with the above, the care home has been voted one of the top 20 in the whole of Yorkshire and the Humber. Since there are 1423 homes being considered, this is a real achievement.

It is a testament to all the staff, friends and families about the care their loved ones receive. The residents themselves “feel at home” not in a care home.

BLUE BADGE UPDATE

The ban on Blue Badge users from the foot streets has led to a huge drop in attendance at St Sampson Centre for Older People and prevented some disabled people from accessing parts of the city centre.

27 York organisations including St. Sampson's, MySightYork, Age (UK), and the Assembly supported by the Human Rights City Network helped gather 3000 postcards asking the Council to reverse the ban.

The Health and Wellbeing Board heard comments from Jim Cannon, Chair of the Assembly and others about the inconsistency of agreeing to apply for York to be an “Age Friendly City” while Blue Badge users are banned.

Jim said, “Hopefully a more reasonable and practical way forward can be found to benefit disabled citizens both young and old”. One of the key issues is to tackle isolation and loneliness. What the Blue Badge ban does is increase it – stopping people from getting out and about.



YORK 50+ FESTIVAL 2022

This year's Festival had an interesting and exciting programme of over 100 events. Activities included special events on 1st October (the International Day of Older People) an Information Fair, walks, talks, sports activities, and tasters of all sorts of things. More than 1000 people attended, ensuring that many people enjoyed new activities and events.

Posters, flyers, and 4000 copies of the brochure were produced and distributed across the city, with radio and newspaper features, in the York Press, York Mix and BBC Radio York.



Red Brick tour

We are grateful to our sponsors, advertisers and activity organisers for all their help.

We are already talking about next year's Festival. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact the YOPA office on 07856 908586.



Blazing grannies



Happy To Chat café

YORK HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

In this Summer the Government decided to provide a Household Support Fund aimed at financially vulnerable families from October 2022 to March 2023. York's share was just over £1 million.

Eligibility

- those who have dependent children and are entitled to free school meals
- those who receive Council Tax Support or Housing Benefit who are working but not receiving any other benefits.

In addition, there is a discretionary scheme, aimed at supporting vulnerable residents, including pensioners, who are directly affected by the rise in utility costs. To seek clarification and further information please contact the Council on 01904 551556

The Council is to write to over 3000 people inviting them to apply directly between 5th December 5th January. They would receive one-off payments between £200-300 which will be paid directly to them early in the New Year.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR THE ASSEMBLY

We welcome Adrian Kybett to the Assembly. He joined us in October 2022. Following a professional career in the charity and education sectors, he is now a City Bar Wall attendant (locking and unlocking the bar walls). He enjoys walking his dogs and cycling. He is a trustee at "Everybody's Cycling" charity in York, which specialises in cycling experiences for anyone with disabilities or support needs.

