

**Chair: Ellen Lebethe, 1 Heyford Ave, London SW8 1EA. Tel 0207582 5063**  
**Secretary: Penny Savage, 61 Hackford Road SW9 ORE Tel:020 7735 7375**  
**Members secretary Amanda Evans, 100 Newpark Road, SW2 4LN 020 671 8752**  
**Treasurer: Jennifer Hall, 100 New Park Road SW2 4LN**  
**<http://www.lampag.org>**  
**[info@lampag.org](mailto:info@lampag.org)**

**LAMPAG OPEN MEETING**  
**Monday 15 January 2024**  
**12.00 pm to 2.30 pm**  
**Lambeth Town Hall, Mayor's Heritage Suite**

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE CRISIS**

**Speaker: Jan Shortt - General Secretary National Pensioners Convention.**

Welcome to our first meeting of the new year. I hope that you had an enjoyable festive season with friends and family wherever you were. We wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous new year with hopes and ambitions fulfilled.

We start the new year addressing an issue which is of concern and interest to all of us, i.e. health and social care. While our health system is the envy of the world despite its current problems, we are facing a 'ticking time bomb' in social care as chronic underfunding, severe staffing shortages and a growing elderly population means that many in future will not get the care they need. People living in poorer areas of the country will see their health and well-being worsen in the coming year. Without wholesale reform the gap in care available will put more vulnerable people at risk of seeing their health worsening and requiring care in the NHS thereby putting greater strain on its resources. The situation has been exacerbated by the pandemic and the government's failure to shape the future social care system, the complexities of means testing and its ensuing unfairness and inequalities. Amongst the key areas contributing to the crisis are the cuts to local authority funding for care, the reduction in government funding grants, staff shortages which could rise to almost 500 000 by 2030 with gross pay the lowest of almost any sector in the UK. Furthermore, social care is not free with some people providing informal care and others paid for by local authorities. This system perpetuates inequalities and unfairness. Clearly, the social care system requires radical reform to reach the standards of a civilised and rich country. Come and join the debate on how we have reached this troubling situation, its impact on the quality of our lives and what changes need to be introduced to fix this deeply flawed social system.

## **LOOKING BACK.**

This is the time of the year for reflection, assessment, of eager anticipation of the future. It is that time when we think about what the year has meant for us personally, of the positive experiences we have had, of the challenges we have faced and more importantly of the lessons we have learned and the decisions we need to make.

2023 has fallen short of our expectations to be treated with dignity and respect and to be financially secure in retirement. The year started with P.M., Rishi Sunak's 5 priorities to halve inflation, grow the economy, reduce debt, cut NHS waiting lists and stop the boats. As far as the NHS is concerned, no progress has been made on waiting lists which have continued to grow. Consultants, junior doctors, nurses have gone on strike for better pay, working conditions and to save the NHS from privatisation.

The cost of living is still at a high. In the Autumn statement the Government honoured its commitment to the triple lock. The state pension will rise by 8.5% from April 2024 to £203.85. However, this will be lower after taxes. Our pension is still the lowest in the developed world with 2.8 million pensioners affected by fuel poverty. High gas and electricity prices will affect those on low incomes the most. More than 1 million pensioners have no savings. Many older people live in cold, damp, poorly insulated homes which affect their health and wellbeing.

The number of older people in private rented accommodation has increased. The gap between rich and poor is glaring. We need a social security system fit for purpose. We need to create a society in which fewer people fall between the minimum income standard.

There is a well-founded call for a Commissioner for Older People as in Wales and Ireland. There are 11 million people over 65 in England and in 10 year's time the number will grow to more than 13 million. There is no overall strategy for the complex, social and policy challenges that this will generate. A Commissioner for Older People in England will act as an independent champion and ensure that policy making across government considers the long-term needs of an ageing population.

As pensioners we have a special role in demanding respect, dignity and financial security in retirement. We have to build our organisation and involve more people. We need to get our message across at all levels, local, regional and national. We have to be the voice of the voiceless and work to reduce the injustices, disadvantages and discrimination that beset older people. It is our responsibility to create a platform on which future pensioners can advance their cause.

**Committee meeting on Monday 22 January 2024. 12.30 – venue changed to Ellen's House address as above**