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LAMPAG OPEN MEETING

Monday 15 May 2023

12.00 pm to 2.30 pm

Room 16

Lambeth Town Hall

Transport for All

Guest Speaker: Yargael Drouet

The NPC campaigns for dignity, respect, financial security and independence in retirement. An aspect of independence is the ability to be able to travel by car, scooter, and bicycle or on public transport to carry out essential caring responsibilities, attend clinic/hospital appointments, do shopping, carry out volunteering duties, visit friends and family and socialise. The most popular and convenient form of travel for older people is by bus. What is needed therefore is a bus service which is reliable, safe, affordable and accessible and which meets the needs of older people with different levels of mobility. Already we have seen some cuts to bus services in the borough and changes to bus routes which have made travelling by bus longer and more arduous. A major concern among older bus travellers is the issue of safety when boarding or alighting from buses. There is also some disquiet about the level of training of bus drivers contributes towards uncomfortable commuting and reduces positive experiences of travel by bus. Older people also ask for accessible, procedures for lodging complaints when necessary. Transport for All has been championing the cause of accessible transport for the capital for two decades. Transport for All says that "they have always been determined to ensure that the grassroots experiences and opinions of service users are always heard by those who commission and run the transport network".

This meeting opens up an opportunity for us to have our experiences and opinions regarding the various issues around bus travel heard. Come prepared to come and talk about the progress made so far, the benefits of bus travel as well as the kinds of changes you would like to see that will make your experience of bus travel even better.

Membership subscriptions.

LAMPAG has been campaigning for pensioners' rights for over 40 years. Now more than ever we need to build a stronger and more viable group that is able to recruit membership, spread the word far and wide and take our aim for dignity, respect, financial security and independence in retirement. You will help by renewing your membership. Kindly respond to the membership letter attached. Thank you.

Tea, Coffee, biscuits, raffle

Pension Credit

Pension Credit is a lifeline for people on low incomes. It guarantees that pensioners' incomes can be top up to at least to £173,70 a week for singles and £268 for couples if their income falls below this level. As a weekly income top up, it helps people to meet their basic needs such as nutritious food, or heating their homes. Over 1.4 million older people across Great Britain receive pension credit and they say it makes a huge difference. However around a million older people eligible for pension credit do not claim it. This causes them to lose on an average £49 a week putting them at risk of deep poverty and especially in the present climate of rising cost of living. During the last year alone, it is estimated that £1,135, 000 has not been claimed by hundreds of thousands of people who qualify for pension credit. On top of weekly pension credit it opens the door to other entitlements. It reduces Council Tax, a free TV licence for people over 75, housing benefits, and contributions towards glasses and dental treatment.

The Government has made some progress in raising awareness of pension credit, but there is still a long way to go. What is needed is a bold pension credit uptake plan led by the Department of Works and Pensions backed by evidence, to ensure that the progress that has been achieved to date is sustained and increased. On 27 April LAMPAG joined the Campaign Team at Independent Age at the DWP and handed in an open letter to the Works and Pensions Secretary of State Mel Stride calling on him to make sure that everyone eligible of receive pension credit does so. The letter has been backed by over 3,500 people. We too should ensure that the message regarding the importance of pension spread as widely as possible.

68 is too late

I reached pensionable age when I turned 60 but decided to continue to work a three day week until I retired at 65. At the time the state retirement age was 65 for men and 60 for women. We need to remember that that the gender pension gap has always been higher for men than for women even taking into account pension increases and the triple lock. Currently the state pension age is 66 which is already too high. The government has plans to to increase the state pension age even further to 68 in the forthcoming Work and Pensions Review. It has long been NPC policy that the state pension age should in fact decrease to 65 with the view of lowering it even further. Rising the state pension age will impact negatively on older workers who are already struggling with health conditions which affect their ability to remain productive in the workforce.

On 2 May, LAMPAG joined Unite, the NPC ,the Scottish Pensioners' Forum and MPs at a rally on College Green in Westminster to demand that the government rules out any further increase in the state pension age and to send out a loud and clear message that 68 is too late.

At the rally Jan Shorrt, NPC general secretary said, "Workers of today are the pensioners of tomorrow. Rising the retirement age when the health of the nation is at its worse is unacceptable. It would show a lack of commitment by the government to tackle issues that impact on older people. We've got 2.1million pensioners living in poverty and that figure is steadily rising as pensioners grapple with the cost of living. We have failing health and social care services. These failures are all the fault of the government and their policy decisions so it is up to them do something about it" Jan also called on the government to 'sit around the table and to have a national conversation about the future of pensioners".

Caren Evans, Unite national Officer commented."The government needs to make it absolutely clear that they will abandon their plans to increase that state pension age and not just postpone it-that is what we are fighting for".

John Trickett MP who spoke at the demonstration said, "I am absolutely opposed to any rise in the state pension age. People in my constituency are living shorter healthy lives. They should not be working longer".

Committee Meeting Monday 22nd May 12.30-2pm

