

Lampag

Lambeth Pensioners Action Group

Newsletter
December
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Is this the end of the National Health Service?

The Service has always depended on nurses from overseas but they are not coming anymore. Recent changes to immigration rules have reduced the monthly number of applications for health and social care visas from 18,300 in August 2023 to a mere 600 in October 2025.

<https://tinyurl.com/mtkazfnj>

There is an increasing shortage of hospital beds. Treating patients on trolleys in hospital corridors used to be confined to periods of heavy demand lasting no more than a month or two. Now it has become a year-round practice according to a recent report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Emergency Care and the Royal College of Emergency Medicine.

<https://tinyurl.com/2shvj8rs>

The situation is likely to be especially bad this Winter. An expert opinion from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine predicts that the current Winter Flu Season will be the worst for ten years.

Money is being drained from the NHS to increase drug company profits, with the cost of medicines set to increase in stages over the next decade to twice what it is at present plus inflation. This is a deal that the UK Government has done with Donald Trump, ostensibly so that exports of medicines from the UK the USA will be exempt from import duties for the next three years. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn0k520v4xro>

More money will be diverted from the NHS to the private sector by using Public Private Partnerships announced in the Budget instead of much cheaper public borrowing to build new health centres.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Monday 15th December from noon to 2.30pm in Room 1 on the Ground Floor of Lambeth Town Hall.

We have asked the Health and Social Care Working Party of the National Pensioners Convention to provide a **speaker on Social Care, with an emphasis on domiciliary care.**

Apologies for not having the usual tea, coffee and biscuits last time. They will be laid on this time. If someone is willing to take on doing this at future meetings, please let one of the officers know. The more we can share out tasks the better.

Please bring prizes for the raffle.

Ellen continues to make progress but will not be mobile enough to attend the meeting. She sends us all her best wishes for the Festive Season.

Discouraging Immigration

Many more people leave the UK each year than arrive, but Conservative and Labour Governments have nonetheless changed the Immigration Rules several times over the past couple of years to discourage people we need from coming here. Nurses are one example.

Even worse, some people already here are losing their right to remain here because they earn less than the minimum specified by the Home Office. Hundreds of nurses are affected by this because they are paid £63 a year less than the £25,000 specified for their occupation.

Despite having almost banned most immigration already, the current Government is proposing further restrictions. It used to be that unrestricted leave to remain was granted after five years. The Government is planning to extend the period. Nurses would have to be here for 15 years on frequently-renewed temporary visas before getting unrestricted leave to remain.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10267/>

Other low-paid workers are also affected. For example, hundreds of migrant workers on the Underground would lose their right to remain and their union, RMT, is campaigning on their behalf.

The Government should be competing with other countries for nurses and the other people we need from overseas. Instead, its sole concern is to compete with Reform UK for votes. But they cannot out-Farage Farage. He has proposed abolishing unrestricted leave to remain altogether and abolishing the NHS, to replace it with private insurance. He continues to express his admiration for Enoch Powell. Interviewed after the Budget, Farage said "Enoch Powell was right about the Common Market...and I thought he was right about not having vast community change...perhaps not much has in some ways changed."

We hope to be meeting our MPs in February and that would be an opportunity to take up these matters with them. In the meantime, **members can write to their MP. Letters or emails from retired nurses might be especially valuable.** If you do not know who your Member of Parliament is, you can find out at <https://members.parliament.uk/findyourmp?SearchText=mp>

Travel News

Local public transport over the holiday period will be even more restricted than usual for the time of year. Brixton National Rail, Denmark Hill, Herne Hill and West Dulwich stations will all be closed from 27th to 31st December while engineering work is carried out.

Euston and Paddington stations are reputed to have excellent free Passenger Assistance services, which will help passengers with disabilities even if those passengers already have assistance from accompanying carers. Presumably, the same service will be available at other main stations.

Lambeth Solidarity



In our November Open Meeting we had an excellent talk from Jocelyn Cruywagen on behalf of South London Stand Up to Racism.

Jocelyn first mentioned that in Lambeth we nearly all get along with each other, as witnessed by the very successful Community Cohesion Event that the Council hosted earlier in the month. She went on to report, however, that the situation in some neighbouring boroughs is much less happy, with the extreme right attaching Union Jacks to large numbers of lamp posts. Native Black Britons and People of Colour from overseas are intimidated or at least made to feel unwelcome, while many white residents do not see anything wrong.

Steps we can take include:

- Joining Stand Up to Racism and its South London branch.
- If we are mobile, taking part in marches and counter demos against the Far Right.
- Donating money or clothing to Care for Calais, which does what it can to make the lives of refugees stranded there a little less horrible.

Age-Friendly London

On 4th December Debbie Bernard-Weekes, Deputy Mayor of Greater London for Communities and Social Justice reported on progress towards making Greater London an Age-Friendly City.

Her overarching theme was that work is being done on a number of things which affect us older people but these also affect other people, even if not to the same extent. So:

- Accessible transport is important for many of us but it is also valuable for parents with pushchairs and young children in tow.
- Getting online is pretty well essential for older people. But we are not the only ones who struggle with computers and the internet. Many people of working age do so as well.
- We might expect most of the recipients of insulation grants under the Warmer Homes scheme to be retired but in fact only 30% are over 60.

The main challenge is to reach people of any age who are not likely otherwise to put themselves forward for help with these things.

The one exception mentioned to the need for an all-ages approach was the Pension Credit take-up campaign, which has enabled pensioners in London on very low incomes to claim some £9¹/₂ million of the money to which they are entitled.

Marching Together

Over 50 organisations have come together to plan this demo to take place in Central London on March 28th 2026. The aim is to show that the Far Right are opposed by hundreds of thousands of people.

The groups taking part include the General Federation of Trade Unions (who have played an important part in bringing the disparate range of organisations together), CND, Stop the War, Jewish Voice for Liberation, Stand Up to Racism, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, trade unions galore and many very worthwhile smaller outfits.

We will no doubt want to be part of this demo, proudly displaying our gorgeous banner. We can work round many of us having limited mobility or eyesight. If we do not have enough people able to carry the banner on the march, we can find a place where we can stand displaying the banner to the passing marchers.

An Update

The Budget included some changes to Council Tax but these do very little to correct the fundamental unfairness described in the November Newsletter. A further aspect is that the better off gain most from local services. We can all enjoy Ruskin Park but few of us can afford to buy a house overlooking it. Similarly, houses in the catchment area of a highly regarded state school, such as Dulwich Charter, are more expensive than in otherwise similar areas.

The Newsletter

Stephen edits the newsletter but he struggles to find material he expects to be of interest to LAMPAG members. Any suggestions for topics to cover will be welcomed, especially if they are accompanied by some details of where relevant information can be found.

The Officers of LAMPAG are

Chair: Ellen Lebethe 020 7582 5063 elebethe@talktalk.net Secretaries:
Hilary Rock-Gormley hilaryrockgormley@yahoo.co.uk and Stephen Carlill
020 7274 7008 stephencarlill@gmail.com Treasurer: Jennie Hall 020
8671 8752 jenniekh@hotmail.com

**LAMPAG is affiliated to the National
Pensioners Convention**