

North East Pensioners Association

Regional Impact Report on issues affecting pensioners wellbeing in **MAY 2026** including: **1. Care Homes & Housing, 2. Economy, 3. Health & Welfare, 4. The NHS, 5. Politics, 6. Poverty, 7. Security and 8. Transport.**



Note for more reading click any underlined words

1. CARE HOMES, CARERS & HOUSING.

Care Home Manager Awards. Amanda Gell, home manager at Victoria House Care Home in Stockton, has been shortlisted in the Inspirational Care Home Manager category (North & Midlands) at the Stars of Social Care – Care Home Awards 2026. The category honours managers who lead with compassion, dedication, and a focus on person-centred care ([NorthernEcho](#)).



Northumberland Council has agreed to set up a new scrutiny committee that will exclusively look at issues around housing. It follows a damning inspection published in November last year that found “very serious failings” at the local authority. The inspection, carried out by the Regulator of Social Housing, urged the need for “fundamental changes” ([N/Gazette](#)).

2. ECONOMY.

The Great North. Driven by mayors, backed by business and built for the people. This is a mayoral-led collaboration of northern leaders, aiming to elevate the North’s voice and economic impact. It unites Combined Authorities, councils, businesses, universities, and government to unlock the North’s potential ([GreatNorth](#)).



The Port of Blyth launched a £100M Battleship Wharf Expansion scheme. This will bring jobs and increase capacity King's Awards for Enterprise clean energy growth. The early development phase is funded by the Port, Northumberland County Council, the North East Combined Authority, and The Crown Estate ([N/Gazette](#)).

Greggs Profits. Based on their trading update released in May 2026, Newcastle-based Greggs confirmed a strong start to the year, with total sales rising 7.5% to £800 million for the 19 weeks ending May 9, 2026 ([F/Times](#)).



Five North East companies celebrate prestigious King's Awards for Enterprise. The North East winners include Palintest, Express Engineering Group, Inflo Group, Openworks Engineering and Forfusion. ([BusinessLive](#)).

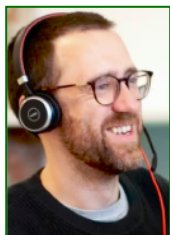
3. HEALTH & WELFARE.

Stop dumping sewage into the sea. The demonstration at [Tynemouth Longsands Beach](#) was part of the massive, nationwide Paddle-Out Protest organised by [Surfers Against Sewage \(SAS\)](#). Thousands of activists across more than 50 locations simultaneously took to the UK's water and shorelines to voice their outrage over ongoing sewage pollution ([Chronicle](#)).

The Venerable Rick Simpson was consecrated as the new Bishop of Durham by the Archbishop of York. He succeeds the Right Reverend Paul Butler, who retired in February 2024, and will be officially installed at Durham Cathedral in June ([D/Diocese](#)).



Researchers identified a potential cause for lacunar strokes, affecting 35,000 people in the UK annually. The study suggests these strokes may result from the widening of arteries deep within the brain, unlike ischaemic strokes caused by blocked vessels. The discovery could help pave the way for new treatments ([Independent](#)).



Independent Age Information groups for older people - online. Join one of our free webinars for a deep dive into our information guides. Led by an expert adviser, we'll look at topics including money, social care and scams, with the opportunity to ask questions. The webinars are suitable for those aged over 65, as well as family, friends, carers or anyone supporting an older person. You can see our upcoming topics below, or click : [download our latest programme](#) ([IndependentAge](#)).

"Don't Put Off the Switch". Get ahead of the nationwide digital landline switchover Jan 2027. If you need extra support making the switch to Digital Voice, please register via BT webform. You'll be asked to log in to your MyBT account and can tell BT about your additional needs. If you have Telecare, and are a BT or EE customer, please call 0800 077 8813 to let them know ([BT.com](#)).

1 in 3 people born in the UK today will develop dementia. Dementia Action Week 18th May is an awareness campaign led by Alzheimer's Society, bringing people and organisations together to act on dementia. This year, they're encouraging everyone to [join the Forget Me Not Appeal](#). ([Alzheimer's Society](#)).



Dementia care in the UK is failing people at every stage, with long waits for diagnosis and inadequate support. Alzheimer's Society's [Unlocking the Door](#) reports highlight the stark reality of this postcode lottery. AS are calling for:

- An 18-week referral-to-diagnosis target to end the agonising wait for answers.
- A national goal to diagnose more people at an early stage.
- Guaranteed access to Cognitive Stimulation Therapy and better support for the specialist workforce ([Alzheimer's Society](#)).

4. **THE NHS.**



Birju Bartoli

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust have achieved Advanced Foundation Trust status. This after a rigorous assessment by NHS England. This status grants financial freedoms, a capability-based regulatory approach, and the potential to hold an integrated care organisation contract ([NHS](#)).

Birju Bartoli - Northumbria Health Care NHS Foundation Trust CEO has been named as top chief executive in the NHS. This by the Health Service Journal, the leading publication for NHS policy and management, in its [annual list of the top 50 chief executives](#) ([NHS](#)).

NHS reform proposes removing councils of public and staff governors from 2027. Governors are an elected independent voice from their community that have oversight of NHS Foundation Trust Boards. This NHS reform means no public governors to be elected this year and then some legislation yet to be defined and decided to replace them with something in 2027 ([CGI](#)) ?

Senior doctors across England's NHS are being balloted for strike action by the BMA. The ballot, which closes on 6 July, follows a government pay offer of 3.5%. The doctors are demanding better pay, working conditions and career progression ([Independent](#)).



Cancer Jab. Tens of thousands of NHS patients with over a dozen cancer types (including lung, breast, and cervical) are now benefiting from a rapid 60-second immunotherapy injection of pembrolizumab (Keytruda) - (NHSE).

Filipino nurses celebrate 25 years of service in South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust marked International Nurses Day by celebrating a special milestone. More than 40 Filipino nurses are reaching 25 years of service with the Trust (NHS). NEPA celebrated International Nurses Day too. Pat a NEPA member and former nurse brought trays of decorated cakes to our meeting in May so we could all celebrate the occasion together.



250 neighbourhood health centres by 2035. The Department of Health and Social Care has awarded a £735,000 contract to Turner & Townsend to develop a public-private partnership model for the centres. The consultancy firm will provide expertise on programme design, cost management, and risk allocation, working alongside DHSC, NHS England, and other advisers (HSJ).



Leaders of a Trial, aiming to improve surgical care for older people, visited South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust. The trial, using an assessment to reduce post-surgical complications, is being trialled in Urology and Orthopaedics at Sunderland Royal Hospital (NHS).

5. POLITICS.

The King delivered his third King's Speech as monarch, marking the 2026 state opening of parliament. Its an important moment where the government's legislative plans for the year ahead are set out. These included the Clean Water Bill, Highways Financing Bill, Social Housing Bill and the Police reform Bill (LGA).

Waspi campaigners prepare for fresh legal action - 'We Will Not Give Up' !

Women Against State Pension Inequality - is an organisation which campaigns to "fight for justice for all women born in the 1950s affected by the changes to the State Pension Age". They are "not against equalisation", but say they are against the fact the State Pension Age was changed "with inadequate or no notice" (Express).



The mixed-age couples rule, in place for seven years, prevents couples with one partner over State Pension age from claiming pension-age benefits. This affects around 70,000 older people, causing an average annual loss of £7,000 and increasing the risk of poverty. Ask your MP to support an Early Day Motion [Click here](#) (IndependentAge).

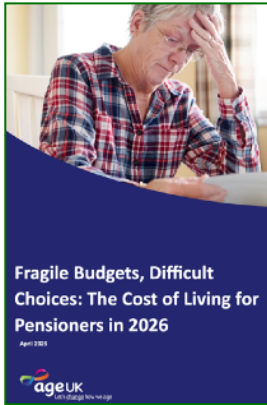
Reform UK - Changed North East Political Landscape

Reform UK appointed new council leaders: Paul Mackings (South Tyneside) Chris Eynon (Sunderland) and Nick Alan (Gateshead).

Lib Dems to run Newcastle City Council as 'new era' deal with Green Party confirmed. Colin Ferguson Lib Dem was agreed as the new leader of Newcastle City. Former North of Tyne Mayor Jamie Driscoll joined the Newcastle Green Party's leadership group (Chronicle).

6. POVERTY.

At least 15m Britons not saving enough to retire, Pensions Commission says. Millions of people across Britain are facing a "cliff edge" when they retire due to a chronic shortfall in saving that will require a radical shake-up of the pensions system to fix, a government-backed report has warned (Guardian).



Financial Hardship. Over a quarter of pensioners in the UK are struggling financially, with this figure rising to over half among private renters.

Energy costs are the main source of financial pressure, with over a third of pensioners cutting back on heating or powering their homes.

Many pensioners opt to forgo heating to avoid debt. This as energy bills are the least affordable household cost. Renters, women, younger pensioners, those with disabilities, and pensioners from ethnic minority backgrounds are disproportionately affected. Only 6% of pensioners sought financial help, with many unaware of eligibility or contact information. Age UK calls for government action on income, energy, and housing ([AgeUK](#)).

7. SECURITY.

Victims of romance fraud. They lost more than £102 million last year, as criminals continue to exploit online relationships to manipulate people into transferring money. Analysis shows people aged 55 to 74 experienced the greatest financial losses, accounting for almost half of the total amount stolen ([ReportFraud](#)).



Crime and Policing Bill receives Royal Assent, giving police new powers

It has over 70 measures including tougher police powers to crackdown on antisocial behaviour and retail crime by introducing Respect Orders so police can ban repeat offenders from town centres and other locations ([Neighbourhood](#)).



E-Scooter and E-Bike seizure. Neighbourhood policing teams seized 16 e-scooters, three electric bikes, a motorcycle, and two mopeds in Cramlington, Seaton Delaval, and Ashington. The operation targeted illegal and antisocial vehicle use ([N/Echo](#)).

8. TRANSPORT.

Eldon Square bus station in Newcastle will close for three weeks in June for resurfacing and other improvements. Bus services will be diverted to temporary stops in the city centre during this time. The facility will be fully closed to arrivals and departures for three weeks, June 10 to June 29 ([Nexus](#)).



Sean Fahey
Secretary NEPA



To contact the NEPA Secretary

Email: nepacontact@gmail.com or see the [NEPA Website by Click Here](#) and you'll find our meeting details under the events menu.

Be our guest and come along and see if what we do is of interests to you?

We promote the relief of elderly people in any manner which is, deemed to be charitable, in and around the North East.

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