

North East Pensioners Association

Impact report September 2025

You can Join NEPA.
Help us Inform, Influence and Change
older lives for the better in our
communities.

Please care and share the news.



Note for more reading click any underlined words

1. CARE HOMES, CARERS & SUPPORT.

A Durham hospice has been forced to lay off three more staff. This because of a funding blow to its dementia services. St Cuthbert's Hospice today announced that, despite its best efforts, it has not been able to secure the continuation of its community outreach and dementia services ([N/Echo](#)).

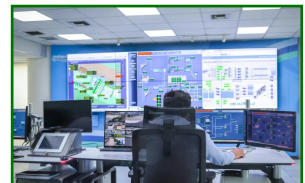


Record Numbers Living to 100. The number of centenarians in England and Wales reached a record high of 13,924 in 2021, a 24.5% increase from 2011. Despite this growth, centenarians still only represent 0.02% of the total population. ([ONS](#))

Age UK's annual report reveals a concerning decline in healthy life expectancy for older people. This exacerbated by pressure on frontline staff and unequal access to services. The report highlights the urgent need for improved community care, better support for unpaid carers, and prioritisation of older people within the NHS ([SocialCare](#)).

2. ECONOMY.

Centrica and X-energy will deploy the UK's first advanced modular reactors at the Hartlepool power station. This creating hundreds of jobs and boosting the local economy. The reactors will power 1.5 million homes and are quicker to build than conventional nuclear plants ([BusinessLive](#)).



High Street cash boost delay. A commission to reinvigorate the North East's struggling high streets is yet to launch – more than six months after it was meant to. The North East Mayor promised in her 2024 election manifesto to assemble a high streets commission that would come up with new solutions ([Chronicle](#)).

A new AI Growth Zone in the North East of England. This will create thousands of jobs and unlock £30 billion in investment. The zone will leverage the region's strengths in energy, manufacturing, and universities, and host Stargate UK, an AI infrastructure platform ([PSE](#)).

Plans submitted for huge battery energy storage facility at industrial site in Jarrow. Battery Energy Storage System developments aim to import and store electrical power during periods of oversupply in the National Grid, and to export it back into the energy network when needed to help 'balance' the grid ([Shields/G](#)).

Thousands of jobs and billions of investment in massive North East AI plan. An AI growth zone in the, including Cobalt Park, North Tyneside, will be established as part of a collaboration between Nscale, OpenAI, and Nvidia. This initiative aims to create thousands of jobs and attract £30bn in investment ([Chronicle](#)).



Royal mail hails profit turnaround. Royal Mail has returned a profit for the first time in three years as the company attempts to turn around its fortunes under new owner, Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky. In its first set of results since being taken over in April, Royal Mail reported annual profits of £12m ([BBC](#)).

3. HEALTH & WELFARE.

Dementia rehabilitation remains the 'missing link' from UK care. New research shows despite almost one million people living with dementia in the UK, rehabilitations is still overlooked in care plans ([SocialCare](#)).

Assisted dying. Former PM Theresa May opposes 'licence to kill' Bill. She told the packed red benches of the upper chamber in Parliament that she fears the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill does not have enough safeguards and could be used to cover up medical mistakes ([Independent](#)).



South Tyneside Council backs big shake-up of adult social care charges – The proposed changes to minimum income guarantee, disability expenditure, and a new home insurance allowance aim to rebalance thresholds and rates. The changes are estimated to generate over £1.2 million annually for the council ([ShieldsGazette](#)).

4. THE NHS.



NHS campaigners held a protest outside of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead. This to criticise what they called "a direct cut to frontline services" which "must be challenged". The protest follows the closure of ward 23 - a dementia ward - on August 20 this year ([Chronicle](#)).

Newcastle Coroner warns that 9 to 5 stroke services putting people at risk. The mechanical thrombectomy service is limited to 9am-5pm due to a shortage of neuroradiologists. A business plan for additional funding has been submitted to NHS England ([N/Echo](#)).

NEW NHS RULES INTRODUCED

Jess's Rule. This named after Jessica Brady, who died of cancer after 20 GP appointments. The rule encourages GPs to reconsider their approach after 3 appointments if a diagnosis remains elusive or symptoms worsen. This initiative aims to catch serious conditions earlier and reduce health inequalities ([BBC](#)).

Martha's Rule. This to help spot any unexpected signs of deterioration early and give you the right to request a rapid review if you're worried that you or your loved one's condition is getting worse ([NHS](#)).

The new neighbourhood health programme. [Stockton](#) and [Sunderland](#) are included in the first wave of 43 areas selected to benefit from it. This was announced by the Government in September ([Gov.uk](#)).

People with cancer across the UK have been let down by a 'cancer postcode lottery'. New research reveals that 40% of people with cancer in the UK have struggled to access treatment or care because of where they live. More needs to be done to make cancer care fair ([MacMillan](#)).

North East hospitals and ambulance service national ratings. 123 Acute Trust Hospitals League Table.

- 09th. Northumbria Health Care.
- 21st. South Tyneside & Sunderland.
- 22nd. North Tees & Hartlepool.
- 26th. Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals.
- 66st. County Durham & Darlington.
- 82nd. South Tees Hospitals.
- 83rd. Gateshead Health.



North East Ambulance Service rated **5th** out of 10 national services ([NHS](#)).



5. POLITICS.

The State Pension is set to rise 4.7% next April. We know this as it is 'triple locked' – ie, it rises by the higher of 2.5% or inflation or the rise in average earnings. The key figure has just come in for earnings to July and it's likely to be the highest of the three, at 4.7%. So based on that, the FULL State Pension (for someone with all the qualifying National Insurance years) is set to rise from...

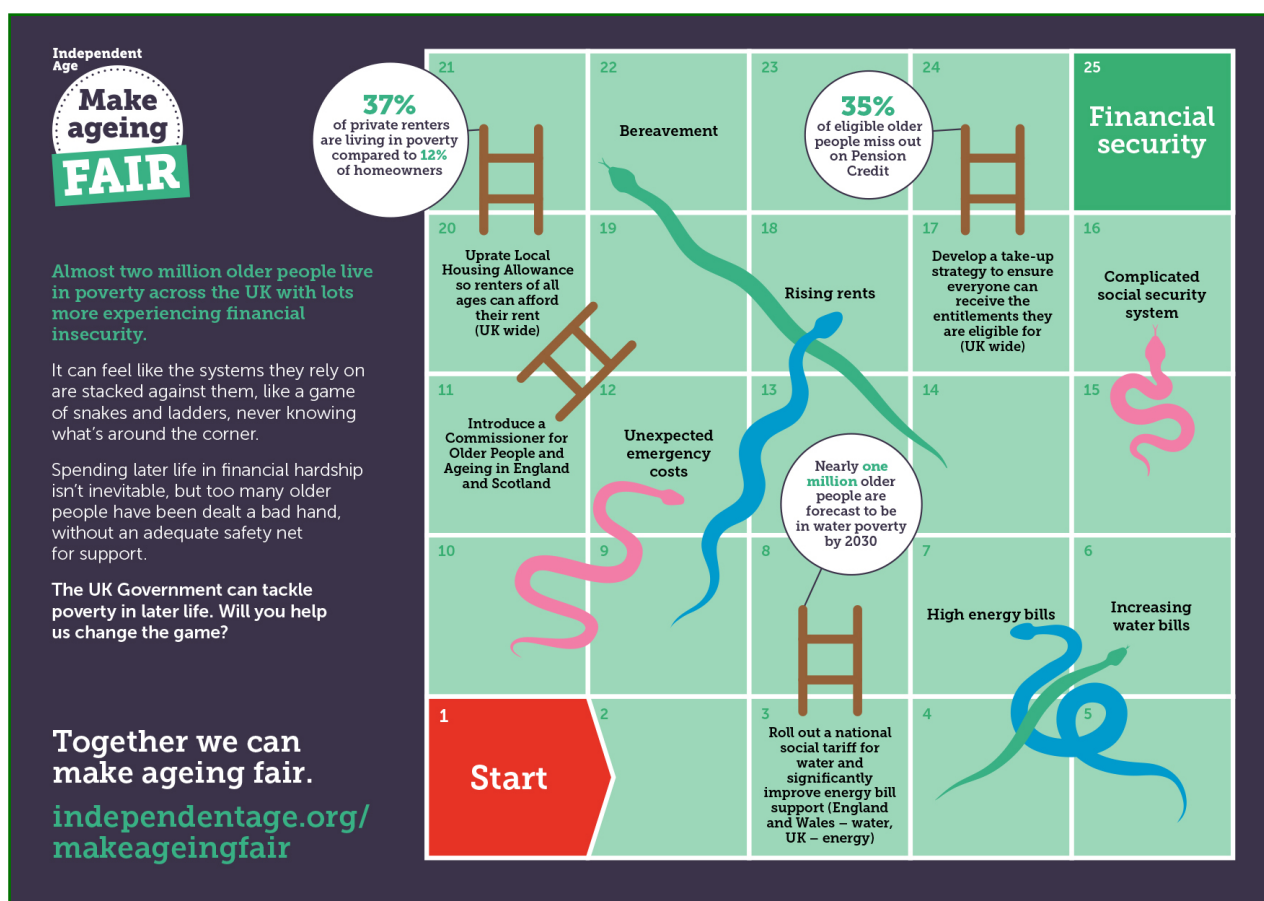


- **NEW state pension: £230.25 to £241.05 a week.**
- **OLD state pension (retirees pre-April 2016): £176.45 to £184.75 a week.**

This will take someone on the full new State Pension to £12,535 a year, only £35 below the frozen personal allowance (amount you can earn tax-free each year).

6. POVERTY.

As part of Independent Age's Make Ageing Fair campaign, they have created a snakes and ladders graphic for you to share with your MP. This shows the obstacles (as snakes) so many older people in financial hardship tell us that they are facing when it comes to making ends meet and the urgent policy changes (as ladders) that could make a huge difference (IndependentAge).



Energy firm Ovo is campaigning for reforms to social tariffs.

They are calling on the government and wider industry to introduce a targeted tariff that would deliver discounted energy bills to the most vulnerable households. A new report from the Green Alliance think tank suggests this transformation could rescue millions from fuel poverty (D/Express).

7. SECURITY.

Two men, were jailed for over three years each. This for organising a criminal network of thieves in the North East. The pair targeted vulnerable victims, following them to banks and using distraction methods to steal their money. Their sentencing is part of ongoing efforts to combat organised crime in the region ([Rayo](#)).



Newcastle scam. An elderly man has lost an estimated tens of thousands of pounds. This after falling victim to a bank scam. Three suspects have been remanded at court following an investigation into fraud and money laundering ([Chronicle](#))



Cyber crime in the North East has risen by 14% in the past year. This with over 9,000 reports made to police. This increase highlights the growing prevalence of online crimes in our digital world ([HexhamCourant](#)).

Warning over robotic calls. This as 2 energy firms fined for unlawful marketing calls. One was Durham based energy firm Green Spark Energy Ltd. It was fined £250,000 for making millions of unlawful robocalls ([InformationCommissionersOffice](#)).

8. TRANSPORT.

Darlington train station transformation work won't be completed this year. The Tees Valley mayor said it was "deeply frustrating". He made the comments as Network Rail confirmed that in spite of what they call "strong" progress, the station project completion date has been pushed back from December 2025 to Spring 2026 ([D&STimes](#))

Growing problem with e-bikes and e-scooters. A Royal National Institute of Blind People report reveals e-scooters and e-bikes obstruct pavements, causing fear and anxiety for blind and partially sighted people. The RNIB calls for government action to create inclusive pavement standards and regulate rental schemes ([Independent](#)).



Gateshead Quays £23m car park finally open after huge delays. The charges to park at The Quays Multi Storey Car Park will be in line with other council car parks nearby - £2.60 for up to two hours, or £5.70 per day ([Gateshead](#)).

The 4th Northumberland Line Station - Bebside. This will open on Sunday 19th October 2025. The line, open since December 2024, has seen over 500,000 passenger journeys in its first eight months ([NCC](#)).



North East Mayor has pledged tougher oversight of the Tyne and Wear Metro. She will be introducing new public performance reporting amid concerns over reliability and a lack of formal scrutiny under the region's new transport authority ([DailyMotion](#)).

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