

North East Pensioners Association

Regional impact report on issues affecting pensioners wellbeing in September 2020 including the following:

1. Care Homes & Housing, 2. Economy, 3. Health & Welfare, 4. NHS, 5. Politics, 6. Poverty 7. Security and 8. Transport.

NEPA
Security with Dignity

1. CARE HOMES & HOUSING

Pressure on care home providers to accept Covid patients (Channel4). The Government Guidance says: "It is important to note that patients can and should be discharged before resolution of symptoms provided they are deemed clinically fit for discharge in a rapid, but safe, manner. They will have been COVID-19 tested and have confirmed COVID-positive status". In the first wave they didn't know - It's not clear what's changed?

Care homes close to visitors across the North East. A DHSC spokesperson said: "We know that limiting visits in care homes has been difficult for many families and residents who want to see their loved ones. "Our first priority is to prevent infections in care homes, and this means that visiting should still be restricted with alternatives sought wherever possible.(Mirror). Visiting the very necessary emotional value of physical contact either inside or outside cannot be emphasised enough.

What is the Green Homes Grant? Homeowners and landlords in England can apply for a government voucher worth £5,000 (£10,000 in certain circumstances) towards 2/3 of the costs of installing energy efficient and low-carbon heating improvements to homes (Money Saving Expert). See also the Simple Energy Advice calculator.

2. ECONOMY.

Chilling signs of the impact of COVID-19 on older workers. Data from the DWP shows the growth trend in over 50's employment that had continued for over a decade has stopped (Business in the Community Age Campaign).

SCS £19m sales increase. The Sunderland based sofa and flooring business SCS, which has 100 stores across the UK, says it is seeing pent-up demand from customers spending on their homes, servicing up an additional £19m in sales.

New Holiday Inn, Keel Square. The 120-bed Holiday Inn, which will overlook Sunderland city centre's Keel Square, will create 130 posts when it is completed towards the end of 2021. The £18m development will also include four ground-floor commercial units with opportunities for food and drink businesses (S Echo).

Chancellor plans massive business tax breaks to spur investment. He is understood to be studying plans to give big firms a full tax break on capital investment, such as technology, machinery, and industrial premises, allowing them to immediately deduct the costs from their bills (Sunday Telegraph). Will this save jobs in our region?

Is the North East ready for Brexit? "Covid has been a nightmare - all consuming. And now we've somehow got to find the extra time and resources to plan for Brexit. The stress for me is that I know I should be doing something to get ready, but I don't know what that is. Ryan Maughan runs Avid Technology, which supplies components for electrical vehicles and relies on the EU for two thirds of its orders" (BBC).

Dogger Bank Wind Farm. The North Sea development will see 120 jobs created at the Port of Tyne and another at the Able Seaton Port at Hartlepool (Chronicle).

Government block open cast mining near Druridge Bay. The extraction of 2.75 tonnes of coal from Highthorn in Northumberland has been refused again (Chronicle).

Free flu vaccine scheme extended.
Free flu vaccine this year in to all over 50s. those on the shielding patient list.

3. HEALTH & WELFARE.

Stricter restrictions in the region from 19th September 2020. This as Covid infection rates have tripled in some parts, including Newcastle, Sunderland and Northumberland ([BBC](#)).

The free NHS Covid -19 app. This is a vital part of the NHS Test and Trace service in England([NHS](#)). To get it you'll need a smartphone and be able to manipulate the app.



Northumberland - New Covid Testing. There are 2 semi-permanent walk through Covid testing centres, in addition to 3 mobile testing units. The new sites are in Ashington at People's Park car park and Blyth at the Marine Terrace car park. Appointments are required – book tests at nhs.uk/coronavirus.

Virus triples among older people - Across England the spread of the virus has almost tripled among those in their 60s since the start of the month (23 cases per 100,000 people in their 60s, up from 8 at the end of August, and 22 cases per 100,000 in people over 80, up from 9) per official data analysed by [Duncan Robertson](#) from [Loughborough University](#).

Grandparents and other carers. They will once again be able to look after children and vulnerable adults from outside their household after Government u-turn on new local lockdown laws. ([N Echo](#)). I think we can all agree a victory for common sense.

PM to consult MP's on further restrictions. PM finally bowed to demands to give MPs a vote before new lockdown curbs after furious Speaker Lindsay Hoyle blasts him for treating Commons with 'contempt' ([D.Mail](#)).

What's going wrong with testing. The government chose to centralise the system, working with private companies and universities, rather than existing NHS laboratories. Allan Wilson ([IBMS](#) President) believes this was a mistake. "The Lighthouse lab model isn't sustainable in the long term, and we need an exit strategy," he says ([BMJ](#))?

SERCO contact tracing. In June, ministers confirmed that Serco had subcontracted approximately 9,000 staff out of the total 10,500 required to run the service to a panel of 29 subcontractors, but refused to reveal the list. It now transpires the subcontractors include the company embroiled in the Tax Credits scandal and debt collection companies ([PoliticsHome](#)).

4. NHS

Global health award for North East doctor. Prof Richard Walker, a consultant geriatrician at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and clinical lead for its Parkinson's disease service, is the latest recipient of the World Parkinson's Program Dr Rana International Parkinson's Community Service Award ([NHS](#)).

Doctors are braced for the reopening of Covid wards in October. This to combat a Covid surge. Nightingale Hospitals built to help the NHS cope with the first wave of the virus are being made ready for new patients. And those currently relieving pressure on the NHS by carrying out cancer screening and routine ultrasound tests are being readied for a second wave ([Mirror](#)).

DHSC PPE Strategy Reuse Proposals. This sets out on page 30 para 5.14 the following: PPE designed for reuse: We want to move away from disposable by default and assess new types of PPE that are designed for reuse from the outset, particularly through UK manufacturing. We think staff may need some assurance on this one?

Excess Deaths at Home. Some 10,000 more deaths than usual occurred in people's private homes since mid June, long after the peak in Covid deaths, prompting fears that people may still be avoiding health services ([Guardian](#)). Get medical advice if ill.

Care Quality Commission bring first criminal prosecution under the duty of candour. The University Hospitals Plymouth Trust is charged under this duty following

a death. The CQC has previously issued fines and warning notices for breaches of duty of candour but has never before prosecuted a trust in court (Independent).

5. POLITICS

Devolution, can we bridge the divide? In a letter seen by the Chronicle, local government minister Simon Clarke (He resigned shortly afterwards leaving a vacuum?) said that reuniting the areas 7 councils under a single elected mayor was the only way to unlock massive public investment in the regions transport network (Chronicle).

New Northumberland County Council Leader - Conservative Glen Sanderson.

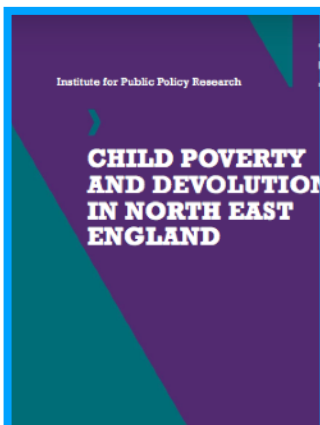
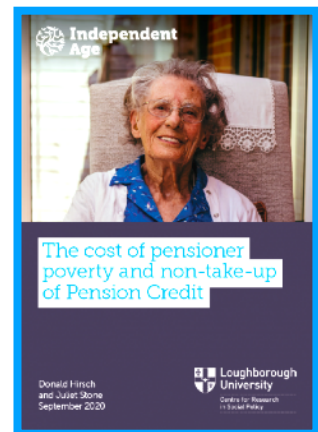
PM and junior minister in North East Covid restrictions muddle. It happens but at a time of increased infections we all need to be on the same page and singing the

Brexit.	
7 things that will change in January 2021	
And you may need to take into account now.	
1	European trips will need more planning.
2	You'll stand in a different queue at borders
3	Duty-free shopping will return
4	Moving to the EU? Expect more paperwork
5	New rules for EU citizens living in the UK
6	There'll be a new immigration system
7	Trade will be different, inside and outside the UK
This will include things like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sure your passport has at least 6 months left on it. • Extra driving documents may be needed. • Travel insurance with health cover. • Free mobile roaming ends. Read the BBC oversight article by clicking here .	

same song. We need to have confidence that those making the decisions understand them as we have to carry them out. Must do better.

6. POVERTY

New research commissioned by Independent Age. This conducted by Professor Donald Hirsch and Dr. Juliet Stone at the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University has found that not only would higher uptake massively reduce pensioner poverty, but that the failure to deliver Pension Credit to 4 in 10 eligible pensioners is costing the state an estimated £4 billion a year in increased NHS and social care spending.



As part of our “Credit Where It’s Due” campaign, we’re calling on the Government to address this issue and put in place an ambitious action plan, detailing how they will increase the uptake of Pension Credit over the next five years.

Child Poverty Regional inequalities in the UK include marked differences in levels of child poverty. The North East currently has the second highest rate of child poverty of any English region. In this report, they consider how English regions, such as the North East, could use devolution to address child poverty and improve the lives and life chances of children (IPPR Research).

7. SECURITY

Courier Fraud - North East Regional Special Operations Unit notification. In many cases of courier fraud, victims are contacted repeatedly and are pressured into handing over high-value items and cash. By the time they realise they have been duped, it is often too late for them to get their money back.

**FRAUDSTERS ARE
DELIBERATELY
TARGETING
OLDER AND
VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

Courier fraud involves a fraudster contacting a victim by telephone purporting to be someone else such as a police officer or bank official.

There has been a rise in the number of courier frauds reported in the previous week (58 reports) and an increase in the amount of calls using the identity of NCA officers.

See below for tips on spotting courier fraud and how to protect yourself...



You get a call claiming to be from your bank or local police telling you about fraudulent activity but ask for your PIN to verify who you are.

Your bank or the police will never call you to ask you to verify your personal details or PIN by phone.



They're offering you to call back so you can be sure they're genuine, but when you try to return the call there's no dial tone.

If you need to call your bank back to check, wait five minutes or use a different line; fraudsters may stay on the line after you hang up.



They offer for somebody to pick up the card for you to save you the trouble of having to go to your bank or local police station.

You should only ever have to hand your debit or credit card over at your bank. Your bank or police will never offer to pick up your card by courier.

If you have been a victim of fraud or cyber crime, report it to Action Fraud

ActionFraud
Report Fraud & Internet Crime
0300 123 2040

Courier Fraud

Scammers conned two elderly men out of five-figure sums in a 'courier fraud'.

The fraudsters tricked the victims into believing they were helping detectives from the Met Police. Both men aged in their late 60s and 80s, received a phone call asking them to withdraw thousands of pounds and hand it over to a courier who turned up at their home address.

The incidents were reported in Neville's Cross area in Durham in Darlington on September 5 and September 11 (Teesside Live).

8. TRANSPORT

Tyne Tunnel - Barrier free. This, it is hoped, can be up and running between October and December 2021 and work by using Automated Number Plate Recognition cameras only. Tyne and Wear councillors agreed in September to approve the implementation of the project which operator TT2 says will ultimately cost £80m and create 80 new jobs ([Shields Gazette](#)).

Metro driver shortage - Winter disruption. Many employees have been lured by rivals offering higher salaries. A reduced schedule is set to be announced next month. Metro's driver and crew workforce is predicted to be 10% below what is needed in December and 13% below in January 2021 ([BBC](#)).

Sean Fahey
NEPA Secretary

The **NEPA Website** can be accessed by [clicking here](#) or google "**NEPA Pensioners**" (Please note that underlined script in this document serve as links to web pages).