

# North East Pensioners Association

**Regional Impact Report on issues affecting pensioners wellbeing in March 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 homes providing tailored nursing care in the community.** They will receive a funding increase of over 5% starting 1 April 2026. This will help reduce pressure on hospitals and support the discharge of individuals into social care settings ([Gov.UK](#)).

**Sunderland Holly House Care Home rated Outstanding.** This is a residential home for up to 40 people who might have a physical disability or be living with dementia.



The Care Quality Commission upgraded the rating for how effective, caring and well lead it is from good to outstanding the rating for safe and response remain good ([CQC](#)).

**Karrthikeya Health Care Newcastle.** The service is being placed in special measures by the Care Quality Commission due to inadequate care. This included a lack of understanding of the Mental Capacity Act and safe medicine management. The provider must improve care quality within a specified timeframe ([CQC](#)).



**All landlords to face tougher regulations after law change.** Landlords in North Shields and across North Tyneside are facing significantly tougher regulations and increased penalties following the implementation of the [National Renters' Rights Act 2025](#). This gives major enforcement powers which come into effect on 1 May 2026 ([Chronicle](#)).

## 2. ECONOMY.

**Tyneside based Kinewell, a windfarm software and consultancy firm.** The firm, raised £1m in investment, including £750,000 from the [North East Accelerate Fund](#). Its new software designs turbine layouts and transmission systems - with claims it can reduce the cost of offshore wind farms by 6% ([BusinessLive](#)).

**Jaymac Solutions (Freight) has acquired a site at the Teesside International Airport.** The site will support air freight services following Teesside's recent multi-million pound deal with European Cargo. This firm delivers warehouse and logistics services to high street clients, including major retailers ([NorthernEcho](#)).

**EasyJet has opened a new base at Newcastle International Airport.** This will create 140 direct jobs and supporting 1,200 jobs. The airline is now operating up to 86 flights a week from Newcastle to 22 leisure destinations ([HexhamCourant](#)).

**Royal Mail stamp prices increased from 7 April 2026.** First class stamps rising to £1.80 and second class to 91p. It is claimed the increase is due to higher delivery costs and declining letter volumes. Citizens Advice head of policy, criticised the latest stamp price increase, saying it lacks justification for consumers ([BBC](#)).



### 3. HEALTH & WELFARE.



**Pension credit applications fell by 36% despite government awareness efforts.** Many successful claimants over 75 discovered the benefit by chance, and those aged 66-74 often hearing about it from the DWP - Are you or your's missing out (**WHICH?**).

**What help is available for heating oil customers amid the ongoing crisis in the Middle East?** £53 million in additional support for heating oil customers in vulnerable situations was announced. Local authorities will distribute the support via the new Crisis and Resilience Fund which exists from 1 April 2026. Low-income households and those in vulnerable situations should qualify, though the exact eligibility criteria will be set by local authorities.

**Local authorities will also determine:**

- The type of support you can get, including how much.
- When you'll be able to get it (though a Treasury spokesperson said that funding should be made available to those in acute need as soon as possible).
- How you'll receive support (**WHICH?**).



**The Alzheimer's Society says we need a bold and ambitious plan for dementia.** They call on government to deliver a bold and ambitious plan that:



- sets an ambitious goal to reduce the number of people that die from dementia
  - ensures everyone can access an early and accurate diagnosis
  - supports the delivery of high-quality dementia training for the social care workforce
  - prepares the NHS to deliver new treatments, as they become available
- To support the [Alzheimer's Society's](#) open letter please [click here](#).

#### **Louise Casey, first speech as Chair of the Independent Commission on Adult Social Care to the Nuffield Trust Summit in March 2026 covered:**

**The social care system in the UK is outdated and inadequate, lacking a unified structure and clear accountability.** Despite numerous reviews and reforms, the system remains fragmented, with responsibilities split across various departments and organisations. This has led to confusion and anxiety for those who need care, as well as a lack of national oversight and action on serious safeguarding failures.



**The social care system is fragile.** It relies on underpaid, predominantly female care workers and a market with small, struggling providers and powerful, profit-driven organisations. The separation between health and social care exacerbates this fragility, with the NHS prioritising acute care and shifting long-term care responsibilities to councils. This divide leads to inefficiencies, with disputes over responsibilities and funding, and a power imbalance favouring the NHS.

**The NHS faces a challenge.** This in addressing the growing prevalence of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, which are the leading causes of death in the UK. Despite its predictable rise and the harm it causes, there has not been a unified response to this challenge. The current system often leaves families bearing the brunt of care, with inadequate support and information provided ([HealthFoundation](#)).

## 4. THE NHS.

**Physiotherapy at home:** A community physiotherapy partnership is helping older adults across County Durham regain confidence, mobility and independence — all from the comfort of their own homes. This physiotherapy support is made possible through a partnership between our trust and [Age UK County Durham](#).



**Cancer death rates in the UK have reached a record low, declining nearly 29% since 1989.** Cancer deaths are falling due to screening programmes and advances in treatment. The NHS cervical screening programme and HPV vaccine have significantly reduced cervical cancer deaths, while targeted therapies and personalised medicine are improving outcomes for other cancers ([Independent](#)).



**Proton Beam Trial.** Newcastle Hospitals is part of a major UK clinical trial to test whether proton beam therapy can significantly improve survival for patients with mesothelioma, a rare and aggressive cancer of the lining of the lung ([NHS](#)).

**Neighbourhood health framework guidance now published.** This aims to improve local health services by creating neighbourhood health services, a collaborative effort between the NHS, local authorities, and wider partners. The framework, co-produced with healthcare and local government leaders, will also support the development of 250 new neighbourhood health centres ([Gov.UK](#)).

**Northumberland councillors will investigate GP access.** This after a survey revealed nearly half of patients struggle to contact their GP practice by phone ([Chronicle](#)).

**Covid-19 Inquiry published its report.** This looked into how the pandemic was handled by healthcare systems across the UK. It found they were ill-prepared, overstretched and came close to collapse. Patients did not get the level of care they would usually receive and the 111 services were not able to cope. Ambulance waiting times rose. Patient died alone. Vulnerable left without support ([4News-shortvideo](#)).



## 5. POLITICS.

**A new report, Clean Water Now.** This urges the UK Government to address water pollution in the upcoming Water Reform Bill. The report, supported by a coalition of environmental organisations, calls for stopping pollution at the source, fixing the water system, and restoring nature to England's waterways ([WCLink](#)).

**Five water companies prices constrained by Ofwat.** They are not allowed to raise customer bills by as much as they had wanted. Anglian Water, Northumbrian Water, South East Water, Southern Water and Wessex Water will be allowed to raise an additional £463m, falling short of the £2.7Bn they had sought ([Express](#)).



**End of Life Bill.** A group of peers blames the failure of the assisted dying legislation on supporters refusing to address flaws. The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, allowing assisted death for terminally ill adults with less than six months to live, is expected to fail due to procedural tactics and time constraints ([DailyMail](#)).

## 6. POVERTY.

**1.1million women pensioners in the UK live in poverty.** But half a million eligible women pensioners are missing out on Pension Credit which could transform their lives. If you know an older person who is struggling to make ends meet, make sure they get in touch with Age UK's free Advice Line 0800 678 1602 so they can find out if they are missing out on benefits they're entitled to ([AgeUk](#)).



Relative poverty in the UK. This rose by half a million in the year to March 2025, with 13.4 million people, including four million children, living in relative poverty. The number of pensioners living in relative poverty increased from 1.49 million to 1.69 million (BBC).

## 7. SECURITY.

**Veil of silence remains on violence against females.** This says Claire Riley Chief Corporate officer for the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board. The number of reported incidents is concerning, but the unreported incidents are even more alarming. There is a need to break the silence surrounding this issue to work towards prevention (Chronicle).



**A vulnerable elderly woman and her dementia suffering husband were attacked and left terrified.** This after marauding armed Raiders smashed their way into their Newcastle home. The trio of 3 were jailed by Newcastle Crown Court for 6, 7 and 15 years respectively (Police).

**The Payment Systems Regulator published the third set of industry-authorized push payment fraud data.** This covering 2024 up to the mandatory reimbursement scheme's start on 7 October 2024. The data reveals the banks least likely to refund scam victims and the firms with the weakest fraud controls in 2024 (**WHICH?**).

**Social media firms warned over scams.** Firms could be held legally responsible for failing to block scams from their platforms. Fraud minister Lord Hanson said he has put social media companies on "notice" warning them to protect their users from scammers or face tougher rules (Gov.Uk).

## 8. TRANSPORT.

**Moor Farm Roundabout Cramlington upgrade plans are moving forward after being included in the latest Government project list.** Work is scheduled to begin in 2031, with a consultation launching this autumn. While the news has been welcomed, there have also been calls to speed up the process (NGazette).



**On the Buses.** Council leaders approved the next stage of the 'Angel Network' vision. They are aiming to take control of bus routes, fares, and timetables from private companies. The franchising model, similar to Greater Manchester's, will be subject to an independent audit and public consultation, with a final decision expected in early 2027(NGazette).

**The North East Mayor is set to approve £53.6m in new transport funding.** This to include £22m for road improvements and a major upgrade of Regent Centre Metro and Bus Interchange. The package supports the Mayor's Local Transport Plan and includes funding for highways maintenance, transport schemes in County Durham, and the Northumberland Line (NECA).

Sean Fahey  
Secretary NEPA



**To join NEPA contact the NEPA Secretary**

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

Come along and see if what we do is of interests to you? Attending our meetings is free.

**We promote the relief of elderly people in any manner which is, deemed to be charitable, in and around the North East. Est. 1977.**

**FEEL FREE TO SHARE THIS NORTH EAST IMPACT REPORT**