



Campaigning for the rights of older people

CORONAVIRUS - PPE CRISIS

## Time for MP's to step up to ensure priority protection for local health & care workers



**The National Pensioners' Convention is appalled that weeks into the Coronavirus emergency medical and care staff are still without life-saving Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) - and still not being priority tested.**

Despite Government promises, the NPC says many of its 1.5 million members are reporting a widespread lack of PPE – such as masks, gowns, safety glasses and sanitising handwash - for medics and care workers.

These brave, selfless people are putting their own lives at risk by caring for those of us suffering from Covid-19. In many cases these nurses, doctors, porters, other hospital staff and care workers in care homes and in the homes of individuals are the family of NPC members. All of them are concerned at the possibility of spreading the virus.

**As Britain's biggest campaigning organisation for older people – those most of risk from Covid-19 - the NPC is calling on individual MP's, *not to simply leave the issue to Government*, but instead to urgently step up to the mark to ensure health and care workers in their own constituencies receive PPE, and crucially Covid-19 testing as a matter of urgency.**

NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: “We hear daily announcements from the Government about PPE and testing being made available to medical staff and care workers, but from what we see and hear, there is little evidence of this vital equipment reaching those we all rely upon to keep us – and themselves - safe.

**“It is fantastic that so many ordinary people are volunteering to help their communities in this time of crisis. Now that Parliament is closed, it is time for MP's to step up and fight for a**

**better service for the vulnerable for the frontline staff in hospitals, clinics, care homes and care at home services in their own constituencies.”**

“Our members are seriously concerned for the welfare of doctors, nurses and care staff in the light of lack of basic equipment. We have already had cases of medical professionals dying from the disease.

“That these caring staff should still be expected to work without the protection of gloves, aprons, masks and other equipment in time of crisis is appalling. It is also extremely short-sighted, when those who are not protected may inadvertently be spreading the virus even further.”

**The NPC believes Government decisions over the last decade have created the crisis in the NHS and social care.**

We are shocked at the revelations in The Guardian (27<sup>th</sup> March) that former Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt ‘advised’ a high-level Government working party in 2016 to reconsider their recommendation (which they did) to stockpile safety glasses for health workers in anticipation of any future pandemic because of cost.

This is yet another example of the Government’s failure to fully fund the NHS and social care, which has left both services now completely unprepared for the level of need created by COVID-19.

Actions speak louder than words - the Government should be ashamed of not delivering on promises regarding PPE and testing. If ever there was proof of the need for public services like the NHS, local government and publicly funded care, this is it.

“Employers of care staff who work in care homes or visit the most vulnerable patients in their own home must be provided with the same level of equipment and resources for their staff. Not to do so is wholly unacceptable.”

**ENDS**

**\*The National Pensioners Convention** was set up in 1979 to champion the rights and welfare of the UK’s older people. It now represents more than 1.5 million people in over 1000 different organisations across the UK. The 2020 National Pensioners Annual Convention – previously known as the NPC Pensioners’ Parliament - will debate issues affecting older people in Southport from June 2 to 4, 2020. To find out more email [info@npcuk.org](mailto:info@npcuk.org)

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