



Campaigning for the rights of older people

****NEWS: Immediate Release****

April 7, 2020

NPC STATEMENT – Covid-19 Crisis

*New Government Policy on Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19**

Government plan to discharge hospital patients to care homes will put older vulnerable people in danger

The National Pensioners' Convention is calling on the Government to urgently reconsider new guidelines on the discharge of hospital patients to care homes during the Coronavirus public health emergency.

The NPC, the UK's biggest campaigning organisation for older people with 1.5 million members, fully supports care home managers across the country who have condemned the new Department of Health and Social Care guidelines (published April 2) as "disgraceful" and put patients and staff at risk.**

The NPC wants more Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and more Covid-19 testing for staff and patients in all care homes, as well as training in vital end of life care. Clearly there is little understanding in government circles of the reality of dealing with a pandemic outbreak in closely confined establishments like care homes.

Jan Shortt, General Secretary of the National Pensioners' Convention commented:

"The government has removed critical guidelines on discharging hospital patients to care homes to enable it to respond to an unprecedented crisis in the UK. In doing so they have put the very people they purport to care about and want to protect in the greatest danger.

To expect care homes to put at risk already vulnerable people by taking in patients without being tested is ludicrous. The outcome is to potentially spread the virus by admitting untested patients into care homes, thereby increasing the risk to others.

Care homes were already struggling before the outbreak of COVID-19, some even close to going under because of lack of funding.

This government must not renege on its stated policy of isolation for those with any health need let alone some of the more complex needs care homes provide a service for, to be kept safe from this awful virus.

Testing must now become universal, with priority given to front line NHS and care home/care at home staff and those in key industries, then mobile testing throughout communities with support services to ensure that those who are unwell with the virus are properly looked after.

Respect and value for care workers does not seem to be in abundance from government departments. Both the NHS and care services have been chronically underfunded for decades.

It is naive of the government to believe that limited contact of a personal nature by care workers to deliver the care needed will protect them from contracting the virus. Every single front line worker must be tested and have the personal protective clothing demanded of this situation."

ENDS

References:

**Dept of Health & Social Care Admission & Care of Residents during COVID-19 – Incident in a Care Home Published 2 April 2020*

** <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/02/uk-care-home-bosses-threaten-quit-over-return-coronavirus-patients>

**<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-sacrificing-the-elderly-care-homes-asked-to-take-covid-19-patients-11969661>

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