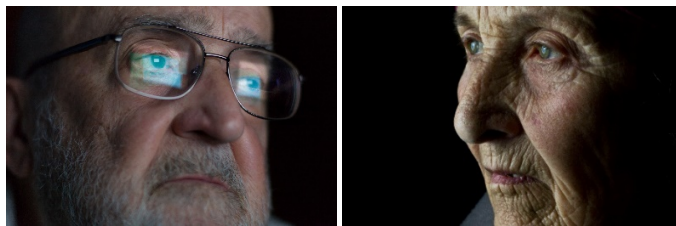




Campaigning for the rights of older people

NEWS: Immediate Release

Call for closer checks on older patients as Coronavirus spreads



The National Pensioners' Convention is calling for closer monitoring of older people, specifically those who live alone as the Coronavirus continues to spread across the UK.

Britain's biggest campaigning organisation for older people fears many of the 3.8 million* who live alone - and don't have friends or relatives checking on them - could be in most danger.

Jan Shortt, General Secretary of the NPC said, "There is a real danger that older people who have no one looking out for them could slip through the net during the current Coronavirus outbreak.

"We know Covid 19 is spreading and that the elderly are most at risk from the virus. GP's already have records of their oldest patients, and are best placed to monitor their ongoing health. However, we all know that GP's are overwhelmed already on a day to day level with patients not always able to get appointments. Additional support and resources from health trusts and the Government should be made available as a priority to ensure those living alone do not get neglected."

The NPC welcomes the Government's quick response to tackling Covid 19 and encourages older people to follow current advice from NHS England to wash their hands regularly to avoid infection, and call 111 and self-isolate if they develop symptoms.

But the NPC is concerned that self-isolating could leave elderly people – who are most likely to have pre-existing health conditions – at greater risk of missing out on vital treatment if their symptoms become more serious.

Jan Shortt said: “Studies show those at the highest risk from the virus are aged over 60** - the overall welfare of this age group is already suffering due to the erosion of health and care services.

“We call on the Government to ensure that the 111 phone system is properly resourced to take account of the likely increased use in the coming weeks. We also expect the government to take this opportunity to ensure that the NHS and Social Care services are properly resourced as a matter of urgency and that everyone in need no matter their age, is treated with equal respect and dignity.”

*Age UK https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/later_life_uk_factsheet.pdf

**World Health Organisation: <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/who-china-joint-mission-on-covid-19-final-report.pdf>

***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

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