

# **MAKE A STAND FOR A DECENT STATE PENSION**

**PENSIONS'  
ACTION DAY  
6 APRIL 2009**

After 100 years of the state pension, Britain still has at least 1 in 4 older people living below the official poverty line, and millions more struggling with the rising costs of living.

The pensioners of tomorrow also face an uncertain future, as pension funds have lost as much as £250bn in the economic crisis and employers reduce the generosity of their occupational pension schemes.

## **That is why all generations need a decent state pension!**

We are calling on the government to immediately raise the basic state pension above the poverty level for all pensioners to at least £165 a week and increase it every year in line with either average wage rises or inflation (whichever is the greater).

And the money is there to do it:

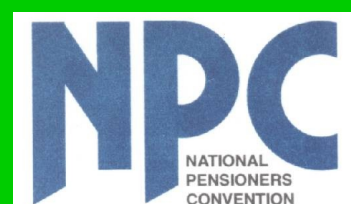
- £46bn surplus in the National Insurance (NI) Fund
- £20bn from scrapping higher rate tax relieve on private pensions
- £8bn on removing upper earnings limit on NI contributions

If the government can find £billions to bail out the banks—they can find the money to give everyone a decent state pension.

**Make a stand on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009**  
**Join members of Lewisham Pensioners' Forum**  
**between 11:30 & 1:30**  
**by Age Concern, Catford Broadway to show your**  
**support for a better State Pension**

### **Lewisham Pensioners' Forum**

436 Lewisham High Street, London. SE13 6LJ  
*membership & enquiries phone 020 8690 7869*



**Stop Press  
Newsletter  
Insert**

**Update from Grove Park Users Group  
on the  
Lobby of Parliament  
on Wednesday 25 February 2009**

**to put the case for Lifelong Learning  
to the Secretary of State, John Denham**

Representatives from the Grove Park Users Group recently attended the above lobby and have sent us a summary of their report for Forum Members.

“A very large Committee room was filled to the brim; many people were left in the corridor. It showed a great variety of people had got involved with the lobby and the level of support for Lifelong Learning. We were addressed by members of all the organisations involved, and some others. It was obvious that everyone was singing from the same hymn-sheet, and they all had a particular concern for Adult Education, its diminution and possible eventual loss.”

“The Minister, John Denham MP, was due to speak at 2.30 pm so prior to that we had the benefit of his shadow, David Willetts MP and the Lib-Dem representative. David Blunkett also put in an appearance, as he had been Minister for Education in a past life. He supported us totally, saw no benefit in what was being planned, but foresaw (as we all have) the damage – some of which has already occurred.”

“The Minister did not seem to hold out much hope for Lifelong Learning, and showed no sign of even extending an olive branch for non-accredited Adult Education (which he still calls Informal Learning!). We felt that he was patronising, did not listen and was defensive. Perhaps people react like this when they know in their bones they have it wrong? We are now awaiting the publication of a White Paper on the subject.”

“The Minister’s talk of huge sums of public money (in billions) being diverted to Youth Education, Training, and apprenticeships only is worrying, as it appears to be at the expense of Adult Learning and one has to consider whether due fairness and democracy have been observed. This feeling was apparent from many others present who simply became angry. After all, it is our money too! It would be interesting to know the cost of non-accredited Adult Education in any one authority – a proper validated figure. Is there anyone out there who is able to provide this?”

“From the government’s viewpoint it has to be asked why is it following such an unpopular, and unjustifiable policy? What is in it for the government? We end up with no classes at an affordable rate. Politicians who are forced to implement the policy against local wishes risk losing votes. Who wins? This White Paper is bound to affect provision in Lewisham so we then have to ask is there anything to gain from the Mayor’s Commission and its findings? Unless, of course these findings are able to influence government plans. From what we saw and heard from the Minister John Denham we are not very confident that it will.”

“The Mayor of Lewisham’s Commission on Libraries and Learning is now coming to the end of its deliberations and we shall report back to Forum members as soon as possible on our view of the findings. “

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**Free Swimming for the over 60s** Lewisham has not been slow in adopting this national government initiative and from 1<sup>st</sup> April will offer free swimming for Over 60s in **EVERY** pool in the borough. Just present your library card.  
*Look out for more information at your local pool and further details from the LBL press office.*