



ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM The voice of Islington's older community July/August 2021 Newsletter

1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
Telephone 020 7226 7687

Charity No: 1043081

Email: ipf@islingtonpensionersforum.org Website: www.islingtonpensionersforum.org

A message from Jeremy Corbyn MP, our joint President



Jeremy Corbyn MP speaks at our AGM

It is always a pleasure to be able to write an annual message to Islington Pensioners Forum.

It is an incredible forum that has stood the test of time and has been a place for all the people to come together, debate, discuss and above all act in unison.

The Coronavirus has obviously hit our borough very hard and the enforced isolation of people who live alone is made worse, whilst the isolation of large families in small flats has made life extremely difficult.

Whilst we seem to be coming out of the worst aspects of Covid-19, the effects will be around for a long time to come. It's exposed the good and the bad in our society.

The good of course being those who work in the NHS and care services; those who work in delivery; and the thousands of mutual aid volunteers who have set up food co-ops and hubs

to ensure everyone gets something to eat. In a civilised society this should not be necessary, but we are not a civilised society because we allow such grotesque inequalities to exist. So many people must lead a hand to mouth existence.

Many of our community centres are now turning their food banks into food cooperatives and it might be a good idea to invite one of the community centres to come and talk to the Forum when physical meetings return.

The Covid crisis has shown the double standards at work in our society. Like everyone else I've joined in the applause and claps for NHS and care workers and would always do so.

However, these claps are completely useless unless we ensure all NHS workers get a decent pay

Continued on the back page

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



Bob Collins, chair Islington Pensioners Forum

The government and the pensions triple lock

Every year the Chancellor has to set a rate of pensions and benefits which will apply from the following April. The rate of the basic state pension must rise each year by the highest of three numbers - the rises in prices, the rise in earnings or a floor of 2.5 per cent. The problem is that average earnings have increased over the latest quarter by 5.6 per cent. If the state pension were to be increased by the full 5.6 per cent, it would add £10 per week to the rate of the new state pension.

I personally cannot see the government agreeing to do this in the annual review in November. If it refuses, we pensioners need to be ready to wage a

fight – and we need to enlist the whole of the trade union movement on our side. After all It is in their interests. Occupational pensions (derived from your job) continue to disappear at a rate of knots, and all workers are becoming more and more dependent on the UK state pension, which is among the lowest in Europe.

Pension Credit - don't miss out

Are you claiming Pension Credit? Many thousands of pensioners who qualify are missing out!

If you are not, please get in touch with the government. Many people are currently missing out. You can top up your pension to:

- £177.10 if you are single
- £270.30 if you have a partner

Visit <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit>

Pension credit claim line: 0800 991234

Sandra & Bob's Days Out

2C2 rail have a Senior Rover ticket Monday-Friday for only £7, it is a hop-on hop-off.

We went to Leigh-on-Sea and enjoyed some cockles and mussels – see the picture below.

We walked to Chalkwell and got the train to Shoeburyness and then walked back to Thorpe Bay. We managed to get a little sunburnt as it was a very hot day!!

We also had a trip to Richmond and saw Hampton Court. Both were free to get to and included a nice walk by the river.



Richmond river side walk



Lovely Leigh on Sea cockles

Our NHS - Pam Zinkin . . .

I have been looking through my books about the NHS from many years ago. What emerges is that many eminent authors have understood quite clearly that our NHS has been under attack from those who wish to make profit from it for many years.

What has also become clear is that knowing what is happening has done little to prevent it. **Keep our NHS Public** and **We Own It** are good campaigning groups but the reality is that the main health advisor to the government (to Boris Johnson) is Samantha Jones, CEO of Operose, dependent on US private organisation, Centene.

Also that Baroness Dido Harding has applied to be CEO of NHS England despite her dismal track record in both private and public sectors. She ran a £37 billion test and trace scheme which failed to make any measurable difference to the path of the pandemic, according to Parliament's Public Accounts Select Committee.

Integrated care is being discussed but the propos-

als for managing it make seats on the board allocated to private companies equal to those belonging to the local council.

We can vote for our local council, but not for the board of Amazon or Centene, so how can they have an equal say in deciding our health care?

And might there be a conflict of interest? The private companies will favour policies that ensure they make a profit while local councils will want policies that are beneficial to local people.

So it is up to us to do everything we can, from refusing to letting our own confidential medical data be sold, or given, to private companies. So opt out of all data sharing, whatever you are told, and advise the same to supporting groups and your pensioners' forum.

See the article on page 5 by Frances Bradley about how you can opt out of sharing your data.

Any individual action or ideas you may have please share. It really is up to us to save our NHS.

Ending of lockdown on 19 July

Despite soaring case numbers, England is set to end almost all pandemic lockdown restrictions on 19 July. The health secretary, Sajid Javid, warned that case numbers could reach 100,000 per day as a result, but he wouldn't say how many deaths the government expected.

The decision to end almost all restrictions at once – including the requirement to wear face coverings on public transport and in shops– is a huge gamble. It will mean many unvaccinated young people will be infected and the long-term consequences of that remain unknown. Vulnerable people are already saying they will be forced to shield at home.

We already know that young people are at risk of long-COVID and that allowing the virus to run rampant creates the ideal conditions for the evolution of new vaccine-avoidant variants.

A YouGov poll showed 71 per cent of people thought masks should remain mandatory on public transport, with just 21 per cent opposed.

Fifty-one London bus drivers have already died from COVID-19 during the pandemic.

Transport for London just announced they will continue to make mask wearing compulsory - now the Rail Networks and shops must do the same



Do you want your NHS data handed over to unknown third parties?



You have a choice

The health and social care minister, Matt Hancock, announced in April his plan for data from every patients' NHS GP record in England to be shared for "research and planning". Making a contentious announcement with very little publicity makes certain that most people do not see it. Presumably this is because when the public became aware of a similar data grab in 2014, it met with overwhelming opposition. The new plan has fewer safeguards.

The plan

Medical data from millions of patients will be transferred from GPs to NHS Digital, who will be able to take the following from GP records: **data about diagnoses, symptoms, observations, test results, medications, allergies, immunisation, referrals, recalls and appointments, including information about physical, mental and sexual health, and sex, ethnicity and sexual orientation.** It will also include details about the staff who have treated the patient.

NHS Digital will be able to pass this data to their customers and, with no audit trail required, in future this valuable asset can be sold on repeatedly to unknown recipients for their unknown use, for example, international pharmaceutical companies.

There are none of the usual assurances about security because the government has not required NHS data be accessed via the "safe setting", their established, highly secure, heavily audited data processing facility.

An emeritus professor of medical informatics at Manchester University, Alan Rector, has pronounced the anonymity assurances "worthless", and that "few people realise how easy it is to identify individuals from medical records, even if obvious personal details are removed".

Opting out

The good news is you can retain control of your personal confidential information by opting out. Opting out does not affect your rights or personal medical care, or impact on your GP practice in any way. Your GP practice will still to be able to share anonymised information which helps NHS planning and medical research.

To fully opt out there are two stages:

(i) Fill in the Form "Type 1" for GP data, and give it to your GP - **SEE THE FORM ON PAGE 5.**

(ii) Visit the national data opt-out page - go to <https://www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters>

by Frances Bradley

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Do you want your NHS data handed over to unknown third parties?

CUT OUT AND FILL IN THE FORM BELOW TO OPT OUT OF GIVING UP YOUR DATA

This decision will not affect individual care and you can change your choice at any time, using this form. This form, once completed, should be sent to your GP practice by email or post. **It needs to arrive no later than 30 September 2021**

Details of the patient

Title	
Forename(s)	
Surname	
Address	
Phone number	
Date of birth	
NHS Number (if known)	

Register your Type 1 Opt-out preference

Your decision

Opt-out

I do not allow my identifiable patient data to be shared outside of the GP practice for purposes except my own care.

Your declaration

I confirm that:

- the information I have given in this form is correct
- I am the parent or legal guardian of the dependent person I am making a choice for set out above (if applicable)

Signature

Date signed

When complete, send to your GP surgery by post or email. Deadline is 30 Sept 2021

INFORMATION

Don't hesitate to send us items of news or opinions for publication in our newsletter. Send to address on front of Newsletter.

Islington Pensioners Forum IT and Smartphone classes

On zoom

FREE – weekly on a Wednesday from 4.30pm with Peter Crockett.

Our IT classes are now online!! Please email peter@healthygenerations.org.uk or text to 0757 978 5053 and he will send back the URL you can copy and paste into your browser – with full instructions!!

Islington Pensioners Forum END OF LOCKDOWN PARTY Date To Be Confirmed

Although lockdown will end on 19 July we have not rescheduled our **End of Lockdown** party. We will let you know the new date as soon as it is decided.

A message from Jeremy Corbyn MP

Continued from the front page

through taxation and we receive it when we need it, without the stress that is involved in the current system.

I have spent a lot of time campaigning to defend our NHS against the threats of privatisation and especially one that's happening on our doorstep where Centene have taken over two large practices in Islington and 42 others around the country.

Centene is an American health care company with the sole interest in Britain to make large profits out of our health care.

Beyond the privatisation which is explicit in the current legislation and is an aim of the government is the sale of NHS data to the private sector, which is incredibly damaging and undermining of the principals of a universal health service.

The IPF was set up over 35 years ago to provide a place for discussion, debate, support but also to put pressure on local policy makers in the Council and in the NHS. It's been my pleasure to learn a great deal from the IPF and you'll have my full support over the coming years.

All the best, Kind regards,

Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP
Islington North
corbynj@parliament.uk
twitter: @jeremycorbyn
Facebook: JeremyCorbynMP

Keep others safe with rapid testing

With cases rising again, regular, no-symptom Covid-19 tests are more important than ever, whether you've had the vaccine or not. The council's website gives the latest info on where to collect a home testing kit and testing sites.

<https://tinyurl.com/islingtonVIRUSTest>

NEW MEMBER

RENEWING SUB

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POST CODE:

TELE NO:

EMAIL:

ANNUAL SUB ENCLOSED.....£5.00

PLUS DONATION?.....

Cheque payable to: IPF Send to:

Islington Pensioners Forum,
1a Providence Court,
Providence Place, Islington N1 0RN