

North East Pensioners Association

Regional Impact Report on issues affecting pensioners wellbeing in MAY 2024 including: 1. Care Homes & Housing, 2. Economy, 3. Health & Welfare, 4. The NHS, 5. Politics, 6. Poverty, 7. Security and 8. Transport.



Note for more reading click on underlined words

1. CARE HOMES/CARERS.

Rent prices in Newcastle. Rents have gone up almost twice as fast as wages over the last nine years, exclusive analysis by the Chronicle has revealed. It cost £979 a month on average to rent a home in the year to March 2024 ([Chronicle](#)).



Respite Care. Dr Sally Parkin, partner at Corbridge GP surgery, recently reopened the community's free respite bed service for over-65s. This service costs the charity over £60,000 annually and relies solely on donations and grants, receiving no support from local authorities ([Hexham Courant](#)).

Ministers knew about carer's allowance problems three years ago, report reveals. The DWP suppressed a report that was commissioned in 2019 after a parliamentary inquiry heavily criticised the department's failure to understand the distress and hardship inflicted on tens of thousands of unpaid carers by its management of the allowance ([Guardian](#)).

Alarm Systems. Retirement home residents could face hundreds of pounds of extra charges in the digital landline switchover as bosses replace incompatible emergency alarm systems, experts warn ([DailyMail](#)).



2. ECONOMY

Over 6,000 bank branches closed since 2015 and counting. The number of UK bank branches to shut their doors in the past nine years has passed 6,000 according to Which? research – severely affecting public access to cash and the millions of people who rely on cash services ([Which?](#)).

Most advanced wind turbine test plant to be built in region. The development at Blyth Northumberland comes as part of an £86m government investment in wind power. The new centre at the ORE Catapult will bring 30 jobs and put the region at the forefront of the renewables industry ([Chronicle](#)).

UK unemployment 4.3%. This in the 3 months to March which is the highest since May to July last year and up from 4.2% in the previous 3 months (The North East rate was 4.4%). The highest employment rate estimate in the UK was in the South East (78.6%) and the lowest was in the North East (69.1%), for the three months ending March 2024 ([Office of National Statistics](#)).



Economic growth 'stronger than expected'. The economy's 0.6% growth over the first quarter of 2024 was "stronger" than expected says director of economic statistics at [Office of National Statistics](#) ([BBC](#)).

3. HEALTH AND WELFARE

Middlesbrough named one of the unhealthiest places in UK. The study, carried out by the Office for National Statistics scored Middlesbrough 80.2 overall based off metrics including disability, frailty, mental health conditions and suicides ([N/Echo](#)).



More pharmacies could close. This without urgent government intervention one Newcastle owner predicts. The government continues to parrot the £2.6bn they pay to the profession but what they don't ever say is that in 2016 the figure was cut from £2.8bn and it hasn't increased by a penny since ([Chronicle](#)).

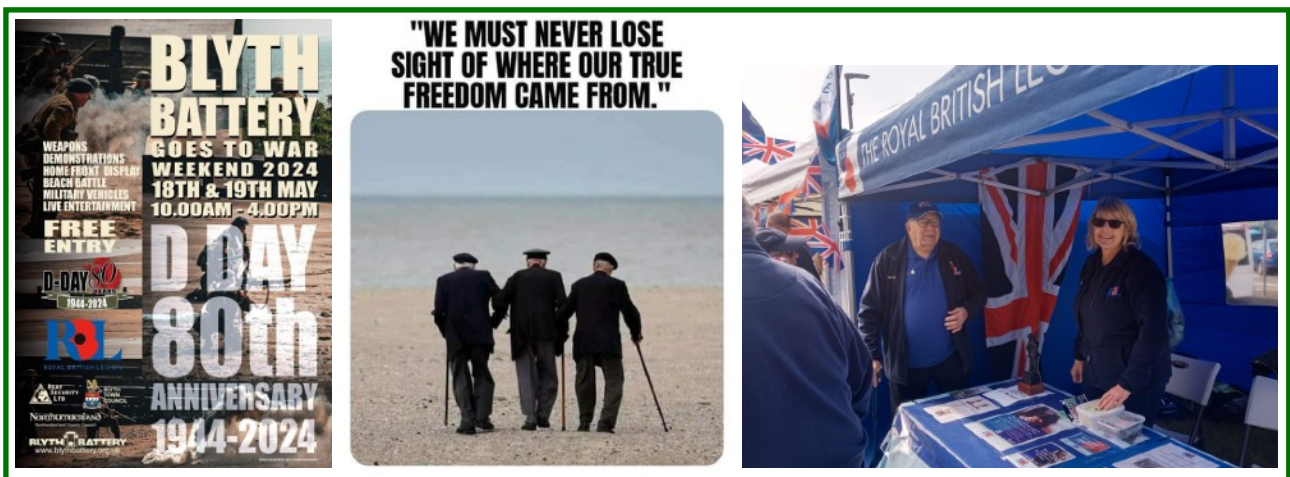
Relatives are shouldering 63 per cent of all dementia costs. This according to new research has revealed. Families are being forced to give up the equivalent of £51,000 a year on average to look after a loved one with dementia, according to new research ([iNews](#)).

Major hormone breakthrough could 'stop Alzheimer's in its tracks'. Scientists say Leptin is a hormone that plays a key role in regulating energy intake and expenditure, including appetite and metabolism. It could be used to stop early stage Alzheimer's disease ([Mirror](#)).

Hundreds gathered on a North East beach to protest against sewage in the sea. Swimmers, dippers and surfers of all ages came together at Tynemouth Longsands as part of the 'Paddle Out' protest. Their aim was to make a stand and campaign to end sewage pollution ([Chronicle](#)).



Royal British Legion Blyth Branch on the Beach Commemorating the D-Day landings 6 June 1944



4. THE NHS

Agency charging hospitals nearly £2,000 for specialist nurse shift. BBC News has discovered. Glen Burley, chief executive of an NHS trust, said that Thornbury Nursing Services is targeting areas in England where nurses are in short supply ([BBC](#)).

Outsourcing NHS treatment to private sector leads to poorer patient care. According to [Oxford University analysis](#) there is a link between outsourcing and poorer quality care. It shows that when services moved from public to private, staff-to-patient ratios declined and patients with more serious, less profitable to treat conditions were left out ([Lancet](#)).

Blind campaigner says Hospital is still communicating via a method he can't read. This despite the 68-year-old having had 4 complaints upheld by the Newcastle hospitals NHS Trust as he fights for vital letters to be sent to him in a simple email format ([Chronicle](#)).

See GPs within 24 hours. Healthwatch England urged ministers and NHS employers to respond to intense frustration about the long delays many people face waiting to see a GP, by enshrining in the NHS constitution what would be patients' first ever guarantee of care by general practice within a set timeframe ([Guardian](#)).



Care Workers Strike. Workers at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust walked out for 5 days. The Unison union said they routinely performed clinical tasks above their pay scale and wanted a salary increase and back pay ([BBC](#)).

5. POLITICS

General Election THURSDAY 4 of July 2024

Questions from the [Independent Age](#) charity
You may wish to ask canvassers on the doorstep.



HOUSING?

- Do you agree that we should all be able to live in a safe, affordable and good-quality home?
- Do you agree that any discrimination in the rental market is unacceptable?
- Will you pledge to stand with older private renters by creating a



HIGH HOUSEHOLD COSTS ?

- Do you agree that we should all be able to afford enough energy, water and other household costs to live well?
- Do you agree single social tariffs for energy, water, and broadband would make a difference to older people in poverty?
- Will you pledge to campaign so that older people in financial hardship don't have to face spiralling household costs?



CHAMPIONING OLDER VOICES ?

- Do you agree that older people are often left out of the conversation around financial hardship?
- Do you believe we could do more to involve the voices of older people in the way the Government makes decisions?
- Will you pledge to campaign for a new Commissioner for Older People and Ageing in the UK Parliament?



INCOME IN LATER LIFE ?

- Do you agree that every older person should be able to easily receive the benefits they're entitled to?
- Do you think that two million older people in poverty is too many?
- Will you pledge to campaign so that all older people can live free of poverty in later life?



6. POVERTY.

Record number of food bank parcels given out. More than 3.1 million emergency food parcels were distributed by food banks in the Trussell Trust network in the past 12 months — the most parcels ever distributed by the network in a year ([TrussellTrust](#)).

Pensioners use Food Banks. The Trussell Trust noted part of the increase in demand was fuelled by more pension-age households needing help. 179,000 parcels were provided for older people in this age bracket ([Independent](#)).

7. SECURITY.

Northumbria's new PCC vows to build a bigger police presence across local communities:

1. Reduce serious and violent crime
2. Tackle anti-social behaviour
3. Strengthen neighbourhood policing
4. Communicate with and listen to you
5. Fight for properly funded police and public services ([NorthumbriaPCC](#)).

She has also vowed to do "whatever we can" to reopen closed stations and boost the policing presence on the region's streets ([Chronicle](#)).



Operation Soteria. Durham Constabulary has secured a significant increase in serious sexual assault charges. The 67% increase was achieved between August 2022 and July 2023. Under Soteria (*deliverance*), officers are trained in how to put the victim first by concentrating on the behaviours of the offender not the victim ([ITV](#)).

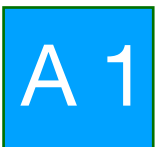
Police Powers. An attempt by the government to widen police powers over protests has been ruled unlawful by the High Court. Legislation introduced last year by the ex-Home Secretary gave officers more leeway to stop disruption ([BBC](#)).

8. TRANSPORT

North East Mayors Promise. She has vowed to back Sunderland's ambitious Crown Works Studio plan - and work to bring the Metro to Washington ([SunderlandEcho](#)).

Eaglescliffe Station. Network Rail, Tees Valley Combined Authority, and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council have started work on Eaglescliffe Station - saying that the multi-million-pound project will see accessibility at the station vastly improved with the installation of a new footbridge, with lifts added for the first time.

Councillor call for mandatory cameras in Middlesbrough taxis. Several local authorities have taken the decision to mandate CCTV systems, as a way to further safeguard passengers and drivers. According to the Office for National Statistics, taxi drivers are among the most at-risk occupations for experiencing violence while at work.



Consent granted on long-delayed A1 dualling. Repeatedly delayed, the scheme was first raised more than 15 years ago and will create a continuous dual carriageway from Newcastle to Ellingham. It will receive funding reallocated from the scrapped HS2 rail project ([BBC](#)).

Sean Fahey
NEPA Secretary

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