

GROUP CIRCULAR 924

To: Branches, Groups and Executive Council

June 2022

Dear Colleague,

- 1. REMINDER -DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS AND MOTIONS FRIDAY 1ST JULY**
- 2. CODE OF CONDUCT**
- 3. PENSIONS OVERPAYMENT CASE SUCCESS!**
- 4. REGIONAL MEETINGS**
- 5. RETIREMENTS AND STAFF CHANGES AT HQ OFFICE**
- 6. GROUP ACCOUNTS**
- 7. GROUP ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: CONSULTATION**
- 8. COST OF LIVING CRISIS AND PENSION CREDIT**
- 9. NEW CSPA PROJECTS – WE NEED YOU TO HELP US TEST THE NEW WEBSITE**
- 10. CSPA 70TH ANNIVERSARY**
- 11. YOUR MEETUPS AND EVENTS**
- 12. NPC BULLETIN-CAMPAIGN! JUNE 2022**

1.REMINDER-DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS AND MOTIONS FRIDAY 1ST JULY

GC 923 invited groups and Branches to submit Motions and Constitutional Amendments for debate at the AGM and Nominations for the posts of elected Officers and Executive Committee members. Groups are reminded that the deadline for receipt of submissions at CSPA HQ offices is Friday 1st July.

2.CODE OF CONDUCT

A draft Code of Conduct was previously circulated to groups with **GC 903/20**. The Code has not yet been put to an Annual General Meeting due to the pandemic. The comments received in response to the first circulation have now been taken in account and the code has been redrafted with the assistance of EC member David Humphreys, Regional Representative for the Midlands Region. The draft code is attached to this circular and will be put to the AGM for agreement in October 2022.

3. PENSIONS OVERPAYMENT CASE SUCCESS!

Groups will be interested to hear about a positive outcome on a personal pension case, highlighting the importance of the support and service we offer members encountering problems with their civil service pension. CSPA officers John Jarvis and David Luxton helped our member over a number of months, and she has recently heard that the Cabinet Office has agreed to write off an overpayment of £27,000. She said *“Obviously I am very relieved and delighted at the outcome of the IDR2! Thank you so much for help. You gave me so much encouragement, information, help and kindness and I am very, very grateful. I wouldn't have received this result without your help. I was so anxious before you started helping me but contacting you and also John made me relax more and cope better. You also armed me with information and the best way to deal with the issues.”*

Christine Haswell, CSPA Personal Pension Case Manager, can be contacted via HQ office or at christine.haswell@cspa.co.uk

4. REGIONAL MEETINGS

The following allocations have been agreed between the Headquarters Officers for Regional Meetings to take place over the next few months. Groups will be contacted by their Regional Representative with details of dates and venues or video conference instructions

Greater London - David Owen, Lisa Ray

Southern Region - Greg Mountain, Nicola Crichton

Southwest Region - Les Calder, David Luxton

Wessex Region - Tony Hall, Nicola Crichton

Northwest Region - Harry Brett, Lisa Ray

Northeast Region - Andy Aitchison, David Luxton

Eastern Region - Frank Edwards, Nicola Crichton

Midlands Region - David Humphreys, David Luxton

Wales – acting David Humphreys/Jean Hardiman Smith, Lisa Ray

5. RETIREMENTS AND STAFF CHANGES AT HQ OFFICE

Groups may be aware that two long serving members of headquarters staff are due to retire at the end of June. Darlene Vendryes, Office Manager will be retiring, and Linda Smith will also be finishing her duties as Minutes Secretary. Any groups or members wishing to send retirement wishes to Darlene and Linda are invited to send cards etc to HQ office; CSPA 8th Floor, Grosvenor House, 125 High Street, CROYDON, CR0 9XP to arrive by end June.

Marion McAuliffe will be promoted to the position of Office Manager from 1 June, and we are pleased to welcome a new member of staff, Sally Tsoukaris who will be Deputy Office Manager/ PA to the General Secretary. Handovers and training will take place over the next month(s). We will endeavour to maintain our high standards of service to groups during this period.

6. GROUP ACCOUNTS

Thank you to all those Groups that have sent in their Group Accounts for 2021. Could those Groups that are yet to do so please send them to the National Treasurer, Mike Sparham as soon as possible? They can either be emailed to M.Sparham@cspa.co.uk or sent by post to Head Office.

7. GROUP ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: CONSULTATION

The EC is reviewing the provision for Group Associate membership and is seeking information and views from Groups.

Group Associate Members are provided for under Rule 6 (c) (iv) of the Constitution. They are not full members of the Alliance as they do not pay a national subscription, and they cannot be eligible to join the Alliance at a national level. To comply with GDPR, the EC is putting forward a motion to the AGM this year that prevents Group Associate Members holding any office that would give them access to CSPA financial and membership information. The wider question has also been raised of whether Group Associate membership should continue to be available. Before considering this, the EC is asking Groups for information and any views.

A Group can admit anyone as an associate member who “can bring benefit to the Group.” As they are not national members, the EC has no information on how many Group Associate Members there are, or the extent to which Groups make use of this facility. To assist the EC

in its deliberations, would all Groups who have Group Associate Members please let the National Treasurer, Mike Sparham, know how many such members they have and whether they pay a local Group subscription. Any comments from Groups on the benefits they gain from having Associate Members would also be welcome.

This information will be fed into the EC review. Please send your response to Mike at M.Sparham@cspa.co.uk or in writing to him at Head Office. Responses should be received by **Friday 8th July**. If the EC has any further proposals for change, they will be put to the 2023 AGM.

8. COST OF LIVING CRISIS- PENSION CREDIT

Groups will be aware that CSPA has been campaigning on the cost-of-living crisis alongside other organisations such as Age UK, NPC, and later Life Ambitions. The Chancellor recently made a statement including a U-turn on the Government's previous opposition to a windfall tax on oil and gas firms, with a new one-off tax that they anticipate will raise £5bn over the course of the next year. The Chancellor has called this a "temporary targeted energy profits levy." He also stated that firms that invest will get tax relief on 90% of their investments. This will help fund Covid support measures totalling £15billion, these will include:

- A grant of £650 for eight million people on the lowest incomes, including all those on means tested benefits, such as Universal Credit.
- A £300 Winter Fuel Payment for state pension households.
- A one-off payment of £150 for those on means tested disability benefits.
- A £400 discount on bills for all households from October 2022.

The Chancellor also restated his commitment to the triple-lock returning next year and we will hold him to this.

The targeted measures focus on those in receipt of means-tested benefits including Pension Credit. Groups are encouraged to share with members how to check if they qualify to receive this entitlement. Some three quarters of a million are missing out now. A brief outline is below, and more information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit>

When you apply for Pension Credit your income is calculated. If you have a partner, your income is calculated together.

***Pension Credit tops up your weekly income to £182.60 if you are single
your joint weekly income to £278.70 if you have a partner***

If your income is higher, you might still be eligible for Pension Credit if you have a disability, you care for someone, you have savings or you have housing costs.

By claiming Pension Credit, you might unlock other benefits too, such as help with health and housing costs.

Pension Credit claim line Telephone: 0800 99 1234 Textphone: 0800 169 0133

9. NEW CSPA PROJECTS – WE NEED YOU TO HELP US TEST THE NEW WEBSITE AND ONLINE REGISTRATION

After a few months of planning and designing, we are nearly able to test the new CSPA website and online registration. We want to make sure that we launch a website that will improve the experience of becoming a member of the CSPA, highlight our campaigns and give our members access to the information and benefits that they want.

To make sure that the website meets those objectives, we are inviting our current members to be part of our testing phase. We want to ensure there are no barriers that prevent

interaction with, or access to our site by people with physical disabilities, situational disabilities, and socio-economic restrictions on bandwidth and speed.

Contact Nicola Crichton to be part of this project on n.crichton@cspa.co.uk

10. CSPA 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Call for information: We are looking for pictures, artefacts, and stories to show the fantastic work and connections that CSPA and its groups have facilitated since 1952. A sincere thank you to the groups and individuals for some great submissions.

This will help us with commemorating CSPA at the AGM and provides content for our 70th anniversary publication. Please email Nicola Crichton on n.crichton@cspa.co.uk for more information and for any submissions.

Groups who are holding events to mark the Platinum Anniversary of the CSPA may wish to use the resources available at this link, including logos, 70th Anniversary stamp and print and cut bunting (copy sheet enclosed).

Download here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qyeiobwfg8895sr/AADmo1PrMehiPzLzs1pcncWha?dl=0>

Or if you require further copies, please contact Marion McAuliffe at Headquarters Office
Do not forget to send us your photos of your 70th Anniversary events!

11. YOUR MEETUPS AND EVENTS

We want to share with members that meet ups and online events are still happening, even virtually.

Share your pictures – We would love to share the great work and activities of our groups. We have a growing social media following and we welcome you to send pictures of your meetings, campaigning, and social events to us.

Share your events / meetings – To widen visibility of group meetings, we encourage you to send us the details of your get together so that we can add it as a Facebook event. Send the title of your event / meet up, location (physical address or Zoom), times, any agenda, and a way for someone to contact the group lead.

The aim of this would be to show that there are active groups in local areas and potentially aid recruitment of new members who want to meet former civil service colleagues.

Please email all submissions to Nicola Crichton on n.crichton@cspa.co.uk

12. NPC BULLETIN-CAMPAIGN! JUNE 2022

Enclosed with this circular is a copy of the June 2022 edition of the NPC newsletter.

If you have any questions or require any further information about the matters covered by this Group Circular, please don't hesitate to contact me, either by email at lisa.ray@cspa.co.uk or by telephone on **020 8688 8418 (Office)**

Yours sincerely,



Lisa Ray
General Secretary

NPC Campaign!

NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

NPC

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WANT TO JOIN THE NPC?

Do you
care about
Issues
affecting
older peo-
ple? Want
to do
something
about
them?
Then why
not join
us, as an
individual
or as an
affiliate
group. We
are the big-
gest cam-
paign
group run
for and by
older peo-
ple. So
contact us
today and
find out
how to get
involved.
Details
above.

Fighting for the rights of older people

NPC General Secretary to address mass protest at Parliament on June 18th

The NPC will join thousands of workers and members of the public from across the UK at a mass 'We Demand Better' march and rally in London on Saturday, 18th June. Organised by the Trades Union Congress, the event is being staged to call for 'a new deal for working people, real help with our energy bills and a pay rise' to help everyone cope with the disastrous cost of living crisis. NPC

General Secretary Jan Shortt has been invited to address the rally outside Parliament to outline our support for government action to end the desperate economic situation which is plunging



Jan Shortt, NPC

millions of people of all ages into poverty. Jan said: "Everyone – pensioners and younger working people alike – are tired of struggling to make ends meet, then being asked to pay more

while we earn less. NPC members will be out in force in London and across

the country to support the call for long term help to ensure we all have a decent stand-ard of living, so no one is forced to choose between eating and heating." The TUC is inviting people to join rallies at UK town halls throughout June

(www.tuc.org.uk/join-our-town-hall-rallies). NPC members will be staging their own events, such as Yorkshire & Humber Region in Leeds on 15th June. To find out what your local NPC group is doing, check www.npcuk.org or contact our office. Assemble for the London rally from 10.30am at Portland Place, London. The March departs at 12pm, with the rally at 1pm.



NPC members will join 'We Demand Better' demos across the UK

Annual Convention opening with Health & Care Act debate

The NPC Annual Convention is being held in two stages this year with online sessions in June and a live, one-day conference in September. The opening event will be an interactive webinar on the controversial Health & Care Act now coming into effect. The free-to-attend session, from 11am to 1pm on Thursday, 16th June will hear from Sharon Graham, General Secretary of Unite which represents 100,000 health workers and Dr John Puntis, Co-Chair of Keep Our NHS Public (KONP). Like the NPC, both speakers are concerned at the implications of the new legislation, which they believe

threatens the independence and accountability of the new Integrated Health Boards which oversee NHS contracts.

The webinar will give attendees the chance to join breakout sessions to discuss ways of maintaining local accountability for health services. To reserve your free place, visit www.npcuk.org or contact our office.

Details of our next June event and the live September event are continued on Page 2.



Sharon Graham, Unite.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS: Emergency measures too late for many... Page 3

Plans underway to stage live members' conference in September

The first live NPC Annual Convention for more than two years will be held this September. The pandemic has forced cancellation of our usual summer conferences. But possible locations are now under consideration for a one day event, with details announced shortly. By postponing the face-to-face conference until later in the year, Officers believe members will feel more confident about attending public events, while the number of suitable venues that are available to us is likely

to be higher. The General Secretary and Officers are in favour of an umbrella theme based around Poverty and Pensioner Rights for the 2022 sessions, with subjects including: Housing, Communications, Travel and the case for a Commissioner for Older People in England.

2022 Annual Convention Dates

June 16 –11am
Health & Care Act—
What It Means
June 21–11.45am
Assisted Dying Bill
—A Briefing
September Dates TBC

Second June event: NPC members' briefing on Assisted Dying Bill

The second Annual Convention webinar on Tuesday, 21st June is a members' briefing about the Assisted Dying Bill. This is an emotive and divisive issue across society, which evokes



*Dr Jacky Davis,
Dying with Dignity*

strong arguments on both sides as to whether it should ever become law. At the moment, Baroness Meacher's Private Members' Assisted Dying Bill is going through the committee stages of the House of Lords. At the request of many NPC members we have invited the organisation Dignity in Dy-

ing, chaired by the Baroness, to explain the case for assisted dying. As the Baroness is unwell, Dr Jacky Davis will give a presentation on what the Bill actually intends. The NPC holds no position or opinion either way on the debate – we are simply offering a briefing. We have not, at the request of Officers, invited anyone opposed to assisted dying to take part to avoid a distressing debate. However, session chair General Secretary Jan Shortt will put the views of opponents to the Bill, and questions from members to Dr Davis. Jan will also stress that the NPC does not support one argument over the other. *Webinar: 11.45am, Tuesday, 21st June. Details: at www.npcuk.org*

NPC calls on Ofgem to work with government on energy price hikes

The NPC has written urging Ofgem to work with the government to look at immediate and long term measures to help those struggling with fast rising energy bills. NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt has asked Ofgem boss Jonathan Brearley to take action after he said the energy price cap, which limits how much providers can raise prices, is due to increase again to an average of **£2,800 a year in October**. Coming on top of an unprecedented £700 average rise in April, the increase is pushing our oldest and poorest into poverty. The NPC doesn't believe the Chancellor's new emergency measures are enough to deal with the ongoing hikes in energy prices and believes we need a long term strategy from the government and energy industry regulator Ofgem. In response to Mr Brearley's recent letter to Chancellor Rishi Sunak, and Business & Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng, the General Secretary said Ofgem appears to be 'resigned to capping energy

NPC's 'logical & reasonable measures' will help

costs in the same old way.' She added: 'The systems applied by energy companies are excluding those with the least income at a time when the need is greater. We make some suggestions and ask questions that would seem to pensioners to be logical and reasonable as a way of rationalising costs and prevent discrimination.' The NPC is asking for:
Standing charges: Reducing or removing these would help every household.
Winter Fuel Allowance: a permanent increase in the winter fuel allowance for pensioners to £500.
End Pricing Discrimination against those without the option to use Direct Debit and those who monitor their spending through key/card meters.
Removal of 5% VAT on energy: this would make bills more affordable,
Invest in Insulation: of cold, damp housing to bring properties up to a decent standard, to mitigate against rising energy bills.
***Read Jan's letter in full at: www.npcuk.org**

'How will we survive until then?' - Chancellor promises pensions & benefits to rise with inflation next year

Chancellor Rishi Sunak's emergency measures and promises to help pensioners with the cost of living crisis may come too late for many.

While General Secretary Jan Shortt said the NPC welcomes any help that can be given to older people struggling to make ends meet as food and energy prices rocket to record levels, she fears it will not help those who cannot pay energy bills or buy food right now. Jan said: "How are people going to manage until October when the Chancellor's emergency budget measures start to

come through—never mind weather another winter until next year? The NPC is pleased that at last the Chancellor has put together a package to support hard hit families and pensioners. But whilst we look forward to receiving our increased winter fuel allowance and £400 off our energy bills, even this will not cover all of this year's cost of living price rises. Also, none of these measures are for today or tomorrow - they are for October and beyond, when yet another energy price cap will arrive."

Prices are still rising across the board, with energy bills alone set to be on average £2,800 a year by the Autumn (almost double what it was in Janu-

ary). People are already in debt and need immediate assistance to survive. These measures will help... but the devil is in the detail... some pensioners will benefit, some will lose out. This is a one-off measure to help for this year - what happens after that? Older people need their incomes stabilised. They need a decent state pension - at

the very least the reinstatement of the triple lock - instead of a succession of emergency handouts." Speaking on BBC Breakfast, Chancellor Rishi Sunak said pension and bene-

fits payments are set to increase in 2023 in line with this year's inflation, which could be as high as 10%. He said: "Looking forward, what is likely to happen is that benefits and pensions next year will go up by this year's much higher inflation levels." If this happens, the Resolution Foundation, an independent think tank, has calculated that the move will cost the Treasury £15 billion. But this year, pensioners and benefit claimants are facing a real-terms cut in income after their payments only increased by 3.1 percent as the triple lock - which sees state pensions rise by the highest out of inflation, the average wage jump or 2.5 percent - was suspended for 2022.

'None of his measures are for today or tomorrow - they are for October and beyond'

Summary — Chancellor's Emergency Budget Measures

How will the £400 energy bill discount be paid?

All UK households will get a grant which will reduce energy bills by £400 from October. Previously, the Chancellor said £200 would be deducted off everyone's energy bills, but would have to be paid back in instalments—this repayment has been scrapped. The £400 discount will be made automatically by your energy supplier. There is no need to apply. Direct debit and credit customers will have the money credited to their account. Customers with pre-payment meters will have the money applied to their meter or via a voucher.

What additional help will people on benefits get?

A £650 payment will be made to more than eight million low-income households who receive Universal Credit, tax credits, pension credit and other means-tested benefits. This will be an automatic payment into bank accounts. It comes in two instalments - the first in July and the second some-

time in autumn. Payments for those on tax credits only, will follow shortly afterwards.

Those on disability benefits will receive £150 in September, which may be on top of the £650 payment, because in many cases they have higher energy use.

What help will pensioners get for winter fuel bills?

Households that receive the Winter Fuel Payment will receive an additional £300 in November or December. Lower-income pensioners, who claim pension credit, will receive the money in addition to the £650 support for those on benefits. A small group of pensioners with disabilities will receive a total of £1,500 when all the new payments and discounts they are eligible for are added up.

What payments are already being received?

About 80% of households are already receiving a £150 energy rebate, often through their council tax bill.

BT asks NPC to join Digital Voice Steering Group on phase two

The NPC has been invited to join a steering group that will advise and inform the next phase of the BT Digital Voice upgrade programme.

We welcomed BT's decision to suspend the roll out of their new Digital Voice home phone service which has already caused many problems for older people after meeting with BT executives. However we have expressed our concerns at BT's decision to restart the programme, which will see the UK's old analogue phone with a digital only system by 2025. The switchover has already had serious consequences for many of our members,

who were left without any phone for emergencies. In a subsequent announcement, BT apologised for having "underestimated the disruptive impact this upgrade would have" while they work on improvements to the new system. General Secretary Jan Shortt said: "The NPC has been at the forefront of confronting BT about our members issues with the Digital Voice system. We must have clarification on the full implications of the Digital Voice switchover. There are many other phone providers in the UK who are involved in this work - they have still to say what their plans are, if they intend suspending work or notifying customers."

Renters' Forum writes to PM to call for reform of private rented sector

Too many people live in insecure, unaffordable and unsafe homes. Successive governments have failed to reform the private rented sector and give England's 11 million private renters a decent place to call home - this needs to change. The NPC has welcomed the Renters Reform Coalition's letter to the Prime Minister about the Renters' Reform Bill. To read the letter in full, visit our website: www.npcuk.org or contact our office if you are not online. You can find out more about the Renters Reform Coalition on: www.rentersreformcoalition.co.uk

NPC will submit evidence to new inquiry into digital transformation of NHS

NPC working parties are gathering evidence for a submission to an inquiry examining government progress on the digital transformation of the NHS. Both the Health & Social Care, and the Digital Working Parties will contribute to the NPC's feedback by 10th June. The inquiry is assessing Government progress on moving towards a digital approach to healthcare and what further steps need to be taken. MPs will also consider the need to develop public trust, with polls suggesting a third of people are unconvinced about the long-term use of digital in the NHS and data security.

Independent Age records poverty in later life experiences

More than two million older people are living in poverty in the UK. The Experiences of Poverty in Later Life project by Independent Age aims to amplify the voices of some of these older people, by highlighting the experiences of people facing financial hardship in later life. The project is based upon a series of interviews Independent Age conducted between November 2021 and January 2022. Around 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with older people who were experiencing financial hardship. They spoke to older people from a range of backgrounds and perspectives, including older people of different ages, different genders, different ethnicities, different family situations, and different housing tenures. From these interviews, they have created a series of concise, visual briefings. Each visual briefing addresses one of the key themes which emerged during Independent Age's research and includes

stories and quotes from some of the older people they spoke to. Like the NPC, Independent Age believes the government should ensure everyone in later life receives the full range of benefits and entitlements they are eligible for, as part of a Department for Work and Pensions written strategy to increase the uptake of Pension Credit. This strategy should include realistic, measurable targets, and short term activities like targeted awareness-raising campaigns, including at local level, and new research on how best to target people missing out. It should also look at longer-term solutions such as automatic payment, better government data sharing to identify people missing out, and reviewing the name 'Pension Credit'. Independent Age also calls on the government to fulfil its commitment to restore the State Pension triple lock from April 2023. [Link to full report via: www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)



CSPA CODE OF CONDUCT

CSPA values the contribution of our HQ staff, members, volunteers, visitors, and other external partners, who support our work and enjoy our activities, benefits, and services. We all have a right to enjoy a safe, mutually respectful, and supportive environment.

This code of conduct, has been approved by the CSPA Executive Council and will be submitted for approval by the 2022 Annual General Meeting.

Key Principles

Everyone connected with CSPA is expected to:

- Adopt a fair, inclusive approach, founded on mutual respect and rejecting bullying behaviour. Discrimination, or harassment of any group or individual on the grounds of gender, race, disability, age, marital status, pregnancy, religion or belief or sexual orientation will not be tolerated. This includes verbal, written or physical behaviour.
- Reject violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening, abusive or offensive behaviour and language (verbal or written, including via social media)
- Report any concerns for the health and safety or welfare of CSPA members. Avoid any action likely to cause injury or impair safety on CSPA premises or at hired venues, events or activities organised by, or on behalf of, the CSPA.
- Reject behaviour which could bring the CSPA into disrepute, including at meetings and on social media.
- Abide by CSPA rules and procedures, particularly those which govern the conduct of meetings and elections, the use of personal data, and the use of funds.

Dealing with unacceptable behaviour

If anyone acts in a way that is not in keeping with the standards of conduct expected by CSPA, early intervention is key. Mediation is the preferred method of solving disputes. Everyone involved should be reminded of the guidance contained in this code. When appropriate, the person(s) concerned may be asked to leave a meeting or event.

Everyone should bear in mind possible behavioural issues caused by cognitive impairment and, if necessary, seek advice from Dementia Connect Support line at Alzheimer's Society on 0333 150 3456. <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/dementia-connect>

Instances of alleged serious misconduct, including those that result in removal from a meeting, should be reported to the General Secretary. The General Secretary or Deputy General Secretary will consider all the supporting information provided and will decide on the appropriate response, including giving advice to the parties involved. In more serious cases, the Disciplinary Procedures in Para 11 and Appendix 2 of CSPA National Rules and Constitution will be followed.

CSPA Staff

All CSPA staff are expected to follow the same principles set out in this Code, but any complaint about their conduct will be dealt with in accordance with the ACAS codes of practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. <https://www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures>.

Complaints about the conduct of CSPA staff should be sent to the General Secretary, or if concerned with the General Secretary, to the Chairman.

The ACAS website also provides the appropriate definitions of bullying, discrimination and harassment should HQ staff wish to make a complaint about their treatment/experience whilst working for CSPA.

Publication

This Code of Conduct will be provided to members upon joining the CSPA. It will also be shared on the CSPA website www.cspa.co.uk, The Pensioner Magazine, the Guidance for Groups in England and Wales, and the CSPA Rules and Constitution. It will be reviewed annually by the Executive Council.

