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PCS Associate and Retired Members
North West Committee

NEWSLETTER

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NW ARMS (and new banner) support the doctors

NW ARMS members took our new banner to a well-supported picket of trade union and pensioners groups at the Royal Liverpool Hospital;



A junior doctor holding the new ARMS banner

other ARMS members joined pickets elsewhere in the region. We agree with the junior doctors that the primary concern is patient safety and the very future of the NHS itself.

ARMS committee member Tony Mulhearn addressed the picket at a rally and expressed our solidarity and support for the BMA fight; he also urged all unions to widen the dispute. At the time of writing, the BMA is entering talks with the government: if ministers do not enter these discussions with a commitment to serious negotiations, then they must take responsibility if junior doctors feel driven to drastic action yet again.

May Day rally

The new NW ARMS banner made its first public appearance, joining many other banners from all parts of the local trade union movement, at the May Day rally and march through Liverpool City Centre

Solidarity!

New ARMS Group For Manchester – come to the first meeting

A new Group for ARMS members in the Greater Manchester area is being set up – and all members are invited to attend. The date is Friday 17 June. The venue is yet to be finalised, but full details will be published on our blog as soon as they become available. Go to: arms-nw.blogspot.co.uk

Please pass this info to anyone you know who might be interested. Non-members can join at the meeting, or go to: tinyurl.com/join-arms

Intergenerational fairness enquiry

The Parliamentary Work and Pensions Select Committee is conducting an inquiry into “intergenerational fairness” which, to summarise, means: are today’s pensioners unfairly receiving far more than the next generation can hope to obtain, and at the expense of that generation?

- The terms of reference for the committee requires it to produce “a cross-party assessment of the sustainability of the existing welfare systems.” This includes some key questions the committee is directed to address including:
- To what extent is intergenerational fairness a welfare issue?
- How does the welfare system interact with other areas of public expenditure and income and wealth in the wider economy, including issues of health, education and housing.
- Is the triple-lock necessary to prevent future increases in pensioner poverty?
- What would be the effects of reforming

the triple lock and how might the worst of these be mitigated?

- How might other benefits such as winter fuel payments be reformed?

Brian Herbertson, ARMs national assistant secretary, commented “We support the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) submission to the select committee. It makes clear that the media, think-tanks and politicians have created a phoney war between the generations, when the real unfairness and inequality in society is between the wealthy and the rest of us.”

The recent budget statement the chancellor described as a “budget for the next generation”, provided a link to the narrative that the government is seeking to pedal around intergenerational conflict. Brian echoed the comments of NPC general secretary Dot Gibson who commented: “Our grandchildren face huge university tuition fees, insecure employment, zero-hour contracts, low pay and rising house prices, yet there is no promise to improve any of those things. Young people are forced into private rented accommodation because of a lack of affordable homes. Work that pays barely more than the minimum wage is not going to give them a decent pension when they retire. Young and old share these concerns, but the chancellor has done nothing to address any of these issues. He simply uttered a phrase that is totally meaningless.”

Brian concluded: “This issue is extremely important. ARMs representatives will be working within PCS nationally and with our campaign partners, including the NPC, to ensure our voice is listened to by the select committee. We will also work to support and promote the NPC ‘Generations United’ campaign to tackle the governments divisive policies.”

This article first appeared in the PCS national ARMS newsletter, “Up In ARMS”, a link to which

can be found on our blog. Merseyside Pensioners will be holding a conference on this theme in November – see below.

Forthcoming events

17 May: “EU & Austerity: The Greek Experience”. Public meeting with guest speaker Prof. Costas Lapavitsas. Jack Jones House, Liverpool at 6.30 pm.

9 June: NW ARMS regional committee, PCS Liverpool office, 11.00am. All members welcome.

21 June: ARMS national forum in Liverpool. Observers from across the North West – see our blog.

1 October: Older People's Day. Various events across the UK.

12 November: conference by Merseyside Pensioners Association “Generations United” at the Holiday Inn, Liverpool. Speaker: John McDonnell.

Trades Councils

The Merseyside ARMS Group is in the process of affiliating to the relevant trades councils: Liverpool, Knowsley and Wirral, and as new groups spread across the region, the aim is that they too affiliate to their local trades councils.

ARMS NW feels it is important to remain an active participant in the trade union movement across the region.

ARMS speakers to PCS Branches

Any PCS branch who would like a speaker from NW ARMS to their BEC or other meeting should contact us using the e-mail address above.

