

Post-Election Round-up Briefing Paper June 2017



Introduction

The result of June 8th's General Election has raised a number of important issues for those campaigning in the pensioner movement. This briefing gives a current snapshot of where we are in relation to these issues.

Ministers

The government has appointed Guy Opperman, the MP for Hexham as the new Pensions' Minister replacing Richard Harrington. The NPC has already requested a meeting with the new minister and will report back shortly. The situation in social care is more complicated. The former care minister, David Mowat (who suggested families needed to do more to provide care for their loved ones) lost his seat in the election, but the government has yet to appoint his successor. Moreover, in Theresa May's first period as Prime Minister she downgraded the role from Minister of State to Under Secretary of State. Given the crisis in social care, the issue should really now be dealt with at Cabinet level.

Policies

As a result of the Conservative party failing to get an overall majority in the general election, and having to rely on the Democratic Unionist Party for support, it now seems likely that a number of proposals in their election manifesto will be dropped. For example, the plan to remove the triple lock from the state pension in 2020 and to means-test the winter fuel allowance away from up to 10 million pensioners now seems unlikely to happen.

However, in the Queen's Speech on 21 June it was announced that over the next few months the government would consult on the future funding of social care. On the same day, Damian Green MP, the deputy Prime Minister told the media there would be a cap on the amount of money that people would have to pay for their care – but declined to say what that might be.

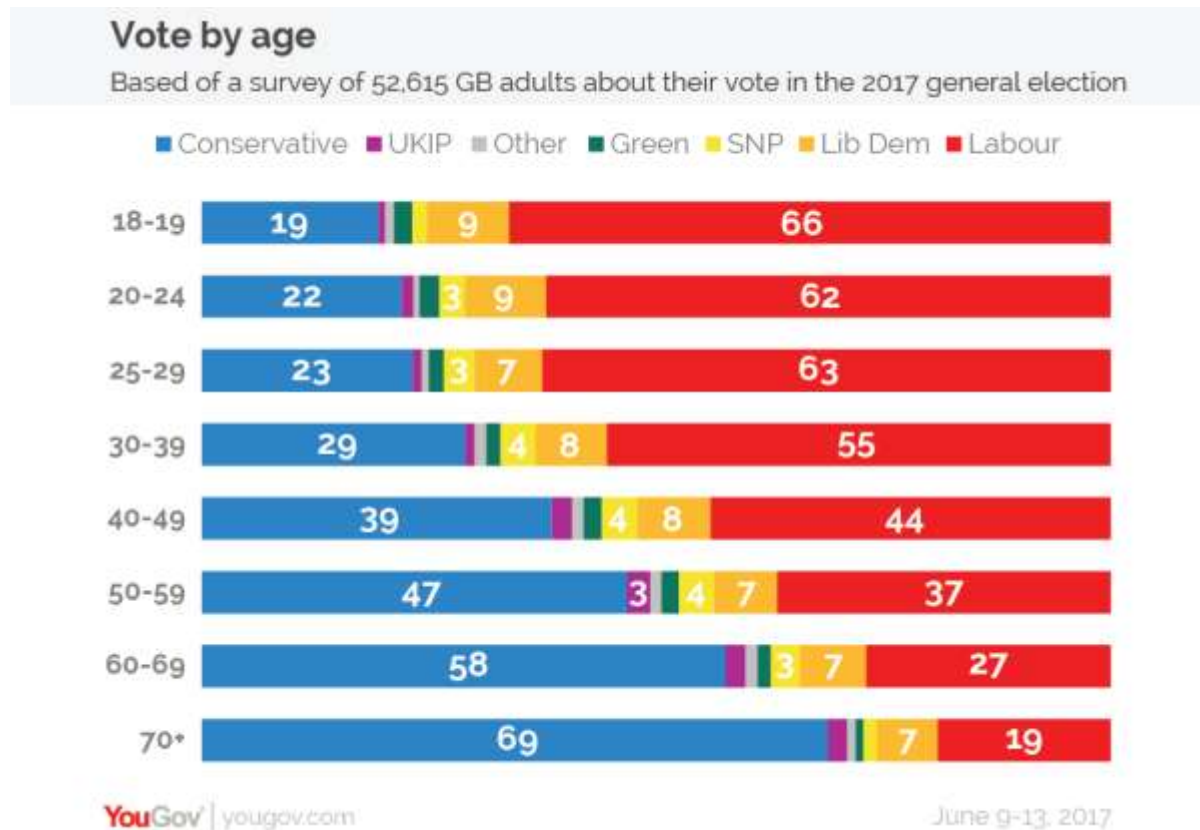
Most political commentators point to the bungled Conservative manifesto pledge on social care and the fact that minister were only told of the plans 24 hours before they were published, as one of the main reasons the party lost support. Nevertheless, campaigners are concerned that this consultation must not allow the government to introduce this discredited and unpopular policy through the backdoor. Either a consultation is open – or the government has already made up its mind what it wants to do, and is simply going through the motions. The NPC will take a leading role in this issue and continue to press the case for a tax-funded social care system.

Opposition

As far as the information currently available, Labour has retained Alex Cunningham as shadow pensions' minister and Barbara Keeley as shadow care minister. The NPC will be seeking meetings with them as soon as possible.

Voting figures

The polling company YouGov has released some data on how the different age groups voted at the 2017 general election. Using a sample of just over 50,000 people they found that age seems to be the new dividing line in British politics. The starkest way to show this is to note that, amongst first time voters (those aged 18 and 19), Labour was forty seven percentage points ahead. Amongst those aged over 70, the Conservatives had a lead of fifty percentage points.



The NPC is concerned that, as with other voting figures, some politicians, think-tanks and media pundits will try to use this as the basis of intergenerational conflict. The NPC must continue to build support for its Generations United campaign, that links the age groups in support of the welfare state and public services.

The Pensioners' Manifesto

The NPC's six point manifesto will now form the basis of our campaigning priorities over the next period. It is vital that every new MP is sent a copy so that they are aware of our case. Electronic copies are available to download from the NPC website www.npcuk.org or hard copies can be ordered from the NPC office.

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