



International House • 12 Constance Street • London E16 2DQ

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

27 June 2019

Dear Mr Hunt,

I am writing to congratulate you on reaching the final stage of the Conservative leadership election and to ask you for your views on the difficulties facing approximately 3.8 million women born in the 1950s as a result of the mismanagement of increases to the State Pension age (SPa). I have also written to Boris Johnson for comment.

As you may know, WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) is a grassroots campaign, founded and run by women affected by these changes. We are calling on the Government to act to redress the serious financial hardship being faced by WASPI women as a result of these changes, which were implemented in the 1995 and 2011 Pensions Acts.

Successive Governments have failed to adequately inform WASPI women about the changes to the SPa. A series of well-known organisations and reviews have made recommendations on fair notice for changes to the SPa. The Turner Commission recommended 15 years notice, Saga recommended 10 years notice, and John Cridland's Independent Review of the SPa recommended that the Government communicate changes directly to those affected.

However, the Government only began sending letters to women affected by the 1995 changes some 14 years after the Act. Some WASPI women had less than one year's notice to prepare for a six-year change in the pension age. Many did not receive any letter at all. Research from the DWP in 2004 found that levels of awareness were *"a cause for concern and showed that information about the increase in SPa is not reaching the group of individuals who need to be informed the most."* Women seeking out information about their State Pension at the time did not receive accurate information. Many forecasts did not contain any information about the SPa, only setting out a projected pension. The Government's own website still showed the SPa for women as 60 until February 2016.

The impact has been devastating. Many women are suffering huge financial difficulties because of the changes implemented in the 1995 and 2011 Pension Acts. Some will lose up to £45,000, and many have lost their savings because they did not have the time to put in place alternative arrangements, nor the information needed to plan effectively for retirement.

We are not opposed to the equalisation of, or increases to, the SPa. The problem is that these changes were mismanaged, and our particular cohort of women were not adequately informed. We are calling for fair transitional State Pension arrangements for all women affected. I would be grateful if you could set out how your Government would address these issues. We appreciate that you have a very busy campaign ahead of you, but we would be delighted to meet with you and tell you more about the situation faced by the 3.8 million 1950s-born women affected.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Angela Madden, WASPI Director and Chair