

WASPI – Women Against State Pension Inequality

This document is designed to support WASPI members as they meet their local MPs to raise awareness of the campaign. Should you have a meeting arranged with your local MP or be attending their surgery, we recommend you read the points below and take a copy of this document with you.

Background

In 1995, the then Conservative Government legislated to increase the women's State Pension age from 60 to 65 by April 2020. Yet in the years following, these changes were not communicated to affected women. Many only received notice of a change after the State Pension age was raised again by the Pensions Act 2011. Women born in the 1950s (some 3.6 million) were victims of what the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman has branded "maladministration".

Some found out about the postponement to their State Pension as late as 2012, getting only one year's notice of a six-year delay to their retirement. WASPI women planned their lives under the misapprehension they would receive a State Pension at 60. Many gave up work for caring responsibilities, believing they could rely on savings until reaching State Pension age.

Others turned down job opportunities, accepted part time work and made life changing decisions they couldn't reverse.

About the campaign

WASPI was launched in 2015, as a voluntary organisation representing the women affected by poorly communicated State Pension age changes. We argue affected women were not given adequate notice to make alternative retirement and pension income arrangements.

Specifically, WASPI calls for an **immediate one-off compensation payment** in acknowledgement of the financial and emotional hardship caused by the failure of communication by the DWP.

The campaign argues for the most substantial compensation to go to women who

were given the shortest notice of the longest increase in their State Pension age.



YES – Fair and fast compensation for proven DWP maladministration



NO – Reversing the pension age to 60; or paying 'lost pensions'

Key WASPI messaging

The key message to impart to local MPs is the urgency of the campaign. WASPI women are rapidly approaching retirement – one more 1950s born woman dies every 13 minutes, awaiting compensation.

The government cannot afford to drag its feet on this issue anymore, and the opposition parties – particularly in the build up to a general election- **must pledge clear support for fair and fast compensation for WASPI women.**

How to approach your MP

MPs from the major political parties are cautious about pledging support for compensation, since substantial sums will be necessary to afford 1950s women the justice they deserve.

We recommend that WASPI members express disappointment at MPs' lack of support, by uttering warm words about the injustice but not making a clear commitment to compensation.

This is particularly important when meeting MPs from the Labour Party, which has previously been supportive of WASPI but has not yet made any commitment to help after the next general election.

Why a resolution is urgent

We ask WASPI members to reiterate the urgency of the campaign, given that WASPI women are reaching the latter stages of their life and more than 225,000 have already died. Amid the cost-of-living crisis, economic strife and an energy crisis, 1/3 of WASPI women are in debt.

Additionally, women are more likely to experience poverty in later life than men, because of the inequalities they face throughout their lives. The government is, yet again, failing older women by moving the goalposts without their knowledge, and then not remedying this injustice and leaving one in four women under the poverty line.

The Ombudsman's investigation

We ask WASPI members to challenge MPs for hiding behind the outcome of the Ombudsman Investigation.

After an unprecedented out-of-court settlement in spring 2023, the Ombudsman is now re-examining their Stage 2 report into the full impact of State Pension changes on 1950s women, with their findings due within months.

Given the high likelihood the Ombudsman will recommend compensation for WASPI women, both leading political parties should be getting ahead of the issue.

WASPI continues to work hard, across party lines, to secure manifesto commitments to fair, fast compensation at the next general election.

Key Asks

Meeting an MP is an opportunity to provoke them into action. Here are some suggested outcomes for your meeting:

Labour MP:

- Ask that they send letters to Rachel Reeves, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Jonathan Ashworth, Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, requesting a meeting with WASPI. We are happy to supply a draft if that helps

- Ask for advice on how to influence the upcoming Labour Manifesto and for their commitment to help get compensation for 1950s women into a new Labour government's programme
- Ask that they raise WASPI's campaign at an upcoming PMQs, or at oral questions to DWP and Treasury ministers

Conservative MP:

- Ask that they draft a letter to Mel Stride, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, requesting a meeting with WASPI as soon as the PHSO's next report is published
- Ask that they raise WASPI's campaign at an upcoming PMQs, or at oral questions to DWP and Treasury ministers

Key statistics: 1950s-born women dying

- 1 every 13 minutes
- 110 every day
- 258,000 by the end of 2023

Mythbuster

Below is a list of answers to frequently asked questions by MPs. Many are not well versed on the WASPI issue, and there are some preconceptions around the campaign ask.

- WASPI is not against the equalisation of the State Pension age
- WASPI is not asking for the State Pension age to be put back to 60
- WASPI is not looking to make back all the money lost from changes to State Pension age
- Ministers are at liberty to remedy this issue now rather than wait for further investigations

WASPI is seeking compensation for WASPI women on a sliding scale of how badly they were affected, with the worst affected receiving in excess of £10,000.

Any compensation scheme needs to be simple and quick to implement so that women, who have already waited years for a resolution, can at last achieve redress without further delay.