

Supporting Southend's WASPIs



Over 11,000 women in Southend-on-Sea City Council's authority area have been affected by the increase of State Pension age for women from 60 to 65 by the Government in the 1995 Pensions Act, with a further increase to 66 in the 2011 Pensions Act.

This change was not properly communicated to 3.8m women born in the 1950s until 2012, giving some only one year's notice of a six-year increase in their anticipated retirement age.

This injustice has had a profound effect on those individual women but also the wider community of the City of Southend, not least because:

- Women who would have looked after older relatives or partners are unable to afford to do so, with a knock-on impact on local social care
- Women who would have retired and engaged in caring responsibilities for grandchildren are having to continue working, increasing the pressure on local childcare spaces and facilities
- Women who have been left in poverty are struggling to meet their housing costs, with a knock-on impact on local housing stock
- There is a broader impact on voluntary services of all kinds locally, which are missing out on able, active volunteers who would otherwise have been able to retire from full-time work as planned
- Our local economy is negatively affected by the reduced spending power and disposable income of 1950s-born women caused by the uncommunicated State Pension Age changes

Council notes that:

- The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (**PHSO**) has found that the Department for Work and Pensions was **guilty of maladministration** in its handling of the State Pension Age increase for women born in the 1950s.
- The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on State Pension Inequality for Women has concluded that **"the impact of DWP maladministration on 1950s-born women has been as devastating as it is widespread**. The APPG believes that the case for category 6 injustice is overwhelming and clear. Women have had their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances totally obliterated by a lack of reasonable notice."
- Research commissioned by campaign group WASPI found that by the end of 2022, **more than 220,000 1950s born women died waiting for justice** since the campaign started in 2015.
- WASPI's figures show that over the course of the two-year COVID pandemic, 1 in 10 women who died was affected by these uncommunicated changes and lost both their state pension income and the opportunity to make alternative retirement plans.
- Despite the Ombudsman's findings and the rapid death rate of those affected, the government is choosing to wait for further reports before taking any action.

Council supports:

- The conclusion of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality that women born in the 1950s have suffered a gross injustice, affecting their emotional, physical and mental circumstances in addition to causing financial hardship.
- A swift resolution to this ongoing injustice before more women die waiting for compensation.
- The WASPI campaign for an immediate one-off compensation payment of between £11,666 and £20,000 to those affected, with the most going to women who were given the shortest notice of the longest increase in their state pension age.

Council resolves that:

The Leader of the Council will write to our two local Members of Parliament, and to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to outline the effects of the injustice to 1950s women on the community in the City of Southend-on-Sea and to seek their support for an immediate compensation package.

Proposed by: Cllr Daniel Cowan

Seconded by: