

WASPI outrage at DWP's refusal to meet

A PARLIAMENTARY ANSWER from Pensions Minister Guy Opperman has left campaign group Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) outraged.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, June 16, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A PARLIAMENTARY ANSWER from Pensions Minister Guy Opperman has left campaign group Women Against State Pension Inequality ([WASPI](#)) outraged at the government's "astonishing arrogance".

Rupa Huq, MP for Ealing Central and Acton, asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when her Department last held a meeting with a representative of the WASPI campaign, and when they next intend to do so.

Guy Opperman responded saying that a departmental Minister met with representatives of WASPI six years ago on 29 June 2016 and that there are no plans to meet with representatives of the group in future.

The WASPI campaign has been trying to meet Opperman again ever since the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) confirmed last year that 1950s-born women were victims of maladministration by the Department for Work and Pensions.

The group is campaigning for 'fast, fair compensation' for those women affected by the DWP's failure to tell women about changes to State Pension Age in good time.

The changes to women's pensions, which were legislated for in 1995, were not communicated through targeted letters to most of those affected until 2012, leading the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) to find that "The opportunity that additional notice would have given them to adjust their retirement plans was lost."

Recent research commissioned by WASPI found that by the end of this year 220,000 women born in the 1950s will have died awaiting compensation. Over the course of the two-year COVID pandemic, one in every ten women who died was born in the 1950s, and had 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 DWP is refusing requests from MPs to meet with campaigners to discuss a one-off compensation payment.

WASPI chair and finance director Angela Madden said: "We are grateful for MPs such as Rupa Huq's continued support for the WASPI campaign.

"Our members understandably conclude that the Government is just choosing to turn a blind eye and prevaricate on the issue, when they could help now.

"The Ombudsman has been clear that the Department could be pro-active on compensation. All we are asking is that Ministers meet with us to discuss a fair, fast compensation package now before more women die waiting for justice. Their refusal to do so is astonishingly arrogant."

Rupa Huq MP added: "This is a shocking response from the DWP who have already been found guilty by the Ombudsman of maladministration. The Department knows there is a wrong that must be righted here, but seems to be hoping campaigners will simply go away. We won't. We intend to keep campaigning for the justice WASPI women deserve."

For more information visit: <https://www.waspi.co.uk/>

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

• Guy Opperman's parliamentary answer to Rupa Huq is available in Hansard and is pasted below:

o Dr Rupa Huq: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when any Minister in her Department last held a meeting with representatives of the Women Against State Pension Inequality campaign; and when they next intend to do so.

o Guy Opperman: A Departmental Minister met with representatives of the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) on 29 June 2016. There are currently no plans to meet with representatives of the group.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's office has said that the Department of Work and Pensions should consider being proactive in looking for a remedy to the injustice caused by their maladministration of State Pension Age changes. See:

<https://www.waspi.co.uk/2022/05/22/letter-to-co-chair-of-appg-from-the-phso-25-august-2021/>

About WASPI

• The 1995 Conservative Government's State Pension Act included plans to increase women's

state pension age from 60 to 65 so that it was the same as men's. WASPI agree with the equalisation, but not with the unfair way the changes were implemented.

- The WASPI campaign was founded in 2015 and continues to fight for justice for all women born in the 1950s (on or after 6th April 1950 to 5th April 1960) affected by changes to the State Pension Age.

- WASPI is calling on the government to agree fair and fast compensation for all women affected by the lack of notice regarding the State Pension age increases (1995 and 2011 Pensions Acts) to reflect their financial losses, the sustained damage to their mental health, and well-being, and the additional impacts.

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