

Motion - To support the Women against State Pension Injustice (WASPI) Campaign (submitted by Councillor Christine Brett)

Preamble

Members will be aware of the long running complaint from 1950s born women whose state pension age was changed without in many cases any notice and the findings by the ombudsman that compensation should be paid to all of them due to maladministration.

Hundreds of thousands of women had significant pension changes imposed on them by the Pensions Acts 1995 and 2011 with little or no personal notification of the change. Some women only had two years notice of the six-year increase to their state pension age. A large number had no notice whatsoever.

It is recognised that this has had a significant effect on the women in the Lewes District. Many women born in the 1950s are living in hardship. Retirement plans have been shattered with devastating consequences. Many of these women are already out of the labour market caring for elderly relatives, providing childcare for grandchildren or suffer discrimination in the workplace so struggle to find employment. Women born in the nineteen fifties are suffering financially.

These women have worked hard, raised families and paid their tax and national insurance with the expectation that they would be financially secure when reaching 60. It is not the pension age itself that is in dispute. It is widely accepted that women and men should retire at the same time. The issue is that the rise in the women's state pension age has been too rapid and has happened without sufficient notice being given to those affected, leaving women with no time to make alternative arrangements.

Motion:

That the Council resolves:

1. That it deeply regrets a decision of a Labour Government to ignore an independent non-party political ombudsman's assessment that compensation should be paid to them; this is deeply unconstitutional.
2. To call upon the Government to reconsider its decision and make fair pension arrangements for all women born on or after the 6 April 1950 who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to state pension age spa, with lack of appropriate notification.
3. That the Leader of the Council
 - Writes to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to ask her to reverse the Government's decision and to set up a compensation scheme for all the women affected without delay.
 - Notifies the local MPs of the Council's view, and
 - Requests that individual Councillors express their concerns to their party colleagues at Westminster on the effects of this decision on women in the Lewes District.