

Campaign Briefing

Lets give the Pensions Bill the chop



Unite briefing

URGENT: HAVE YOU CONTACTED YOUR MP AND PLAYED YOUR PART IN GIVING THE PENSIONS BILL THE CHOP?

You may now have heard about the government's unfair plans to change the State Pension Age. 5 million men and women in their late 50s are affected, and will have to wait longer for their state pension. Half a million women will have to wait over a year for their pension, and 33,000 will have to wait a full two years. Most of our members are affected, and we all need to take action to unite for pensions for women, for men and for all our futures.

The Pensions Minister Steve Webb has promised that there will be transitional arrangements put in place for those most affected by the proposed changes but we're yet to see what these arrangements will be.

Please find enclosed a model letter to MPs and a briefing on the issues affecting our members. Please could you encourage as many Unite members as possible to write to their MP over the Summer months. The Bill will be debated again in parliament in the Autumn. The feedback we've had from MPs is that every single email, letter and phone call makes a difference.

If you can get online go to the following link to mail your MP:

<http://www.unionstogether.org.uk/stopthebill>

Or take five minutes to call your MP's House of Commons office through the Houses of Parliament switchboard on 0207 219 3000.

If you're not sure who your MP is you can call the House of Commons information line on 0207 219 4272.

Please do let us know if you receive a reply from your MP. You can email me at siobhan.endean@unitetheunion.org Many thanks for supporting this urgent campaign.

'Yvonne's pension story'

I left school to begin my working life at the age of 15. At this time the state retirement/pension age for women was 60. When I had my first Daughter at the age of 22 I was unable to return to full time work due to childcare issues so I took on part time work to fit in around my husbands work.

During the next few years I had 2 more children. Money was very tight I needed to work to keep our heads above water, so I continued to work part time. At one time I was doing 3 different jobs, an early morning cleaning job before my husband left for work, a couple of hours in the middle of the day while one of my daughters was in full time school, another at nursery part time and a friend looked after my youngest. I then had another cleaning job at tea time when my husband returned home from work.

When I was in my mid 30s, in the 1990s we were told the age for women's retirement would be increased to 65, but it would be increased in stages from 2010 to 2020, I was not happy about it but this change was a long way off for me.

At the age of 35 I returned to full time work with my present employer. I was invited to join the company final salary pension scheme, at last I was able to see a good future for myself and looked forward to a good income when I retired.

In 2010 my company told us they were closing down our Final Salary Pension. I had been in the scheme for 19 years and had the scheme remained open I would have had a very good lump sum and monthly pension by the age of 65. In fact I had planned to reduce my hours when I reached the age of 60 to help my Daughter with her childcare so she could get back into work as she is unable to return to work now due to the cost of childcare for her 2 children.

The good pension and lump sum I had been looking forward to has now been taken away from me. I will be 55 this year, and now this ConDem government has decided they want me to work until I am 66. I have worked since the age of 15, having only 10 or 12 weeks at home following the birth of my 3 children. I work in manufacturing doing a manual job; I have arthritis and a few other medical problems. At times now I struggle to cope with my work, as I get older I expect I will struggle more.

If I am unable to carry out my duties at work I will be at risk of my employer dismissing me on the grounds of capability. If that happens before I can draw my pension how will I cope financially, who else will employ me, how will I survive without an income? I am now frightened about my future, because all I can see is an old age of financial hardship after a lifetime of working.

How many thousands of women like myself are this government condemning to a dismal future. These plans do not give us enough time to plan and save for a half decent retirement.

Yvonne
West Midlands.

The Coalition Agreement published in May 2010 stated that "The parties agree to... hold a review to set the date at which the state pension age starts to rise to 66, although it will not be sooner than 2016 for men and 2020 for women." Yet despite this reassurance, the new government published draft legislation to accelerate the equalisation for women by 2018, and then increase both men and women's state pension ages to 66 by 2020.

This is a 'u-turn' on their commitment to women and hits women aged around 56 and 57 particularly hard, with very little time to prepare or amend existing plans.

Specifically, the State Pension age for women born between 6 December 1953 and 5 October 1954 (who are currently aged 56 or 57) will increase by more than 18 months, and the Government's impact assessment estimates that this will affect around 300,000 women. In the most extreme case, 33,000 women born between 6 March and 5 April 1954 would have an increase of two years. These women expect to be reaching state pension age in March 2018, and therefore have only around 7 years to prepare and plan for an extra 2 years before being able to draw a state pension.

The plans mean that a woman born in April 1953 will be able to get her pension at age 62 years 11 months, but a woman born in April 1954 will have to wait until she is 66. Saga estimate that this will be a loss of over £10,000 of pension income that women would have been relying on and they have very little time to make that up now.

Many of these women are already well underway in their plans for the hitting state pension age under the existing timetable, and we have heard from many of them who have, for example, already reduced hours, given up work, or are now undertaking caring duties of both elderly parents or of young grandchildren

Women are already at a significant disadvantage relative to men when it comes to pensions. This particular generation of women has tended to earn far less during their working careers, were often prohibited from joining a private pension scheme when they started working (part-time workers were only allowed to join pension schemes relatively recently) and have had interrupted careers which gave them less chance to build up a pension outside the state pension system. The increase in the state pension age will also have a double impact for public sector workers, many of whom are low paid and are facing a further attack on their occupational pensions. By making these women wait to get their state pension, they will not have enough money to live on and do not earn enough to be able to save the thousands of pounds they will need to replace the lost state pension.

How will you be affected?

Increasing women's state pension age

DATA Source USDAW Pensions Web Site					
Is your date of birth between...		Your state pension date was...	Your new state pension date will be...	The number of extra weeks you will have to wait for your state pension will be...	The amount of money you'll miss out on will be...*
6.4.53	5.5.53	6.5.16	6.7.16	8	£817.20
6.5.53	5.6.53	6.7.16	6.11.16	17	£1,736.55
6.6.53	5.7.53	6.9.16	6.3.17	25	£2,553.75
6.7.53	5.8.53	6.11.16	6.7.17	34	£3,473.10
6.8.53	5.9.53	6.1.17	6.11.17	43	£4,392.45
6.9.53	5.10.53	6.3.17	6.3.18	52	£5,311.80
6.10.53	5.11.53	6.5.17	6.7.18	60	£6,129.00
6.11.53	5.12.53	6.7.17	6.11.18	69	£7,048.35
6.12.53	5.1.54	6.9.17	6.3.19	78	£7,967.70
6.1.54	5.2.54	6.11.17	6.7.19	86	£8,784.90
6.2.54	5.3.54	6.1.18	6.11.19	95	£9,704.25
6.3.54	5.4.54	6.3.18	6.3.20	104	£10,623.60
6.4.54	5.5.54	6.5.18	6.4.20	100	£10,215.00
6.5.54	5.6.54	6.7.18	6.5.20	95	£9,704.25
6.6.54	5.7.54	6.9.18	6.6.20	91	£9,295.65
6.7.54	5.8.54	6.11.18	6.7.20	86	£8,784.90
6.8.54	5.9.54	6.1.19	6.8.20	82	£8,376.30
6.9.54	5.10.54	6.3.19	6.9.20	78	£7,967.70
6.10.54	5.11.54	6.5.19	6.10.20	74	£7,559.10
6.11.54	5.12.54	6.7.19	6.11.20	69	£7,048.35
6.12.54	5.1.55	6.9.19	6.12.20	65	£6,639.75
6.1.55	5.2.55	6.11.19	6.1.21	61	£6,231.15
6.2.55	5.3.55	6.1.20	6.2.21	56	£5,720.40
6.3.55	5.4.55	6.3.20	6.3.21	52	£5,311.80
6.4.55	6.4.68	Your 65th Birthday	Your 66th Birthday	52	£5,311.80

*this is based on a full basic state pension of £102.15 a week (which is the rate for 2011/12)

Tell us your story

Unite will be compiling a report of how women are affected by the increase in the state pension age to hand to the Rt Hon Steve Webb MP the Pensions Minister in the autumn. If you are affected by this increase, and would like us to highlight your case in our campaign then please do write and tell me your story. You can email me at siobhan.endean@unitetheunion.org or write to me at Siobhan Endean, Equalities Department Unite House 128 Theobalds Road Holborn London WC1X 8TN

MP

The House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

My address

Date:

Dear

I am writing as one of your constituents, regarding the issue of the State Pension Age.

I am asking you to vote against the Pensions Bill as I believe the Bill is unfair and also breaks the government's own promise in the Coalition Agreement.

The proposals in the Pensions Bill to speed up the equalisation and uprating of the State Pension Age affect 5 million people. 500,000 women, currently in their late 50s, will have to wait more than a year longer to get their pension. 33,000 will have to wait a full two years.

The Pensions Minister Steve Webb has promised that there will be transitional arrangements put in place for those most affected by the proposed changes but we're yet to see what these arrangements will be.

These proposals do not give those affected enough notice to plan for their retirement. They hit women much harder than men, as no men will have to wait over a year longer for their pension. They will also hit those with the smallest savings and no occupational pensions hardest, as they are most reliant on the State Pension.

Further, the plans break a clear commitment in the Coalition Agreement. In the Coalition Agreement, the government said they would "hold a review to set the date at which the state pension age starts to rise to 66, although it will not be sooner than 2016 for men and 2020 for women". The proposals in the Pensions Bill mean the state pension age for men and women will now be starting to rise to 66 in 2018.

These plans are unfair, and break the government's own promise. Please vote against the Bill.

Yours sincerely