



WASPI Campaign 2018



SPEAK TO YOUR MP DURING THE SUMMER RECESS!

1. **Check** to see whether your MP appears on Women Against State Pension Inequality's list of supportive MPs at <https://waspi.co.uk/getting-involved/waspi-map/>
2. **If your MP is shown as non-supportive**, make an appointment to see them during the parliamentary summer recess, which started on 22 July and runs until 1 September. (This is more likely to achieve results than sending an email, which can be ignored or responded to with a stock reply.)
3. **Arrange a meeting** via their office. This could be:
 - a. a private appointment at the constituency office
 - b. at one of their local surgeries
 - c. via a video call
4. **Start by**
 - a. **telling them** that they are showing as non-supportive on WASPI's constituency map
 - b. **asking them** if they're prepared to take steps to change their status to supportive, for example by making a public statement or issuing a press release.

POINTS YOU CAN MAKE DURING YOUR CONVERSATION

Here are some points you might find useful to make during your conversation

1. It's ridiculous that the Government is prepared to spend large amounts of public money on arguing about compensation in the courts. Yet again 1950s women are out of pocket, having to fund a Judicial Review through crowdfunding.
2. The Government has accepted that there was maladministration - it cannot just wriggle out of paying compensation but needs to consider the best way to do it. The Ombudsman suggested a model and recommended that the Government should pay compensation at Level 4 of their financial remedy scale (£1,000 - £2,950).
3. If you have a non-supportive Labour MP, stress that 1950s women feel let down by the Labour Government. For years, while in opposition, Labour supported the WASPI Campaign and many prominent Labour MPs posed for photographs with WASPI campaigners. Many women now feel they were cynically used to obtain votes for Labour in the General Election.



WASPI Campaign 2018



4. Accepting that there was maladministration and apologising is meaningless if nothing is done to compensate victims for the effect it had on their lives. And the fact that the Government has said it will learn from the mistakes made in our case is cold comfort for 1950s women.
5. It is almost unprecedented for a government to reject the Ombudsman's recommendations. In 99.8% of cases, public bodies accept them. Why should 1950s women be singled out for different treatment?
6. The Ombudsman plays a crucial role in the independent scrutiny of government departments. To refuse to follow its recommendations calls into question the very existence of the Ombudsman as an independent arbiter, appointed by Parliament to act on its behalf. Public confidence in the Ombudsman system will be undermined.
7. The Ombudsman laid his final report before Parliament, but Parliament has not been allowed to discuss it or vote on it. If there is a dispute between Government and the Ombudsman, Parliament is the proper place for it to be debated.
8. The Ombudsman considered a wide range of evidence, but the Government cherry-picked just one survey out of context to support its case. It quotes a 2006 survey which found that 90% of 1950s-born women knew that the State Pension age would change. But it fails to quote the sentence immediately after this: "The survey did not ask respondents about their own State Pension age, so we do not know if respondents knew whether and/or how the changes affected them." [Ombudsman's report 2021, para 106].
9. It is patronising in the extreme to suggest that if women had received letters about the change to their pension age at the right time, they wouldn't have taken any notice of them! Many WASPI women remember only too well the occasion when they finally received a letter telling them that they would not be able to retire for several more years - it was a major shock, not to be forgotten. Of course, many women did not receive letters at all, and were stunned when they finally discovered they would not get their pension at 60.
10. The government is fond of saying that paying compensation to 1950s women would cost "tens of billions". The actual figure calculated by the Ombudsman is £3.5 - £10.5 billion (Ombudsman's report 2024, para 504). This is a drop in the ocean compared with the £181 billion that has been saved by raising women's state pension age. Furthermore, the Ombudsman said that "finite resources should not be an excuse for failing to provide a fair remedy" (Ombudsman's report 2024, para 504).
11. It is insulting to treat a generation of women in this way. Many 1950s women started work before the protection of the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts and were excluded from occupational pension schemes. Now in their 60s and 70s, they find the discrimination continues. It is hard to imagine men being treated this way. It is nonsense for the Government to say that they are "determined to always fight for women and for pensioners."



BACKGROUND TO THE WASPI CASE

1. Women born in the 1950s found out at the last minute that they would have to wait several more years for the state pensions they had expected to start receiving at age 60.
2. In 1995 the government introduced a gradual increase to the State Pension Age from 60 to 65 for women - but did not notify them. A further change in 2011 accelerated the rise to 65 and increased it to 66 for both men and women by 2020. Some women were written to in 2009, 14 years after the first change, but letters were then stopped until 2012. Many women received no notice at all. Those who did get letters had very little time to prepare for such a major change to their retirement plans. Some 3.8 million women are affected.
3. For many women the consequences of not knowing their pension age had changed were permanent and irreversible. Women changed jobs, reduced their hours, took early retirement, moved house, promised to look after grandchildren or agreed a divorce settlement thinking they would get their State Pension at 60. When they eventually found out this was not the case, it was too late.
4. On 21st March 2024, after a seven-year investigation, the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman published his final report into the injustice caused by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)'s poor communication with 1950s women. He ruled that the DWP was guilty of maladministration from 2004 onwards when it failed to contact 1950s born women in person to inform them of the changes to their State Pension Age.
5. He recommended that the DWP should make an apology to the women concerned and that they should receive compensation of between £1,000 and £2,950. He called on Parliament to implement these recommendations.
6. On 17th December 2024 Liz Kendall, Secretary of State for Work & Pensions, announced to the House that, while the Government accepted there had been maladministration, and apologised, there would be no compensation for the women affected. It is almost unprecedented for a government to go against a recommendation from the Ombudsman. It calls into question the validity of the Ombudsman's role itself.
7. Despite the Ombudsman's wish that his recommendations be put before Parliament, MPs have not been given the opportunity to vote on the matter.
8. After it became clear that the Government was not willing to debate the matter further, campaigners at Women Against State Pension Inequality Ltd (<https://www.waspi.co.uk>) lodged papers with the High Court on 14 March 2025 for a Judicial Review of the Government's decision not to award compensation to 1950s women. This is expected to go ahead later this year.