**Rachel Reeves**

**Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer**

5 June 2024

Dear Rachel,

We are alarmed to see that at a recent press conference in Scotland, you are reported by *Daily Business* to have said “we have not set out any money” for compensating WASPI women.

Surely this represents a wilful disregard of the conclusions of the independent Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, who has recommended that compensation be paid to the 3.6m affected by DWP’s failures to notify them of changes to their State Pension age.

As you know, some of the affected women were given just 18 months’ notice of a six-year postponement to their State Pension, plunging them into poverty and leaving – as of now – about a third of the cohort in debt.  One WASPI woman is dying every thirteen minutes awaiting justice.

The PHSO investigation lasted six long years, with Conservative ministers hiding behind its glacial pace as an excuse for making no progress on a remedy for the women affected.  During that time, countless Labour MPs have stood in pictures smiling with us and demanding the Conservatives take action.

Now, with Labour a stone’s throw from power, that commitment seems to be vanishing.  Hundreds of thousands of WASPI women already feel badly let down, as it appears Labour is preparing to turn its backs on us at the eleventh hour.

Just ignoring an independent watchdog’s report in this way will make a new administration seem like a pale imitation of Boris Johnson, simply waving away conclusions that it finds inconvenient.

We ask you to imagine the outcry Labour’s benches would (presumably) have led if victims of the infected blood or Post Office scandals had been told they simply had to lump it because of the state of the public finances.  That just isn’t good enough.

We have repeatedly asked for a joint meeting with you and your DWP team, so that a fair remedy could have been arrived at before this election was called, but this has been impossible to secure.  We are still willing to meet you prior to your manifesto launch if this would be helpful.

Either way, we urge you to clarify your position at the earliest opportunity, and commit to implementing a compensation scheme in the first 100 days of the next Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

**Angela Madden**

**Chair, Women Against State Pension Inequality**