



Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI)

Briefing for MPs – Autumn 2026

Latest update

- Prime Minister **Andy Burnham** restated his support for **WASPI women** during the Makerfield by-election, promising to meet with the campaign to discuss **fair redress**.
- The previous administration has repeatedly refused to compensate 1950s-born women and more than £100,000 has been raised this year to launch a High Court challenge. Ahead of any judicial review, we need the new government to think again.
- **We need the new Burnham Government to meet with us as soon as possible and draw up plans this autumn to provide redress to WASPI women.**

The Parliamentary Ombudsman's investigation

- In March 2024, the Parliamentary Ombudsman (PHSO) found maladministration in the way the DWP **failed to properly communicate increases** to women's State Pension age
 - As a result, many 1950s-born women were left with little time to make alternative retirement plans and suffered injustice
- The PHSO **asked MPs to intervene to deliver compensation** at Level 4 on their financial remedy scale (£1,000-£2,950) to those affected

The DWP response

- In December 2024, the DWP **apologised for its mistakes**, and accepted the PHSO's finding of maladministration, but nonetheless **refused to set up a compensation scheme**
- In late 2025, after agreeing their response was legally flawed, the DWP said it would review its position in full
- However, in January 2026, the Work and Pensions Secretary announced compensation would once again be refused, using almost identical reasoning to the DWP position in 2024
- **WASPI is now seeking another judicial review** against the DWP, raising more than £100,000 from the public. WASPI believes the case will be heard early next year given the challenge is based on similar arguments to the previous successful one.

Why the DWP is wrong

- The PHSO identified, through internal DWP memos in 2005, that **officials knew considerable numbers of women were unaware** of planned State Pension age changes, yet they failed to act on their own research to remedy this. The PHSO said this failure was maladministration
 - **Women were denied the ability to make informed decisions**, while losing their sense of personal autonomy and financial control
- The Government can disagree with the PHSO, but they must do so on "cogent" reasons
 - WASPI believes relying on surveys which do not accurately reflect the impact on 1950s-born women, as well as various assumptions, is not cogent or rational

WASPI's response to the DWP

- **"Most women knew the State Pension age was increasing"**
 - The claim that 90% of affected women knew of changes to their State Pension age in 2006 is from a survey. This refers to a general awareness across the whole population about future State Pension changes, not about the specific impact on them as individuals
 - The survey was not representative of the affected cohort. Around 200 women born in the 1950s were asked, out of a total sample size of 1,950 people
 - Elsewhere within the report, research found that just 43% of all women affected by the changes knew their State Pension age was 65, or between 60 and 65 years



- **“Paying compensation is too expensive”**
 - The PHSO said financial circumstances are not an excuse for not paying compensation. Compensation payments could be phased over a number of years
 - Alleged financial mismanagement by previous administrations is not an excuse and the Treasury has saved £181bn by increasing women’s State Pension age
- **“The Government’s decision is the right and fair thing to do”**
 - The PHSO concluded that WASPI women are owed compensation. Ignoring this sets a dangerous precedent for the checks and balances we have on the executive
 - This now leaves the door open for private companies to ignore the decisions of the ombudsmen (e.g. banks if they find financial ombudsmen’s conclusions inconvenient)

PHSO’s response to the Government’s position

- The Deputy Ombudsman told the Work and Pensions Select Committee in 2025 he welcomed the Starmer Government’s acceptance of maladministration but said it had **unhelpfully undermined its report** by *“picking out some aspects of the surveys but not all the surveys”*
- He explained *“The fundamentals in making a decision are that the **DWP itself knew that the women who it wanted to know did not know**”* and yet they failed to act
- He continued *“The Government at the time considered it right to send letters to people to increase awareness. It did not do it. That is the maladministration.”*

Latest statistics

- Polling carried out by Stack Data Strategy between 8 July and 4 August 2026 of 10,052 GB adults (18+) found:
 - **47% of the public** say WASPI women were wronged and should be compensated, compared with just **13% of the public** who disagree
 - When presented with a range of options of how the Government could respond, **83% of the public** say WASPI women should receive some form of financial compensation

What MPs can do now

1. **Ask Prime Minister Andy Burnham** to act on the Parliamentary Ombudsman’s findings and bring forward proposals to compensate WASPI women this autumn
2. **Reaffirm your support to your constituents** on social media, including posting your letter to the Prime Minister and meeting with local groups
3. **Join the cross-party All-Party Parliamentary Group** for State Pension Inequality for Women and work with colleagues to support a pragmatic and fair solution

About WASPI

WASPI calls for fair compensation for the lack of notice 1950s-born women received over increases to their State Pension age. This resulted in serious financial losses, and sustained damage to their mental health and wellbeing. WASPI does *not* campaign for the retirement age for women to return to 60, nor does it take issue with the law change itself.

For further information, please contact campaign@waspi.co.uk