

**Report for: Community, People and Equalities
PDG**

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| Date of Meeting: | 03 December 2024 |
| Subject: | Motion 606 |
| Cabinet Member: | Councillor Jane Lock Cabinet Member for People and Development And Deputy Leader |
| Responsible Officer: | Dean Emery, Head of Revenue and Benefits |
| Exempt: | N/A |
| Wards Affected: | All wards |
| Enclosures: | N/A |

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report is set before the PDG to facilitate a discussion between PDG members in relation to Motion 606, previously set before full Council on 30th October 2024, to allow the PDG to recommend a refined Motion to Full Council.

Recommendation(s):

That Members:

1. Consider and discuss the further development or refinement of Motion 606; and
2. Agree and recommend any updated wording of the Motion to Full Council.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Motion Wording

In the 1995 Pensions Act, the Government increased State Pension age for women from 60 to 65, with a further increase to 66 in the 2011 Pensions Act.

The change was not properly communicated to 3.8m women born in the 1950s until 2012, giving some only one year's notice of a six year increase in their anticipated retirement age, c11,800 of the affected women live in our own authority area.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has found the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to have committed maladministration through its failure to adequately communicate State Pension age increases to women born in the 1950s.

The PHSO has concluded the DWP should apologise to women affected and pay compensation as a result.

The DWP has refused to accept the findings of the PHSO, which has now led the independent watchdog to lay its findings before Parliament, encouraging MPs to intervene to deliver a remedy to affected women.

The All Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality for Women has concluded that “the impact of DWP maladministration on 1950s-born women has been as devastating as it is widespread. The APPG believes that the case for category 6 injustice (£10,000) is overwhelming and clear. Women have had their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances totally obliterated by a lack of reasonable notice.”

As of April 2024, more than c275,000 have died waiting for justice since the WASPI campaign began in 2015. Within Mid Devon it is estimated that c800 have since died.

Council is asked to consider that this injustice has not only had a profound effect on the individuals involved, but on the wider community in Mid Devon and on local government, not least because:

- a) Women who would have looked after older relatives or partners are unable to afford to do so, with a knock-on impact on local social care.
- b) Women who would have retired and engaged in caring responsibilities for grandchildren are having to continue working, increasing the childcare burden on the state locally.
- c) Women who have been left in poverty are struggling to meet their housing costs, with a knock-on impact on local housing stock.

- d) There is a broader impact on voluntary services of all kinds locally, which are missing out on able, active volunteers who would otherwise have been able to retire from full-time work as planned.
- e) Our local economy is negatively affected by the reduced spending power and disposable income that the uncommunicated State Pension Age changes have brought about among women born in the 1950s.
- f) Local tourism has suffered as a result, with affected women unable to travel to the area for holidays.

Council is asked to support:

- a) A swift resolution to this ongoing injustice before more and more women die waiting for compensation.
- b) The conclusion of the All Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality that women born in the 1950s have suffered a gross injustice, affecting their emotional, physical and mental circumstances in addition to causing financial hardship.
- c) The WASPI campaign and All Party Parliamentary Group's calls for an immediate one-off compensation payment at category 6 injustice on the PHSO's financial remedy scale (£10,000) to those affected.
- d) The PHSO's recommendation for the DWP to issue a formal apology to those affected and provide an opportunity for MPs to urgently debate the APPG's recommendations, and any others, in Parliament.

We therefore ask:

The Leader of the Council to write to the 3 local Members of Parliament, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and the Leader of the House of Commons to outline the effects of the injustice on a significant number of women born in the 1950s in Mid Devon and to seek the following:

Urgent delivery of proposals from the DWP, outlining how they will deliver compensation for affected women, to include the value of compensation and a timeline for the delivery of said compensation.

For all MPs to be given an opportunity to debate and vote on these proposals.

1.1 During debate, consideration was given to:

- a) Acknowledged the challenges of the changes for women and families.
- b) Concern that the motion as presented was not in the interest of Mid Devon residents.
- c) There were errors in the motion, and the contained facts and figures were misleading at best, and without careful consideration, it risked being generic and serving little purpose to our residents.

- d) It was the Council's duty to ensure that any motion passed genuinely represented the Council's residents, improved their lives and was factually accurate. To achieve this, and rather than rejecting it outright, it was proposed to refer the motion to the Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group for refinement, allowing them to make the necessary adjustments so that it could truly be bespoke to our community. This would be in accordance with procedure rules.
- e) This was a national issue and not one that the Council could control here and it was important to remember that the pension reforms were introduced to ensure fairness and sustainability.
- f) The equalisation of the state pension age was essential, not only for balancing public finances and to protect the viability of the state pension system, but also to reflect equality—a principle the Council was committed to.
- g) Additionally, there was the matter of the potential financial cost of compensation demanded, which could exceed a staggering £36 billion, this would have a substantial impact on the public purse, which may ultimately detract from local essential services that benefit all residents.
- h) A similar motion had previously come to a Council meeting and was currently still an issue.
- i) Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) had been found guilty of maladministration over 3 years ago.
- j) The motion was important and would support the notice of motion to ensure the Council had this correct.

1.2 A notice without motion was put that the Motion be brought to the Community, People and Equalities Policy Development Group, for review before the Motion will be re-presented to Council for consideration. This Motion was subsequently voted on and was carried.

1.3 This PDG is therefore now invited to discuss the wording of the Motion and to consider any refinements or developments to it in order to ensure that it meets the expectation and requirements of Councillors. Any updated wording can then be recommended by this PDG to Full Council.

1.4 To support discussions, it is suggested that Members reflect on the following relevant points in relation to the Motion:

- a) It is believed that around 11,800 woman were affected by this change within the District, of which c800 have since died.
- b) The cut to the Winter Fuel Allowance will only amplify problems for many of these women.
- c) The Council Leader to write to the Local Members of Parliament to raise awareness also referring to the 'PHSO' investigation and recommendations
- d) The local effect on this legal change

Financial Implications

Financial implications associated with this report and the Motion are very limited given the level of potential spend involved. The Council will need to abide by any procurement requirements in future procurement of any suppliers.

Legal Implications

There are not considered to be any significant legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Assessment

There are no major risks associated with this report.

Impact on Climate Change

The Motion has the potential to create small positive impacts upon climate change in terms of minimising food miles and enhancing requirements about produce from sustainable/organic sources.

Equalities Impact Assessment

No negative equalities impacts are expected.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The work of this PDG will supports a wide range of corporate objectives and the corporate plan as a whole.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 19 November 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria DeLeiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 19 November 2024

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by Chief Executive

Date: 19 November 2024

Performance and risk: Stephen Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 20 November 2024

Cabinet member notified: yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Dean Emery, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Email: demery@middevon.gov.uk
Telephone:

Background information:

[Working State Pension Age- Our findings on the Department for Work and Pensions communication of Change](#)

[Researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk](#)

[Home - WASPI - Women Against State Pension Inequality](#)

[State Pension age review 2017: final report - GOV.UK](#)

[Independent Review of the State Pension Age, Smoothing the Transition, Final Report](#)

[State Pension age timetables](#)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga>