

Jim McMahon OBE MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr Carolyn Wilkins
Chief Executive
Oldham Council
Civic Centre
West Street
Oldham
OL1 1UG

Our Ref: SB/OMBC01002/01160996

21 December 2016

Dear Carolyn

Re: Oldham Council Resolution – Women’s State Pension Age

Thank you for your letter dated the 19 December regarding the above resolution that was passed at the Council meeting on the 14 December dealing with the effect the state pension equalisation has had on thousands of women born in the 1950s.

Whilst I agree the pension age needed to be equalised due to the fact that people are living longer, I agree that the acceleration by the previous Coalition Government and the reluctance to put transitional arrangements in place by this Government is having an enormous financial impact on many women. It misses the point entirely that whilst raising the pension age by one year for men is significant, a rise of between four and six years, without any proper notice and no transitional arrangements in place, is hugely significant and does not take into account that women expecting to retire at 60 have generally had less time to save and generally have smaller, or no personal pension to rely on compared to many men.

Times have changed and people of both genders in the future will have time to save towards their retirement and take advantage of workplace pensions etc., which were not available during the working life of many women born in the 50s. Apart from not being given enough notice of the changes, the fact that many of these women will be the first to be hit by the single-tier pension scheme is an even bigger blow.

I agree with the body of the resolution that explains how many women of this age are caring for elderly relatives or providing childcare for grandchildren; jobs that have almost always been undertaken by women. That’s why Labour has constantly called on the Government to provide transitional relief for those hardest hit.

Despite promises by the former DWP Secretary to look at transitional arrangements due to the mishandling of the pension age rise and despite the Labour Shadow Frontbench urging the DWP to consider the discrimination felt by many women, the Government have flatly refused to listen.

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I assure you that I will continue to put pressure on the Government on behalf of my constituents and will continue to support my Labour Party colleagues who are tirelessly championing the cause.

In the meantime I have raised this again with the DWP Secretary and will copy you into the reply.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim McMahon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Member of Parliament
Oldham West & Royton