



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

October 2019

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about changes to the State Pension age.

I firmly believe people who have worked hard all their lives deserve security in their retirement. The triple lock means that the full amounts of both the basic and new State Pensions will increase annually by the highest of average earnings growth, price inflation or 2.5 per cent. As a result of the triple lock, from April 2019, the full yearly amount of the basic State Pension is around £675 higher than if it had just been up-rated by earnings since April 2010. That is a rise of over £1,600 in cash terms. The Government has introduced the new State Pension, which is also triple-locked, for everyone reaching State Pension age from 6 April 2016 onwards. All those women affected by the 2011 State Pension age changes will draw their State Pension under the new system, which is more generous for many women. Over three million women stand to receive an average of £550 more per year by 2030 as a result of the recent State Pension reforms.

Equalising the State Pension age was necessary to ensure the State Pension remained sustainable, and to reflect our modern economy and society. The Pensions Act 1995 legislated for this to be done gradually after 2010. Following sharp increases in life expectancy projections, the Government had to accelerate this process slightly in the Pensions Act 2011 to secure the sustainability of the system.

The Government did listen to concerns raised at the time of the 2011 adjustment, and I am pleased that as a result the maximum increase was capped at 18 months relative to the 1995 timetable. That represented a £1.1 billion concession, helping those women affected with the transition to a higher State Pension age. Making further transitional arrangements would not only complicate the system but could also cost taxpayers many billions of pounds, and the potential cost of reversing the 2011 changes has been estimated at £39 billion.



On the issue of notice being given to those affected, the Department for Work and Pensions is clear that all those women affected were written to between January 2012 and November 2013. Those affected by the 1995 changes were also contacted between April 2009 and March 2011.

The High Court granted permission for a Judicial Review to proceed relating to the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) handling of the change to women's State Pension age on 30th November 2018. I have been assured that if the Judicial Review does not result in a ruling on the complaints, the Independent Case Examiner's Office can, at the request of the DWP, re-open the WASPI complaints. This would be on the understanding that: (a) the matter is no longer the subject of legal proceedings and (b) there has been no legal determination on the issues which form the basis of the complaints campaign.

Higher life expectancy does mean that as a society we will have to adjust to slightly longer working lives, but it is right to ensure at the same time that people have security and dignity when they do retire. That is why the Government will continue to provide unprecedented support for people in later life, including the triple lock and maintaining universal benefits such as the Winter Fuel Payment. The Government did adjust its proposals in 2011 to mitigate the impact on those worst affected by the State Pension age changes, and I do not think there is a need to revisit the issue

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY