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## Hands off our state pensions! Fears are growing that the triple lock - a vital safeguard against pensioner poverty - faces a cut due to a potential 8% rise

- Safeguarding the triple lock was a Tory manifesto promise at the last election
- It guarantees an annual rise by the higher of average earnings, inflation or 2.5%
- Furlough and pay cuts in 2020 mean wages could rise 8% on average this year
- Last week chancellor Rishi Sunak hinted the triple lock could be suspended
- It comes as many pensioners struggle with rising utility bills and food costs

By [ROBERT JACKMAN FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

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When the state pension triple-lock was announced in 2010, then chancellor George Osborne pledged it would provide 'lasting help for pensioners' and ensure they 'have the income to live with dignity in retirement'.

The new guarantee meant payments would rise annually by the higher of average earnings, inflation or 2.5 per cent — putting an end to meagre 75p-a-week increases.

Although this pensions safeguard is enshrined in law, and was a flagship Tory manifesto promise at the last election, the triple-lock is under attack again.

There are concerns that a distortion to average earnings figures triggered by furlough, job losses and pay cuts in the pandemic could see an 8 per cent rise from the triple lock.



**Pensions threat: After a year of unrivalled spending, the Government needs to repair public finances meaning the triple-lock is under attack once again**

Over the years, ministers have threatened to scrap this vital policy claiming it is too expensive.

And last week Chancellor Rishi Sunak hinted the triple-lock could be suspended — at least for next year.

He said that a rise needed to be fair to pensioners and taxpayers. It is not clear how this would be achieved, one option would be to do a double lock, ie just inflation and 2.5 per cent, but it is more likely that a smoothed average for wage growth would be used - perhaps taken over two years.

Since the Chancellor's comment, Money Mail has been inundated with letters from angry pensioners who feel they are being taken for granted.

Some are already struggling to make ends meet after rising inflation saw utility bills and food costs soar. Energy bills jumped 4 per cent in April, while fuel prices are nearly 20 per cent higher than last year.

'Many over-75s have already been betrayed by having their free TV licences revoked,' writes Ken Hobbins, 62, from Sutton Coldfield.

'Pensioners had no extra support during the pandemic — and didn't make a fuss when others did,' says David Harland, 72, from Durham.

'Let's not forget the Chancellor has already frozen the tax-free personal allowance until 2026, meaning much of the money can be clawed back anyway,' adds Annie Aronowitz, 78, of Wembley.