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WASPI women could be offered hardship fund instead of compensation, experts suggest

Millions of women have been affected by the increased State Pension age

NEWS By [Amy Fenton](#) Senior reporter

16:30, 8 SEP 2024

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WASPI campaigners are calling for compensation payouts (Image: Getty)

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Women who were affected by the change to the State Pension age could be offered a hardship fund instead of compensation, it has been suggested.

The Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) group was established to support women who were adversely affected by increases in their pension age, claiming they weren't adequately informed about these changes.

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of a more than five-year increase in their State Pension age.

READ MORE: [WASPI women could get £45,604 payment from little known state pension loophole](#)

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- ▶ Dressgate, party conference chaos and Sue Gray's salary 46 min
- ▶ Labour's plan for the NHS, Winter Fuel Payment vote and MPs rebelling 42 min

Following a six-year investigation, the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman concluded on March 21 that women born in the 1950s, who were impacted by short notice changes to their State Pension age, should receive compensation. However, the previous government's **DWP** did not respond to the report.

A report by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman suggested that compensation at level four on its scale, ranging between £1,000 and £2,950, could be appropriate for each of those who were impacted by the rise in State Pension age from 60 to 65, to match that for men, and then to 66 for both sexes.

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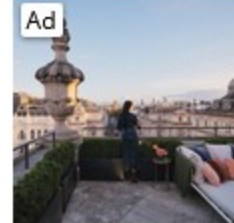


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Compensating all women born in the 1950s at this level would involve spending between £3.5 billion and £10.5 billion of public funds, the report said, adding "we understand not all of them will have suffered injustice."

Sir Steve Webb, a former minister for pensions and now partner at Lane Clark & Peacock, told the [i newspaper](#) the Government could decide to set up a hardship fund instead. He said: "The 'black hole' number for this year makes it unlikely they will pay anything this year. They could well end up saying they don't believe that compensation is needed."



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"But I think one option ahead that's possible is a hardship fund. If people can show hardship on a case-by-case basis - if they can show they made a life-changing decision they wouldn't otherwise have made - then some money could be made available to them."

"They could create something like that with a very high bar, knowing the hurdle would be big, and that might keep costs down. I think they may try to find something as narrow as they possibly can - something very, very narrow."

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Another former pensions minister, Ros Altmann, also believes the Government could come up with a highly-targeted hardship fund for WASPI women who can prove financial loss from the State Pension age increases. Baroness Altmann pointed out that Labour's restrictions to the Winter Fuel Payment have "already demonstrated that it prefers to rely on means testing and is not in favour of universal payouts."

WASPI campaign chair Angela Madden told the i: "We think there should be a two-pronged approach. We think there should be an extra compensation scheme for



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