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Betrayal that proves Labour cynically said ANYTHING to get elected: Storm brewing as ministers refuse compensation for 3.8million Waspi women - despite string of firm promises to help

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By JASON GROVES POLITICAL EDITOR

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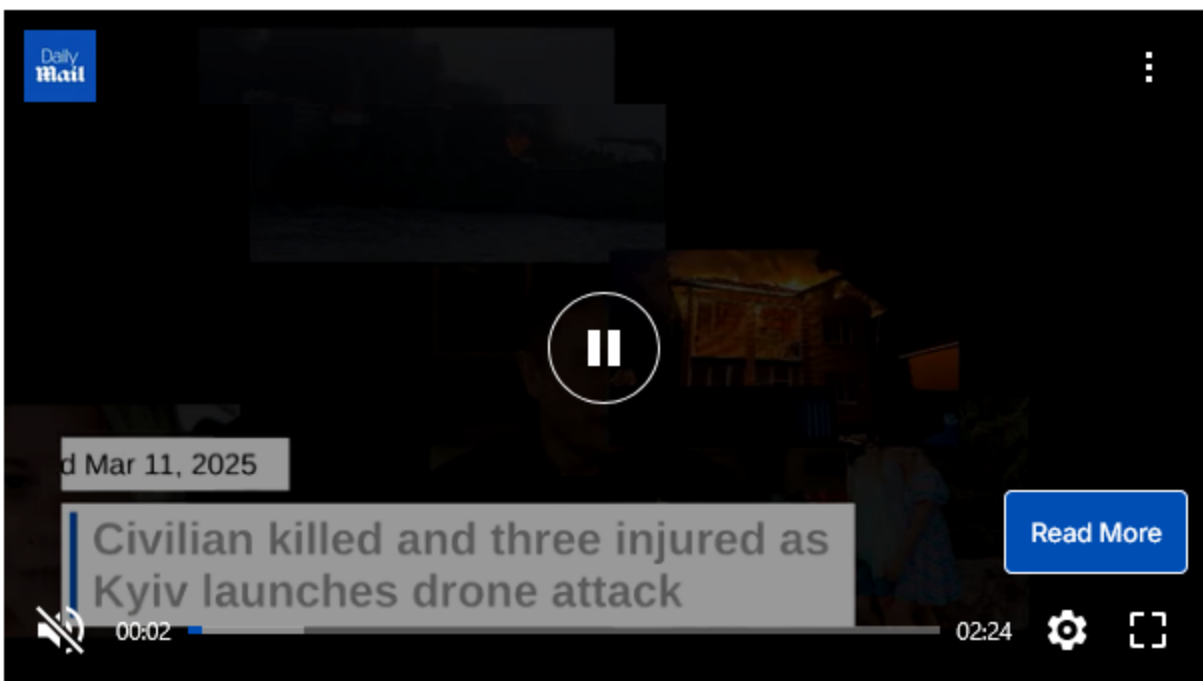
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Betrayal that proves Labour cynically said ANYTHING to get elected: Storm brewing as ministers refuse compensation for 3.8million Waspi women - despite string of firm promises to help | Daily Mail Online
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Labour was accused of hypocrisy last night after abandoning a vow to compensate women hit by increases in the state pension age.

Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall said government would not pay a penny to the 3.8million 'Waspi women' who were told they would **have to work five years longer** to receive their pension.

Senior Labour figures, including Sir **Keir Starmer**, **Rachel Reeves**, **Angela Rayner** and Ms Kendall, all backed the women's campaign in opposition.



In 2022, Sir Keir signed a pledge calling for the women affected to receive 'fair and fast' compensation. Last year, he said they had faced a huge injustice'. But on Monday, the Prime Minister said the Government could not afford the estimated £10.5billion cost – which would have seen a payout of up to £3,000 to each of the more than 3million affected.

The decision triggered a wave of anger with Angela Madden, chairman of the Women Against State Pension Inequality (Waspi) group, describing it as an 'insult'.

In the Commons, Ms Kendall faced a backlash from Labour MPs and cries of 'shame'.

Labour MP Brian Leishman said he was 'appalled' by the decision, telling Ms Kendall: 'Waspi women certainly do not need words of disappointment and they certainly do not need hollow statements. What they need is justice.'

Tory pensions spokesman Helen Whately said it was 'no surprise' Labour had broken its pre-election pledges to the Waspi women.



Sir Keir Starmer was a supporter of compensation for Waspi women as recently as 2022

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Corbyn says the government's 'wrong' to reject WASPI women's money



BBC

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0:00 / 0:40

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This is a video player interface for a BBC Newsnight segment. The video shows Jeremy Corbyn speaking. The player includes standard controls like play, pause, and volume, along with social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, Email, and others. A 'Watch the full video' button is overlaid on the right side of the video frame.



I call on the Government to work with WASPI to urgently deliver fair transitional arrangements for the women affected by the late 1940s

WASPI Women Against State Pension Inequality

I will work with WASPI to identify and deliver a fair solution for all women affected

WASPI Women Against State Pension Inequality

@WASPI_campaign @WaspiCampaign

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Two women are standing in front of a purple campaign backdrop. The woman on the left is holding a smaller purple sign with white text. The backdrop behind them has the WASPI logo and a call to action. The woman on the right is smiling. The scene is set indoors, possibly in an office or meeting room, with a window and blinds visible in the background.

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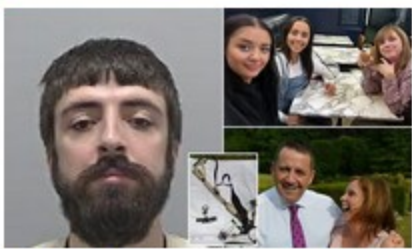

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Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Liz Kendall (right) holding a placard in support of the WASPI campaign.

Starmer in 2022 on WASPI 'injustice' and today on no compensation



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'Yet again, they said one thing to get elected and are now doing another,' she said.

Just like they had "no plans" to take the winter fuel payment from 10million pensioners.

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'They shouldn't expect to get away with this hypocrisy.'

Meanwhile former pensions minister Ros Altmann accused ministers of turning their backs on older people, adding: 'It has been clear there is little sympathy for pensioners, who are simply not a priority for public spending.'

Campaigners, led by the Waspi group, argued millions of women born in the 1950s affected by the changes were required to rethink their retirement plans at relatively short notice and **suffered financial hardship**.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) suggested that compensation ranging between £1,000 and £2,950, could be appropriate for each of those affected.

But Ms Kendall said a flat rate compensation scheme would not be 'a fair or proportionate use of taxpayers' money'.

And she said designing a bespoke scheme to help those worst affected would impose a 'significant cost and administrative burden' on her department. The Prime Minister backed the decision, saying: 'I do understand, of course, the concern of the Waspi women. But also I have to take into account whether it's right at the moment to impose a further burden on the taxpayer, which is what it would be.'

Chancellor 'understands why WASPI campaigners are disappointed'



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WASPI campaigners greeted by a van with The Prime Minister's face on during a demonstration in October



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View gallery

The Waspi women have been pushing for a huge payout from the government

Liz Kendall says WASPI women 'will not receive compensation'

Watch the full video

0:00 / 3:07

Ms Madden, who has campaigned for justice for the Waspi women for years, said: 'This is a bizarre and totally unjustified move which will leave everyone asking what the point of an ombudsman is if ministers can simply **ignore their decisions**.' Stephen Flynn, the SNP's leader at Westminster, described Labour's U-turn as 'shameless', adding: 'When it was politically convenient to do so, Labour backed the Waspi women. Today, they have chosen to betray them.'

In opposition, Labour were relentless in exploiting the Waspi campaign.

Ms Kendall describes herself on her own website as a 'long-standing supporter'.

At the 2019 election, the party committed itself to paying billions of pounds in compensation. At the time Angela Rayner, now the deputy prime minister, said: 'Any government should act responsibly to these women.'