# Plaid Cymru’s Heledd Fychan confronts pension age injustice amid government inaction



Plaid Cymru’s Heledd Fychan has recently taken up the mantle for the 1950s Women of Wales group, rallying against the injustices stemming from the abrupt changes to the state pension age. These modifications have not only blindsided countless women but have also plunged them into severe financial distress, as many anticipated retiring at 60. This government's mishandling of the situation reveals a troubling lack of regard for those who have spent their lives contributing to society.

In a parliamentary debate, Ms. Fychan also brought attention to the struggles faced by former British miners and ex-workers from Allied Steel and Wire, highlighting their unjust fights for fair pension rights. After decades of erosion in pension value, these workers find themselves overlooked by a government that seems more focused on political maneuvering than on meeting their basic rights. "These groups of people share a common story," she asserted, pointing out that all have labored tirelessly and are entitled to the stability retirement should provide. “They did nothing wrong, and it is an utter disgrace that they must now campaign for what they deserve," she added, demanding political accountability that remains conspicuously absent.

The movement for justice has gained momentum through efforts like the online petition launched by the 1950s Women of Wales group, which has garnered over 8,000 signatures. They are urgently calling for a public inquiry into the government's lack of communication and transparency regarding pension age adjustments, highlighting historical inequalities that have been systematically ignored. Previous findings from the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman suggest egregious failures on the part of the Department for Work and Pensions, which recommended compensation ranging from £1,000 to £2,950—a recommendation that the current UK Government has shockingly neglected.

On the campaign trail, Fychan did not shy away from confronting Labour representatives, including First Minister Eluned Morgan and Welsh Secretary Jo Stevens, accusing them of hypocrisy regarding pension rights. Conservative Sam Rowlands, whose mother has been adversely affected, echoed these sentiments, denouncing Labour's promises as empty. With Morgan's previous assertions that a Labour government would resolve these issues, the current leadership's failure to act stands in stark contrast.

Fychan’s motion aimed at addressing these injustices faced a disheartening setback in parliament, voted down 24 to 11, while Labour's competing amendment narrowly passed 24 to 23, underscoring the chaotic landscape of political alliances and the serious neglect of pension justice.

The ramifications of these pension reforms extend well beyond Wales. Campaigns such as the BackTo60 initiative, representing 3.8 million women born in the 1950s, are fervently pursuing compensation due to a staggering six-year delay in their payments. This initiative has resonated with trade unions and political figures, who are advocating for immediate measures to rectify the financial inequities faced by these women without compromising existing laws.

As this situation evolves, public meetings slated for Swansea aim to build a network of support and strategic planning for those affected by the 1995 pension age increase. For this generation of women, the struggle for justice remains fierce, reflecting a pressing need for genuine political action and accountability in an era where rights of working-class citizens should never be trivialized.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25184596.opposition-part-call-end-shameful-pensions-justice/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/24301569.1950s-women-wales-calls-inquiry-pension-scandal/> - The 1950s Women of Wales group has launched an online petition calling for a public inquiry into the state pension age changes affecting women born in the 1950s. The petition, which has garnered over 8,000 signatures, seeks to expose the impact of these changes on women's financial and mental well-being. The group argues that the government has not adequately considered the circumstances and historic inequality faced by these women. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman had previously found that the Department for Work and Pensions failed to properly inform affected women about the changes, recommending compensation ranging from £1,000 to £2,950. However, the UK Government has yet to respond to these findings and the petition for a public inquiry. The group has also lodged an official complaint with the Ombudsman and the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) regarding the issue. They are calling for a compensation scheme to be established to address the economic loss and impact on the lives of these women, including posthumous payments to the estates of those who have passed away.
3. <https://bylinetimes.com/2019/10/10/back-to-60-pensions-scandal-1950s-women-launch-crowdfunder-to-bring-appeal/> - The BackTo60 campaign group, representing 3.8 million women born in the 1950s, is seeking compensation from the UK Government for a six-year delay in receiving their pensions. The group is preparing to appeal a recent judicial review that denied compensation, and has launched a crowdfunding campaign to support this effort. The campaign has received backing from major trade unions, women's organizations, and political figures. A parliamentary motion calling for full restitution has been signed by 221 MPs from all parties, urging Parliament to pass a 'temporary special measure' to compensate the women without changing the provisions of the 1995 Pensions Act, which raised the pension age.
4. <https://nation.cymru/news/public-meeting-called-for-swansea-women-seeking-pension-justice/> - A public meeting has been organized in Swansea to discuss pension injustices faced by women born in the 1950s. The meeting, called by Plaid Cymru's Sioned Williams and the local campaign group Pension Justice for Swansea Women, aims to address the impact of the 1995 decision to increase women's state pension age from 60. Many women received as little as one year's notice of the up to six-year increase, affecting an estimated 15,000 women in the Swansea region. The meeting will provide updates on the fight for financial redress for these women.
5. <https://www.express.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/1891448/WASPI-petition-public-inquiry-state-pension> - A petition initiated by Kay Clarke, founder of the 1950s Women of Wales group, is gaining traction, calling for a public inquiry into the state pension age changes affecting women born in the 1950s. The petition has garnered over 6,000 signatures, surpassing half the threshold needed for a government response. Clarke emphasized the need to gather information to present to the inquiry if it takes place and mentioned plans for another rally outside Parliament to coincide with upcoming debates on compensation.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-politics-47638112> - Women born in the 1950s, who claim to have been left in financial hardship due to changes in the state pension age, have brought their campaign to the Welsh Assembly. The campaigners argue that the move to equalize the state pension age was implemented without sufficient notice, disrupting their retirement plans. Plaid Cymru has called for the Welsh Government to lobby the UK Treasury on their behalf. The UK government has stated that it has already made concessions and refuses to make further changes, citing cost concerns. The issue is expected to be addressed in court later this year to determine the lawfulness of the implementation of the change.
7. <https://newsvoice.info/article/page/dailyrecord/lifestyle/money/calls-state-pension-age-inquiry-34722039> - An online petition, initiated by Kay Clarke, founder of the '1950s Women of Wales' group, is calling for a public inquiry into changes made to the state pension age for women born in the 1950s. Despite the findings of an independent investigation by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) published last March, which recommended compensation for the affected women, the UK Government has ruled out providing a compensation scheme. The petition has garnered over 6,400 signatures, highlighting the ongoing demand for justice and compensation for the 1950s-born women affected by the pension age changes.