



Subject:	Notice of Motion : Changes to State Pension Provision – Response from the Minister for Communities
Date:	18 th November, 2016
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider the response from the Minister for Communities in relation to the Council's Motion on Changes to State Pension Provision.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the response and take any such action as may be determined.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Council, at its meeting on 3rd October, passed the following motion on Changes to State Pension Provision, which had been proposed by Councillor Heading and seconded by Councillor Copeland:</p> <p>“This Council calls upon the Government to make fair transitional state pension arrangements for all women born on or after 6th April 1951, who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age with lack of appropriate notification.</p> ”

Hundreds of thousands of women, including many of our own citizens, have had significant pension changes imposed on them by the Pensions Acts of 1995 and 2011 with little/no personal notification of the changes. Some women had only two years notice of a six-year increase to their state pension age.

Many women born in the 1950's are living in hardship. Retirement plans have been shattered with devastating consequences. Many of these women are already out of the labour market, caring for elderly relatives, providing childcare for grandchildren, or suffer discrimination in the workplace so struggle to find employment. Women born in this decade are suffering financially. These women have worked hard, raised families and paid their tax and national insurance with the expectation that they would be financially secure when reaching 60. It is not the pension age itself that is in dispute - it is widely accepted that women and men should retire at the same time. The issue is that the rise in the women's state pension age has been too rapid and has happened without sufficient notice being given to the women affected, leaving women with no time to make alternative arrangements.

The Council calls upon the Government to reconsider transitional arrangements for women born on or after 6th April 1951, so that women do not live in hardship due to pension changes they were not told about until it was too late to make alternative arrangements.”

3.2

A response has now been received from the Minister for Communities, which highlights the work which has been undertaken since 1995 around the equalisation of the state pension age for men and women. The Minister has indicated that he is supportive of a motion which was presented to the NI Assembly on 26th September, which called for transitional State pension arrangements for women born in the 1950s, and that he has written to Mr. Richard Harrington M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Pensions, advising him of the motion and urging the Government to give it careful consideration to determine if any action could be taken to address the concerns of the women affected. A copy of Minister Givan's response is attached.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.3

None

3.4	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> None
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Response from the Minister for Communities.