

Press Release

Contact: Hannah Waters | hannah@tendoconsulting.co.uk | 07785758614

New overseas voters call on Downing Street to end 'frozen pensions' as they are given votes for life.

Campaigners have this week travelled from Canada to 10 Downing Street to urge Prime Minister Boris Johnson to uprate the state pensions of all Britons abroad in response to the passing of the Elections Act, granting 3.5 million overseas citizens the vote for life.

Representatives from the International Consortium of British Pensioners (ICBP) and the End Frozen Pensions campaign appealed to the Prime Minister on Thursday, requesting the Government rethink its longstanding stance on overseas pension uprating in light of the increased electorate of overseas voters.

Currently, around half a million British pensioners - 43% of all pensioners overseas - have their UK state pensions frozen because they live in a country without a 'reciprocal' uprating agreement with the UK. This means their pensions fall in real terms year on year, with some receiving as little as £22 per week, despite having paid in the same contributions as other British pensioners.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, John Duffy, Chair of the ICBP, declared that 'this unfair policy has gone on far too long' and stressed the importance of this issue to overseas voters.

A recent survey conducted by the End Frozen Pensions campaign found 85% of those impacted by the frozen pensions policy would be likely or very likely to vote in the next general election. Of those, 83% were very likely, and a further 10% 'likely' to vote for a party that committed to ending frozen pensions, with 70% stating ending this injustice was the most important political issue in deciding how they would vote.

More than 90% of the 'frozen pensioners' affected by this policy live in Commonwealth countries, like Australia and Canada, which have close cultural and political ties with the UK. Meanwhile, pensioners who live in the US or EU member states, and a select list of other nations, receive fully uprated UK state pensions.

Fiona MacLeod, Board Member of the Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners, says

"After moving from Scotland to Canada, and spending years campaigning for the end of this discriminatory policy, I am disappointed at the lack of engagement with the issue by the UK Government. We feel we are being treated like second class citizens and are saddened by the continuation of this policy. Now the Government has given Brits living overseas the right of a vote for life, surely the next logical step is to treat all British pensioners living overseas equally, and uprate all UK state pensions, no matter if they live in Canada or the US."

John Duffy, Chair of the International Consortium of British Pensioners, says

"This policy continues to be completely morally indefensible. Giving British pensioners living overseas a vote for life, whilst simultaneously denying nearly half of them a fully uprated UK state pension is a gross injustice. I look forward to hearing the Government's position on this matter and I hope they make the decision to finally put an end to a policy that leaves many British pensioners facing a retirement of financial hardship. We all contributed equally to our pensions and it is only fair that we receive the benefit equally."

Notes to editors

1. The letter is available upon request.
2. The [End Frozen Pensions campaign](#) is run by the International Consortium of British Pensioners, and advocates on behalf of the half a million British pensioners affected by the UK Government's 'frozen' pensions policy.
3. The Elections Act 2022 received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 and includes the provision to remove the rule that people who left more than 15 years ago are ineligible to register to vote in UK elections.
4. A pensioner who retired in 1998 and who has lived in a frozen country for the duration of their retirement will receive a state pension of only £62.45, but if they continued to live in the UK they would be receiving £185.15. The erosion of their pension to date is £45,903.40.
5. All UK pensioners with national insurance contributions are entitled to a British state pension regardless of where they live. However, due to living in certain overseas countries, 492,000 British pensioners are denied the right to annual payment increases in line with inflation. This means their pension is 'frozen' at the level it was when they left the UK or first withdrew their pension, and falls in value year on year.
6. The 'frozen' pensions policy is the outcome of a series of historical reciprocal agreements negotiated with a number of countries that provide the uprating of state pensions. However, the policy can be changed through domestic legislation.
7. In November 2020, the Canadian Government formally requested to create a reciprocal agreement to end the frozen pensions policy affecting around 127,000 UK pensioners living in Canada. The UK government rejected the negotiations.
8. Case studies from British pensioners detailing how this this policy has affected them can be found [here](#).