

# New campaign to end frozen UK state pensions in Thailand

[Barry Kenyon](#) July 25, 2023

*Expats have been complaining about frozen pensions since the 1980s.*

The 40-year campaign to persuade the British government to end the discriminatory practice of freezing the state pensions of some 520,000 Brits abroad is seeking increased membership amongst those expats living in Thailand. A brand new group End Frozen Pensions – Thailand Branch – has this week received a reply from British MP Sir Roger Gale who says the stumbling block is the fear of the UK Treasury that there could be a flood of catching-up claims which might run into millions of pounds.

The British government only allows inflation-linked increases to the state pension in a small number of countries outside the European Union based on so-called "mutually-assured" agreements. Thailand is not one of the lucky places, although the Philippines is. The issue has been raised many times with the UK court authorities as well as human rights tribunals abroad. But the response has always been that the alleged discrimination is a political rather than a legal issue and thus falls outside of juristic competence.

Upgrading state pensions of all expats, irrespective of location, might cost up to 2 billion pounds over several years but even that amount is less than one percent of the total pensions bill over a similar time scale. Most political pundits say that there is a zero chance of the Conservative government changing its mind, though there is more support in the Labour party for a rectification of the discriminatory practice. Separately, there is now legislation to allow long-term expats to vote in general elections in UK, although the numbers are small in electoral terms and spread over many constituencies.

Expats can join the new group by contacting End Frozen Pensions – Thailand Branch on Facebook. With a British general election in sight next year, the group believes this might be a good moment to rally British expats in Thailand who are thought to number around 50,000, mostly retirees on annually renewable visas. The vast majority have private or company pensions as well as the state pension which becomes frozen on taking up residence or as soon as the UK tax authorities find out. A Thai press report last year said there were also over 1,000 Brits living in Thailand via the Elite visa which offers multiple entry for between 5 and 20 years. About 5,000

Brits have work permits for employment mostly in the restaurant, entertainment and hi-tech industries.