

William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee

Sent by email only

21 November 2023

Dear Chair,

I am writing to update you on our investigation into the communication by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) of changes to women's State Pension age and associated issues.

In [stage one](#) of our investigation we found that, in 2005, DWP failed to make a reasonable decision about targeting information to the women who needed it. In 2006, DWP proposed to write to women individually but it failed to act promptly.

Stage two has considered:

- DWP's communication about the number of qualifying years of National Insurance contributions that are required for a full State Pension
- Complaint handling by the DWP and the Independent Case Examiner (ICE)
- Whether injustice resulted from any failings, including the maladministration we identified at stage one of the investigation.

Stage three considers whether action needs to be taken to put right any injustice.

We shared our findings for stage two of the investigation in February 2023. Following a legal challenge, we agreed to look again at our findings about injustice resulting from maladministration in DWP's communication about the 1995 Pensions Act.

In the recent scrutiny hearing Rebecca Hilsenrath, our CEO, committed to a timescale for sharing our provisional views about injustice as well as our considerations about remedy. I am writing to confirm that we are sharing our provisional views with complainants, their referring MPs, and DWP today. Complainants, their MPs, and DWP have until 21 December to comment on our provisional views. We will then consider any comments and further evidence we receive before we make any final decisions about injustice and remedy.

Rebecca also shared that we aim to publish the final report in the new year. The exact timing will depend on factors beyond our control such as the time it takes to review comments on provisional views.

My Office plans to update all MPs today. If you have any further comments, please do not hesitate to contact my Private Secretary (faye.glover@ombudsman.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Rob Behrens

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