

## Written evidence submitted by Trustees of the Ammanford & District Miners Welfare Association (MPS0049)

The History of Mining communities built our own Institutes, Hospitals, Convalescent Homes community facilities. Paid into our Pension funds for retirement. The decision to take 50% of surpluses off one of the largest Pension funds of the day reflects badly on Governments and the Country to treat any of its people in such a way.

From 1994 the issue of Pensions been an emotive subject, with former miners expecting a fair rate of pension for their working life in the coal industry.

Members over the years discussed and questioned the pensions in payment, whilst majority accept the Government Guarantee is important and would not wish to jeopardise the safety provided, the cost paid for such security is far more than any reasonable agreement can justify.

With 27 yrs. elapsed since the surplus share was started; it is clear the risk if any into the future is greatly reduced. The Scheme's membership has fallen by over 300 k since 1994. Many former miners have passed away over the years with widows receiving part pension where applicable, value of pensions is exceptionally low as referenced in the recent BEIS Committee session. With the median Pension only £65 a week, 50% of members have a pension of less than £65 a week, 25% less than £35 a week, and 10% less than £18 a week.

Surpluses and deficits have occurred, stock market falls, yet the fundamental issue, NO GOVERNMENT REQUIRED TO PUT ANYTHING INTO THE SCHEME, over 27 years, yet have profited 4.4 billion off the hard-earned funds of the mining communities, with another approx 2 billion currently expected to be paid in future years. PLEASE NOTE: Bonuses can erode in value as any future bonuses are not guaranteed and none are linked to annual inflationary increases.

Many questioned why 50% was required as it was a Nationalised Industry with Government departments running the Scheme under the NCB then British Coal. To this day no answer given to the question yet BEIS Government department now, still input all aspects of scheme?

We request the BEIS Committee members consider the following.

1. Monies still in the Scheme above the £4.4 billion already paid to Governments is returned to the members funds for an immediate Pension increase for those still alive today, approx. £2 billion reported. Average current death rate of members running at around 7,000 per year.
2. That any future surplus is reviewed to increase the members share to above the current 50%.
3. RPI changing to be calculated in line with CPIH, might also provide more benefit to the Government at the expense of scheme members, pensioners, and beneficiaries.
4. The recent Bonus protection whilst welcomed is not index linked its inflation adjusted value will erode over time again at the expense of former coal miners and their Communities.
5. A Nationalised Industry with Government departments running the Scheme under the NCB then British Coal. Why 50% of any Surplus levied?  
Have any other former Nationalised Industry been treated this way?

I hope the Committee will reflect on the history the vast amounts Governments have taken to date and repay monies to former miners, widows, and beneficiaries, who is funds they are and were to receive in retirement.

Anthony Jones

[On behalf of the Trustees of the Ammanford & District Miners Welfare Association]

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