The 100-year-old woman whose state pension is frozen at just £6 a week

£6 state pension buys just three loaves of bread in Australia

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Is there an expat pensioner who is getting a worse deal than 100-year-old Annie Carr? Mrs Carr, who was born in Sunderland and emigrated to Australia in 1970 to join her only daughter, receives a UK basic state pension that is frozen at just £6.12 a week. Yet if she had stayed in the UK, or emigrated to a country such as Spain or the US, she would be getting up to £107.45 a week. Instead, she is out of pocket by more than £5,000 a year.

Campaigners say that cases such as this demonstrate why the UK government's "frozen pensions" policy – highlighted in Guardian Money last Saturday – is discriminatory and unfair, and results in financial hardship for British citizens around the world.

We reported how, if you decide to move to Australia, Canada, South Africa or one of a number of other countries, your basic state pension won't increase annually, as happens in the UK. It will be permanently frozen at the date you retire or when you arrived in that country, and will never increase. However, if you move to an EU country, the US, or one of a list of other places including Israel and the Philippines, your state pension will increase in line with inflation.

There are around 555,000 "frozen" pensioners around the world, almost half of whom live in Australia. One of the oldest is Mrs Carr, who is thought to receive the smallest full pension of any of the expats. She was born in July 1911 in Monkwearmouth, Sunderland, and lived in that area all her life until she went to Australia on Christmas Day 1970. She worked from home doing hem stitching before she was married, and helped bring up her siblings after her father died. Mrs Carr's husband Edward died in 1964, after which she worked part-time at a department store in Sunderland until she emigrated.

"As I was her only child, and Deborah the only grandchild at that stage, she came to Australia to join us," says her daughter, Mavis Wilson, who lives in Camden, New South Wales, on the outskirts of Sydney. "At that time the Australian government made up her pension to the Australian level, and after five years she received an Australian pension in her own right."

She adds: "Mum has always been content with what she got – but that is not to say it was right. When she arrived, I think her pension was about £5. She went back [to the UK] for about nine months in 1972 to help a cousin whose wife had died and was left with a young son. She came back with the present level of £6.12.

"Given the fact that what she gets would buy about three loaves of bread today, you could say the Australian government have kept her for at least the last 20 or 30 years."

The divide between the pension haves and have-nots widened last year when the UK government restored the link between the basic state pension and earnings. The annual increase in the basic state pension is now protected by what has been described as a "triple lock" - the rise is in line with earnings, prices or a 2.5% increase, whichever is the greatest. As a result, last month saw the amount people receive per week rise by £5.30 to £107.45.

The International Consortium of British Pensioners (ICBP), which last month launched a Pension Justice website to highlight its cause, says cases like this demonstrate why it is wrong to suggest that these individuals are somehow at fault for "choosing" to live abroad in a country where the UK basic state pension is not increased in line with inflation. "Such decisions aren't always straightforward. Many pensioners were originally posted abroad with British companies, the diplomatic service, the armed forces etc, or left to be closer to children or grandchildren. Life can take us in unexpected directions - and it's wrong for some people to be penalised for it, while others are not," the group says.

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