

Public anger at 'hidden' pensions policy

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Nearly half of the British public would vote for a

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political party that plans to unfreeze the pensions of more than half a million of our pensioners based outside of the UK – according to new research.

The OnePoll survey, conducted on behalf of the International Consortium of British Pensioners (ICBP), found that 41 per cent of the 1,000 people polled would vote for a party who stated they would unfreeze pensions for British nationals based abroad.

The issue of frozen pensions refers to current government legislation which sees more than 500,000 British pensioners based abroad faced with their state pension frozen at the same rate as when they left the UK. The vast majority of countries on the government 'hit list' for frozen pensions are Commonwealth members, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, whereas those British pensioners living in the likes of the US and Europe still receive a fully uprated state pension.



Sixty per cent of those polled agreed this was no way to treat British nationals who had contributed to the economy - paying both taxes and national insurance - for a number of years.

The Prime Minister has recently focused on pensioners based in the UK with the triple-lock pensions promise. He said: "I want people when they reach retirement, to know that they can have dignity and security in their old age."

The unfortunate consequence for overseas pensioners is that they will become comparatively worse off simply due to their choice of retirement location.

The secret discrimination continues, as the government takes an 'out of sight, out of mind' approach and relies on a lack of awareness of the issue.

Furthermore, Pensions Minister Steve Webb had been claiming the cost to fix this discrimination is £700m but revised figures release by the government last month show the figure for 2014/15 to be significantly lower at £580m – representing just 0.7 per cent of the overall pensions budget.

When those polled were informed that the cost to unfreeze pensions would represent just a tiny proportion of