

Simon Read: Is it fair that some overseas pensioners receive a higher state pension than others?

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Last week I wrote about the fact that about half a million pensioners won't benefit from Government plans to triple-lock UK pensions to ensure a minimum annual increase of 2.5 per cent until 2020.

That is because they live in the wrong countries, in overseas Commonwealth jurisdictions such as Australia and South Africa. Their pensions are fixed at the rate they were paid when they first received a pension overseas.

Meanwhile a further half a million pensioners living in other countries receive their pension fully indexed as if they still lived in Britain. So, for example, someone living in the US on the border of Canada gets annual increases in their state pension while someone a few miles away the other side of the border, does not.

Is that fair? I don't believe so. But some people believe that the pensioners have no claim for parity. Why? Because they knew the situation when they moved abroad.

Typical is reader Les Townsend, who wrote: "I am astonished to read that you take such a position.

"The individuals involved all made their own decision to leave the UK and go overseas. No one forced them to go. If they had taken the time and trouble to examine the pension issue before they left, then perhaps they would have made some alternative pension plans.

"The fact that they have no pension now is not the responsibility of the UK authorities or taxpayers, but rather the individuals themselves. We should not have to pay for their life choices, and I think that it is wrong for a person like yourself – in a responsible position – to pander to them."

I hope you don't think I pander to people. I try to consider justice and think it's not really fair that someone in one country is treated better than someone in a different country – they should be treated the same. What do you think?

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