

# Simon Read: MPs of all parties join fight for justice for UK pensioners with frozen pensions

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[The Independent](#) | 2014-04-05T00:13:54+01:00

Some things seem simply a question of fairness and justice. I don't think it's right that more than half a million British expatriate pensioners are being treated shabbily by the Government.

In the week that the current Coalition proudly trumpeted the new state top-up pension, ministers seem to have forgotten the estimated 565,000 pensioners who have had their pensions frozen at the rate it was when they left the UK.

It's an injustice because more than 600,000 UK pensioners who have retired to some countries get handed all the pension increases as if they were still living at home. But the other 46 per cent do not, simply because of where they live. All our pensioners should be treated the same.

This week I attended the launch of the all-party parliamentary group on frozen British pensions at the Houses of Parliament where Tory MP Sir Roger Gale launched the group with support from Labour MP Dame Anne Begg. All the affected pensioners want is parity. They're not asking to be repaid all the money they've lost over the years by having their pensions frozen.

Passions were running high at the launch. Sir Roger Gale said: "We're seeking parity at today's prices – a fair deal for lot of people, many of whom are very elderly and don't have much time left. It's wrong to

rely on foreign charity simply because our governments have failed to do the right thing.“

Dame Anna said: ”This is a battle which needs to be fought and won.“

Sir Peter Bottomley pitched in: ”We need to change the situation from wrong to right. It's not a matter of how, it's a matter of when. As time goes on the wrongness and injustice increases and the issue needs to be put on the agenda of the Commonwealth Secretariat.“

Finally, Dave Morris from the International Consortium of British Pensioners, said: ”Because we don't live here the Government thinks nobody cares about the issue.

“More than half a million people are affected and they all have friends and family here in the UK. It's absurd that Britain is the only OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) country (out of 34) that doesn't uprate their pensions.”

The argument seems a simple one to me. We just need today's Ministers to recognise the unfairness and do the right thing.

With an election looming it's worth reminding MPs that the issue also affects the millions of friends and family of the expat pensioners hit by the freeze. And unlike the overseas folk who don't have the right to vote, their friends and family do!

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