

# New pensions minister has massive job on her hands

*The Tories have appointed campaigner Ros Altmann to the post*

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Among all the political upheaval we've seen in the past few days you may have missed the appointment of a new pensions minister. It was necessary because the previous minister – Steve Webb – lost his seat in the general “let's dump on the LibDems” movement in last week's election.

But in a surprise move the Tories have decided against putting a career politician into the job. Instead they've handed the responsibility to campaigner Ros Altmann. I hope this is a good move. Ros has a good track record championing the underdog and I hope that she continues it in government.

She has a massive job on her hands with the new pension freedoms introduced last month still bedding in and further extensions planned, including the right of annuity holders to cash in their policy. There's also the ongoing auto-enrolment process, under which every firm in the country should by 2018 have started a pension pot for employees.

On top of that there's the radical changes to the state pension that will leave many of us having to wait until we're much older than 65 to be able to claim. You can rest assured I'll be keeping a close eye on what happens as pension reform affects us all. But I'll also be contacting the new minister to fight the case for fairness for two groups of people.

First are the 700,000 or so women born between 1951 and 1953 who from next April face getting a smaller state pension than men of the

same age when the single-tier state pension is introduced. It's an unfair anomaly that should be put right.

There's a second unfair anomaly hitting some 500,000 retired Brits who have had their state pension frozen because they moved to the 'wrong' country. It's an injustice that they lose out while more than half a million other expats get the annual state pension increase.

In the past Ros has campaigned for justice. I hope that she will continue to do so by addressing these unfair anomalies.