

Public Service Pensioners' Council

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To: **Secretaries of Constituent Organisations**

October 2015

Dear Colleagues,

PSPC CAMPAIGNS UPDATE – Number 60/2015

I hope that this update finds you all well and enjoying some autumn sunshine.

Handover of PSPC Secretariat

The handover of the PSPC secretariat is now complete. We also have finalised a new bank account and have been able to send out the letters requesting your subscriptions for 2015-16. I hope that the late request for membership fees will not cause you any problems. You will notice that we have requested payments by BACS transfer. This will help us administrate the finances of PSPC more efficiently. Please ensure that you return the acknowledgement slip to Sue Ward at NARPO, also including the name of your organisation. This should ensure we don't chase you for payment, when you have already paid!

Transferring ownership of the PSPC website has now also been completed and it is again available at: [www. <http://www.publicservicepensioners.org.uk/>](http://www.publicservicepensioners.org.uk/)

Consultation into the future of consumer price indices (Johnson review)

In the last update I reported on the UK Statistics Authority consultation on the UK's range of consumer price statistics. The PSPC submitted a response to the consultation which chimed with other pensioner organisations such as the Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance and NPC. In short, we supported the work that is being undertaken by Jill Leyland and John Austin to develop a household inflation index (HII) which would measure the change in prices being experienced by the typical households, Furthermore the PSPC stated that this should be broken down into Different income groups, geographical areas and household types e.g.; pensioners, those in receipt of benefits, single parents.

The UK Statistics Authority received over 80 responses and these will be summarised in a report to be published in the autumn. The Board of Authority will then consider the consultation carefully before it issues its final response in early 2016.

Pension savings incentives consultation

The government has been consulting on whether there is a case for "reforming pension's tax relief to strengthen incentives to save, offering savers greater simplicity and transparency, or whether it would be best to keep the current system". These options range from a fundamental reform of the system (to a system like ISAs and providing a government top-up on pension contributions) to less radical changes (such as retaining the current system and altering the lifetime and annual allowances), as well as options in between. An article in the Sunday Times, indicates that the only change likely is a move from the current tiered system of tax relief on pension contribution to a flat-rate of around 33%.

General Secretary: Lisa Ray

ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTED: Association of Retired and Former HMI Schools • Association of HM Inspectors of Schools (Scotland) • Association of Local Authority Chief Executives • Association of Teachers and Lecturers • Association of School and College Leaders • British Broadcasting Corporation Pensioners Association • Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance • Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance (Scotland) • Educational Institute of Scotland • Forces Pension Society • Foreign and Commonwealth Office Association • GMB • MDP Retired Officers' Association • National Association of Head Teachers • National Association of Retired Firefighters • National Association of Retired Police Officers • National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers • National Federation of Occupational Pensioners • National Union of Teachers • Overseas Service Pensioners' Association • Prospect • Public and Commercial Services Union • Retired Police Officers' Association (Scotland) • Retired Prison Governors Association • Retired Teachers' Association (Northern Ireland) • Scottish Retired Teachers' Association • UNISON • University and College Union

State Pension Top ups

The Government have announced that between October 12th 2015 and 5 April 2017 you can increase your State Pension and get a guaranteed extra income for life with State Pension top up.

You can get between £1 and £25 extra per week by making a lump sum payment before 5 April 2017

To qualify you must be entitled to the basic State Pension or Additional State Pension and be either:

- a man born before 6 April 1951
- a woman born before 6 April 1953

Further details including a State Pension top up calculator are available at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/statepensiontopup?gclid=CLTRsLPYwcgCFQxmGwodCjcBnA>

Alternatively, you can call State Pension top up:

Telephone: 0345 600 4270

Textphone: 0300 200 3519

Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm

Saturday, 8am to 4pm

Universal Pensioner Benefits

The BBC has agreed to take on responsibility for funding the over-75s licence fee concession. I have written to HM Treasury expressing our concern that the BBC have been required to make £750 million available from 2020 (one fifth of their current income) for this purpose. I have asked for their assurance that the provision of free TV licences for the over 75 years beyond 2020 will continue.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any comments about this update.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Ray

Lisa Ray
General Secretary