

09 March 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL MP MEETS WITH AYRSHIRE WASPI CAMPAIGNERS IN PARLIAMENT AFTER JOINING PROTEST

Ayr, Carrick & Cumnock MP Corri Wilson met with campaigners from Ayrshire's Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) group in Westminster yesterday to lend her support to their fight against the UK Government's changes to the state pension age. The meeting took place after Ms Wilson joined the thousands of protestors from across the UK who had gathered outside the Houses of Parliament in London to voice their opposition to the move.

The UK Government has accelerated the process of equalisation of pension ages for men and women, which means that women born in the 1950s have lost thousands of pounds in pension payments without having sufficient time to plan for the changes.

During the meeting, Ms Wilson pledged to continue pressuring the Government on the issue and discussed the impact of the changes on the lives of the Ayrshire women. South Ayrshire Council, led by a Conservative-Labour partnership, voted last week against a motion that urged the Chief Executive to write to the Government supporting the affected women.

Speaking after the meeting, Ms Wilson said:

"It was a pleasure to meet the Ayrshire WASPI group today and to be part of the protests against this Government's unfair changes to pension arrangements. To do so on International Women's Day just shows the challenges women continue to face.

"These women have a right to be angry – they have worked hard for decades and have paid their fair share into the pot. The Government must now honour that and recognise that pensions are not a privilege but an entitlement. The Tories laughably claim to be the party of the working people, but the pension changes show clearly that this is simply not the case. In fact, under this Government, ordinary working people are being penalised to cover the costs of the Government's failed economic policies. This was made clearer when the Tory-led South Ayrshire Council refused to write to the Government expressing support for local WASPI women.

"While I agree with equalisation of the state pension age, I strongly oppose the heavy-handed way in which the Government has imposed these changes. Thousands of women in my constituency, and across the country, now face years without receiving their state pension and a struggle to make ends meet.

"We know that the Government has the money in the National Insurance Fund to help these women, and ensure they get what they are entitled to. Indeed the Chancellor claimed yesterday that the economy was booming. If that really is the case – then I urge the Government to do the right thing and scrap these changes immediately."

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