

Freedom of Information request 378/2016

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Information request

I am seeking information on transitional arrangements assessed by DWP to mitigate the increase in State Pension age for women affected by both the 1995 and 2011 Pensions acts.

Please provide the following:

1. Details of what transitional arrangements have been, were, or are being considered by DWP, when they were assessed and how long for.
2. The cost that would be incurred from implementing each option respectively.
3. The number and costs of DWP staff hours spent working on the options.
4. The number and costs of external (e.g. consultant) hours spent working on the options.
5. The cost of any external legal advice sought regarding the options and the number of hours billed by external legal counsel.

DWP response

Transitional arrangements considered during the passage of the Pensions Act 2011 through Parliament are shown in Table A.

The Government responded to concerns raised during the debate in Parliament about the Pensions Bill 2011 regarding the impact on women facing the biggest increases in their State Pension age under the proposed timetable and considered a range of possible transitional arrangements. The costings in table A summarise the net additional DWP benefit expenditure relative to the expenditure impacts of the original timetable published in the Pensions Bill at introduction (2010/11 terms).

Accordingly the Government introduced an amendment at Commons Report stage in October 2011 to limit the increase to a maximum of 18 months (option 10 in table A). A note on this amendment is available at:

Freedom of Information publication template

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182066/pensions-bill-spa-info.pdf

Table B summarises illustrative costings produced for hypothetical policies, as requested by the Minister for Pensions since June 2015 to give an indication of the fiscal impacts of such policies. These options are not under policy consideration.

Table C summarises an illustrative costing requested by the Work and Pensions Select Committee in February 2016 on the cost of reversing the 1995 Pensions Act changes. Table D covers an additional proposal put forward during an Opposition Day debate in February 2016.

Several of the options in Tables A-D would be unlawful if introduced, as they would introduce new inequalities. There are also operational reasons why some of the options could not be delivered.

Tables A-D provide an indication of the additional net DWP benefit expenditure costs and broad timings of when these were considered. They do not include delivery or operational impacts. We estimate that the cost of complying fully with your request would exceed the appropriate limit for central Government, set by regulations at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

The number and costs of DWP staff hours spent working on the options (point 3) is not available.

The number of and costs of external hours spent working on the options held by the Government (Point 4) is zero, and the cost of any external legal advice sought regarding the options and the number of hours billed by external legal counsel (Point 5) is zero. This is standard practice as the Department has its own policy, analytical and legal resource.