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**POLITICS**

9th September

# Ditching the triple lock will leave many UK pensioners in poverty



By Readers of The National



Work and Pensions Secretary Therese Coffey has compliantly performed a volte-face

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IN July 2016, the **Conservative** baroness Ros Altmann, a former pensions minister, said that the triple lock had "outlived its purpose". At the time a spokesman for for the Department of Work and Pensions said that Lady Altmann had no bearing on policy and that "we have no plans to review it". Age UK also responded by saying that the triple lock was important because it provided older people with financial security.

Fast forward to today, and the government's plan to suspend one element of the triple lock, ie the link between the state pension and earnings. Quite a sea change in policy in the space of five years – or is it? Maybe the opinion of one ennobled Conservative MP, who doesn't have to rely on one of the poorest state pensions in **Europe**, may have had wider support

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within the Conservative party but at that time pragmatism held sway. No such reservations now, and the suspension of one element of the triple lock is a preamble to a possible permanent ending to the link between the state pension and earnings.

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British pensioners were on track to having their pensions increased by a possible 8%, which would have taken many pensioners out of poverty. Unfortunately the Conservative government – true to their unwelcome moniker as the nasty

party – couldn't countenance such sizeable increase in the state pension. Work and Pensions Secretary Therese Coffey, ditching a manifesto commitment to uphold the triple lock, compliantly performed a volte-face at the behest of U-turn Boris.

Coffey said this ensured that "pensioners are not unfairly benefiting from a statistical anomaly". The anomaly being an increase in the niggardly state pension [£137.60 per week] that would have lifted many of the 2.1 million UK pensioners out of poverty.

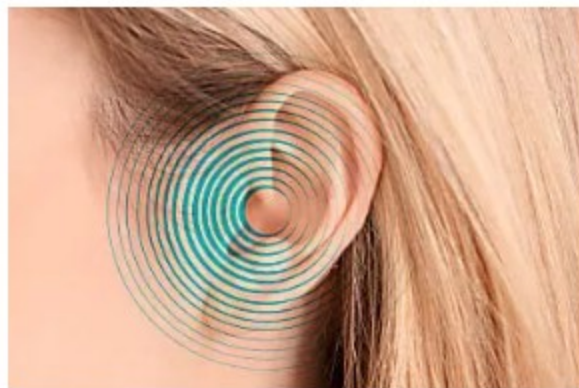
To those pensioners who selfishly support this regressive change to the triple lock, I say: "Wake up and smell the Coffey".

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**Alexander Gordon via email**

DURING the EU referendum in 2016, Boris Johnson stood in front of a bus that promised £350 million a week to the NHS if the UK left the EU. In 2019 Boris blustered with his manifesto for the General Election. He assured the voters there would be no rise in either income tax or National Insurance and said the **Tories** were the party of "low tax". That is certainly true if you are a millionaire or a billionaire.

Now Johnson has had to admit that none of his previous assurances were worth anything. He has decided to introduce a new poll tax on low-paid workers. This will pay for social care in England only. The landlords and other fat cats who have the bulk of the wealth are exempt from any

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tax rise. The poll tax will fall on the nurses, the shop workers, the delivery drivers, the cleaners and others who have seen the country through the pandemic.



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The poll tax will be paid by low-paid workers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with no benefit. Johnson has called this a "Union dividend". The money will go to wealthy care home providers down south. Most of them are based in tax havens

and contribute little or no tax to the UK.

The British Unionists' favourite propaganda tool is to say Scotland is "subsidised". The opposite is true. Scottish **oil** has been bankrolling the UK **economy** for the last 50 years. The economist Sydney Pollard said the Thatcher experiment would have ended in 1983 without the North Sea. What Scotland got in return was the poll tax and 250,000 manufacturing jobs being sent abroad. The only country in the world to discover oil and get poorer.

A referendum on Scottish **independence** will be held in the next two years. The sick and twisted UK media will mount an absurd unprecedented campaign of fear-mongering and lies. Independence will require a massive collective effort from everyone who wants it.

**Alan Hinnrichs**  
**Dundee**



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