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State pension: ‘Shameful decision’ on triple lock will push older people into poverty after UK inflation rise

Living costs rise will ‘strike fear into the hearts’ of elderly who are already facing pension shortfall, warn campaigners





By Serina Sandhu

Senior Reporter

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The **sharp increase in inflation** will have “struck fear into the hearts” of older people who are already struggling financially and worried about **their pensions**, campaigners have warned.

Hard-up pensioners have accused the Government of not caring about them as they grapple with the rising cost of living, including the cost of fuel and food, and limited options to increase their income.

It follows news that the **rate of Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation rose from 3.1 per cent in September to 4.2 per cent in October** – hitting a near-decade high.

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The announcement by the Office for National Statistics has inflamed anger over the Government’s watering down of the state pension triple lock.

The **triple lock policy** ensured the state pension rose by whichever was the **highest of inflation, earnings growth or 2.5 per cent each year**. However, the Government has amended it **for April 2022**, removing the earnings element, due to concerns about affordability.

This means that rather than older people getting a pension increase of about eight per cent, in line with wage rises, their income will rise by 3.1 per cent, September’s inflation rate.

October’s figure of 4.2 per cent – driven in part by soaring energy bills – confirms “the cost of living crisis already engulfing pensioners”, said Conservative peer and former pensions minister Baroness Ros Altmann, who has fought to overturn the **Government’s move to temporarily scrap the triple lock**.

“It will continue to become clear that the shameful decision to increase their state pensions by just 3.1 per cent next year will plunge more elderly people into poverty,” she said.

On Monday, Government MPs refused to accept an amendment from the House of Lords to retain the triple lock, leaving pensioners “without the protection they were promised”.

Last year ministers introduced legislation to ensure the state pension was not frozen and rose by 2.5 per cent.



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Caroline Abrahams, charity director at [Age UK](#), said: “Making ends meet is already really tough if you are living on a low fixed income, so the news about rising inflation will have struck fear into the hearts of the two million poor pensioners, and of the many more who are only just above the line.

“We can’t have a situation this winter in which older people are forced to choose between heating and eating, but with prices on the rise that’s a real and growing risk.

“We think it’s incumbent on Government to act fast and bring forward a package of measures to protect their health and welfare during the challenging months to come.”

Peter Smith, director of policy and advocacy at NEA, warned pensioners may be forced to turn off their heating this winter, leaving them at “acute risk of serious ill-health as we head into colder weather”.

Alan Geraghty, a 74-year-old retired industrial cleaner from Coventry, who received help paying his energy bills from fuel poverty charity [National Energy Action](#) (NEA), said he worried the rising cost of living would further stretch his budget.

He criticised the decision to scrap the triple lock, saying: “The people in Government don’t really care. As long as they get their £81,000 [salary] a year... They can go and get all these wages aside from their normal job and just leave us to it.”

The Government said of the triple lock changes: “This is an exceptional measure for one year only in response to the circumstances of the pandemic and ensures fairness for both pensioners and taxpayers. We are committed to reintroducing the earnings element of the triple lock next year.” [i](#)