

Press Release

**From Councillor Barry Stamp
Stafford Liberal Democrats**

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Use: Immediate

Councillor Warns of Crisis Facing Hundreds of Local Women

A senior Liberal Democrat Councillor has this week highlighted the problem facing hundreds of women in the town who he claim stand to get a raw deal from the state pension system.

Speaking at a meeting of Liberal Democrat members Councillor Barry Stamp said that the pattern for many women was “poorly paid work followed by poorly paid retirement”.

“ Statistics show that among today’s pensioners poverty rates are highest among women. This is supported by the fact that almost three quarters of pensioners on Income Support are women, with the elderly widows being especially hard hit. What is more worrying is that this crisis is set to continue with hundreds of women in the 40 to 50 age band also facing a poor payout once they reach retirement age. The problem lies in the fact that many paid National Insurance at the special married women’s rate. With the Governments plans to increase the role of private pension provision and to cut back on state pensions this situation can only get worse. I believe the government must act now and make a substantial increase in the basic state pension, particularly for older pensioners. This is the only way to guarantee help gets through to the poorest pensioners, many of whom do not claim the Governments complex means tested benefits. I also think the Government should write to all women in their 40s and 50s who have ever paid a married women’s “stamp” to warn them their pension rights might be in jeopardy. I am extremely concerned that hundreds of women in Stafford face a bleak future unless something is done now,” said Councillor Stamp.

“In an attempt to find out just how many local women are suffering under the current pension scheme I intend to organise a series of meetings with pensioner groups, and organisations who provide services directly for pensioners, within the town. I will be asking the Borough Council to add their weight to my call to Central Government to change their policy and ensure a sound a secure future for many local women. It is all to easy to brush this problem under the carpet, but unless something is done now many generations of women are going to suffer,” added Councillor Stamp.

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