

Report from Dr Lloyd on meeting Prof Alston in Geneva 27th June 2019

Our UN envoy Dr Davina Lloyd is just back from a very successful meeting in Geneva with Prof Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on Austerity, prior to his making his final report on the UK to the UN on Friday 28th June. Prof Alston made the following comment on Thursday 27th June in response to a question from Dr Davina Lloyd about the plight of the 1950s women:

*'This group of women have been singled out by the UK Government to simply lose basically 5 years of their expected pension without any attempt to make that change manageable and completely upending peoples' lives and I think that is really **unconscionable** and it is the sort of thing that could be changed immediately with very limited cost'*

He also said that the problems with the welfare system could be changed immediately if there was political will.

Dr Lloyd had a personal invitation from Prof Philip Alston to attend the meeting in Geneva to discuss the findings of his report which specifically mentions women born in the 1950s (see below)

'Statement on Visit to the United Kingdom, by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights London, 16 November 2018

(iv) Pensioners

Despite the protections offered by the triple lock, pensioner poverty has begun to rise after decades of decline. Between 2012/13 and 2016/17, the number of pensioners living in poverty rose by 300,000. As was made clear to me in a number of submissions and through powerful personal testimony, a group of women born in the 1950s have been particularly impacted by an abrupt and poorly phased in change in the state pension age from 60 to 66. The impact of the changes to pensionable age is such as to severely penalize those who happen to be on the cusp of retirement and who had well-founded expectations of entering the next phase of their lives, rather than being plunged back into a workforce for which many of them were ill-prepared and to which they could not reasonably have been expected to adjust with no notice.'

Other Civil Society groups were represented at the meeting. They concluded that the Government's austerity measures constituted a breach of Human Rights and all groups will be following up on Prof Alston's report to bring the Government to account.