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Money

GONE TO POT Thousands of divorced women 'could be owed thousands of pounds in pension payouts' – are you affected?

Hannah Smith

15:12, 6 Dec 2021 | Updated: 15:30, 6 Dec 2021



THOUSANDS of divorced women could be owed thousands in state pension payments after the government [failed to give 200,000 women](#) their share of a £3billion payout.

Former pensions minister Steve Webb is campaigning for the government to now include divorced women in its corrections of historic underpayments, which left thousands of women out of pocket.



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We explain why thousands of divorced women could be in line for a state pension payout Credit: Getty

He says the government has already admitted making mistakes in the cases of 130,000 married women, widows and over 80s, so he thinks it's likely that thousands of divorced women too have been underpaid.

Mr Webb has seen several cases of divorced women getting five-figure payouts to correct their underpayments as a result of the government blunder.

One was Mrs H, who was divorced when she retired and was told she wasn't entitled to a [state pension](#), but when she challenged it the government found she should have been getting £140 a week, and she got a whopping back payment of more than £60,000.

"Given the large-scale errors on state pensions for widows, married women and the over 80s, it seems implausible that DWP has an unblemished record when it comes to the pensions of divorced women," says Webb.

"A series of individual cases has highlighted blunders which have led to divorced women being underpaid by tens of thousands of pounds, in some cases for a decade or more.

"The Department for Work and Pensions has dismissed concerns around this group far too lightly and should take another look to assess the scale of the problem and then take action to put things right".

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The Sun contacted the DWP for comment.

Am I owed anything?

How can you check if you're affected? Webb says it's tricky for the average women to know if the amount she's getting is correct, as pension rules are fiendishly complex.

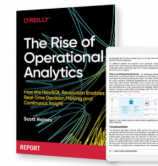
But he suggests you contact the Department for Work and Pensions if:

- You divorced after you reached pension age and you told the government but your pension amount didn't change
- You were divorced when you retired but you are on a small pensions
- You divorced close to retirement, so most of your working life was covered by your spouse's contributions.

Why were women underpaid?

The pension system failed to give an automatic pay rise to women in an [error that stretches back 30 years](#).

Women who retired on small state pensions before 2016 were supposed to see their pensions payments go up by 60% of their husbands' state pensions once the husbands reached retirement age.



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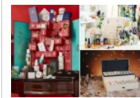
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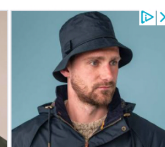
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In 2016, the policy of linking women's pensions to their husbands' was seen as unfair and was changed.

A rule change to automatic payments in 2008 meant women themselves had to apply to get the full amount owed, meaning many missed out.

They were also not allowed to backdate a claim further than 12 months, losing even more in money they were owed.

It comes as thousands of Brits have been urged to check if their benefit entitlements - or [risk losing out on a £5,000 retirement boost](#).

We also explain whether those claiming state pension will get a [£10 bonus this Christmas](#).

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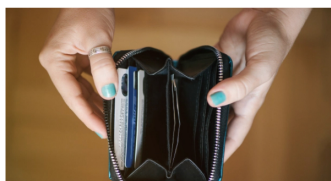
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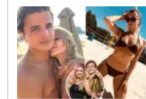
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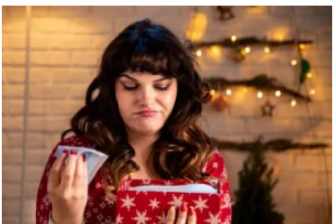
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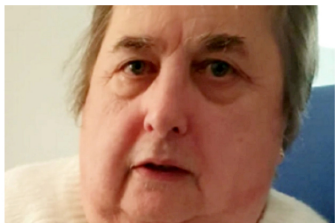
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