

Raising Pensions Age is Anti-Scottish and Anti Poor

Contributed by Mike Weir
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Following the publication of the Turner Report Mike Weir MP, SNP Spokesperson on Pensions, has today (Thursday) highlighted how raising the pension age to 68 would discriminate against Scotland and the poor because the present lower life expectancies.

Mr Weir also said the Turner Report's suggestion of health tests for those with lower life expectancy was bizarre and questioned how workable such a scheme would be. Mr Weir said: "Increasing the health of the people of Scotland is an obvious factor that must be addressed. It should be coupled with allowing people to enjoy longer retirements, not robbing them of the benefits by raising the retirement age. "Raising the retirement age would be anti-Scottish and anti-poor since present life expectancy is lower in Scotland with men in Kensington enjoying far greater benefits in state pensions than men in Kinning Park in Glasgow. "However the Turner Commission's proposal of a health test to tackle those with lower life expectancy is questionable and bizarre. I will be raising this matter with the Commission and asking how they envisage it operating and at what costs? "Whilst the end of means testing pensioner incomes is welcome the introduction of a health test would be even more bureaucratic. These proposals could have the effect of importing into the pensions system the problems of the incapacity benefit system. "Raising the retirement age and introducing a health test is unnecessary. A Citizens Pension, as the SNP proposes, can and should be introduced immediately. "It could be funded by tackling the present ludicrous system of tax relief that sees over 50% going to the richest 10%. Unfortunately this was the only thing that the Commission and the Minister specifically ruled out." ENDS.