



An independent association of
Equitable Life Members & Policy-Holders
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Equitable Members Action Group Ltd

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Dear _____,

Equitable Life: a VERY misleading Statement

Yvette Cooper's Statement to the House on 15th January on Equitable Life gave the impression that the Government has made an unreserved apology for failures between 1990 and 2001 and that compensation will now be paid. But some hours later a very different picture emerged with the release of Command Paper 7538. This document contains the Government's REAL response to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, yet it was not even mentioned in the Treasury's press release. 7538 makes clear that Ms Cooper's apology was actually only for the tiny fraction of PO's findings that the Government concedes as valid.

Both Ms Cooper's speech and the Command Paper selectively misrepresented the reports of the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Public Administration Select Committee, making them appear to say the exact opposite of what they meant.

While the Government grudgingly concedes Maladministration on most points (in part or in whole), it rejects almost every finding of Injustice that would involve any significant compensation. In other words, by agreeing the lesser charges but rejecting all the costlier ones, the Government has ensured that Sir John Chadwick's very narrow remit prevents even the possibility of any significant money being paid out. The Government's grounds for rejection are far from adequately defined, merely asserting without substantiation that the ministerial response is fair.

Furthermore, the brief to Sir John Chadwick is for his ADVICE only. The Treasury is under no obligation whatsoever to disclose it or act upon it. So we have the Treasury, implicated in five of the PO's ten findings of Maladministration, setting up a limited advisory consultancy reporting to it in private, as a replacement for the PO's proposed independent, transparent tribunal accountable to Parliament.

EMAG estimates that, under this Treasury proposed process, more than 90% of Equitable policyholders would receive absolutely NO COMPENSATION whatsoever. **It is Parliament's prerogative to stand up for authority of its own Ombudsman and reinstate the independent Tribunal proposed by the PO.**

MP Steve Webb has sponsored a 90-minute debate on Equitable Life in Westminster Hall on Tuesday 27th January at 11am. Please attend to speak up for your constituents who have suffered loss through this scandal. This is a matter of fairness and justice that could and should concern every MP.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Braithwaite
General Secretary

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