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PENSIONS ARE A TOP VOTING ISSUE FOR WOMEN, NEW REPORT SHOWS

The outdated pension system fails to treat women fairly and could cost politicians dearly at the ballot box, a new report published today by Age Concern England and Fawcett warns.

The report, [*A Blueprint for Reform*](#), reveals that pensions are a top voting issue for thousands of older women because the system fails to take account of women's needs and working patterns. The report goes on to outline four simple steps that could be taken to make the pension system fairer to women.

Older women voters will be crucial on polling day because they are most likely to turn out and are willing to switch their vote. The report shows that half of women aged 55+, - around four and-a-half million - will vote for the party that commits to delivering a strong pensions policy for women (1).

One in five single women pensioners lives in poverty and without radical reform of the outdated pension system future generations will face the same fate. The Government has recognised the scandal of women's poverty in retirement and pledged to look into the issue, but has so far failed to act.

Just 18% of women aged 55-64 think Labour is doing enough to prioritise pensions in retirement compared to 33% for the Liberal Democrats and 32% for the Conservatives.

The report outlines a blueprint for tackling the scandal of female pensioner poverty: ensuring individual rights to a pension, providing a platform for savings, providing a pension for all and making occupational schemes work for women.

Age Concern and Fawcett are calling on the next Government to accept the recommendations and immediately start the process of reform.

Michelle Mitchell, head of Public Affairs at Age Concern England said: "Older women will play a crucial role in deciding the outcome of the General Election. The major political parties have all recognised the scandal surrounding women's pensions and the time has come to radically reform the system to prevent future generations of women from a retirement in poverty.

"We have presented a series of proposals the next Government could adopt to address this problem. Age Concern welcomes the fact all the major parties acknowledge this issue, but the time has come for action and not words."

"Action must be taken to reform the pension system or else future generations of women - particularly carers, full-time mothers and low paid workers - will spend their retirement in poverty. The Pension Credit went some way to addressing this problem, but more needs to be done."

Dr Katherine Rake, Director of Fawcett and one of the country's leading experts on women and pensions said: "Pensions are featuring as a voting issue like never before. Older women voters identified in *Blueprint for Reform* have the power to decide the outcome of this election. All the major parties have acknowledged this is an issue that needs addressing but if they are going to win the vote of women in the 45-65 age group they will have to promise a strong policy on women's pensions.

"Women shouldn't have to suffer poverty in retirement just because they've taken time out the workforce to have children or care for relatives. The pensions system is outdated and these reforms would help future generations avoid poverty in later life."