

Dear Frank Field

I am writing to you as the Chair of the Industrial Training Board Pensioners Association (ITBPA). You may recall that I served for a brief time as the Member for Croydon North West and was one of the supporters of Norman St John Stevas' Bill that established Select Committees in the 1980's.

The ITBPA is a member of the Occupational Pensions Alliance (OPA). I am aware that the National Federation of Occupational Pensioners (NFOP), representing three very large Pensioners' Associations; Royal Mail, BT and British Steel, has already given written evidence and will shortly present oral evidence to your committee and would ask you to consider a verbal contribution from the OPA in addition to our written submission, which is drawn from occupational pensioners who are members of large to medium sized pension schemes.

The OPA wants to make the case for one million occupational pensioners represented by 26 Pensioners' Associations on the same basis as the NFOP. However we are currently having difficulty in getting the opportunity to present verbal evidence and respond to questions by the Committee which places our membership at a significant disadvantage.

Many of the pensioners represented by our constituent associations are in vulnerable positions because of changes in pension roles and, in the case of those represented by the ITBPA many are also vulnerable as a result of many successor companies of the former Training Boards being either unwilling or unable to meet their obligations. The average annual pension received by ITBPA members, including widow/widowers, is £4,500 per year, similar to the pensions received by the Royal Ordinance Pensioners, which has a large number of former part time and female employees

We are able to give examples of the vagaries of Trustees and of companies disappearing almost overnight which could be more clearly explained verbally. Also the Industrial Training Boards were deemed to be quasi government agencies in the 1970's and subject to the rules which now dictate that Consumer Price Indexation (CPI) will be applied to their annual inflation increases, e.g. 1% for April 2017 and not Retail Price Index of 2%.

The OPA Council believes that the evidence we have submitted would assist the Committee better if some of it were presented by one of us in person. Therefore we ask you to take this into account following the recent correspondence from Peter Austin (OPA Chairman) regarding an oral submission request.

My colleagues and I will be available for a hearing in early December to attend and give evidence. If this is not possible there is some availability during November in view of your very intensive time table