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Hopkins backs criticism of Government over Equitable Life

The Parliamentary Ombudsman's decision to publish a special report criticising the Government over its failure to compensate Equitable Life policyholders shows that Ministers remain determined not to fulfil their responsibilities to those affected by the collapse of the firm, Keighley and Ilkley Conservative Parliamentary Candidate Kris Hopkins has said.

In her report which was made public last week, Ann Abraham said she was "deeply disappointed" by the Government's response to her earlier report on its regulation of Equitable Life and its refusal to set up an independent tribunal to calculate redress for policyholders.

She accused the Government of making "highly selective" use of another report into the scandal to justify its position and that this was "misleading."

And Ms Abraham said she had decided to produce a special report - only the fifth time in more than 40 years that a Parliamentary Onbudsman has taken such a step – to draw public attention to the Government's failure to act.

Cllr Hopkins, who has campaigned hard for proper compensation for Equitable Life policyholders in Keighley and Ilkley and last year co-hosted a meeting with Conservative Leader David Cameron in the constituency for some of those affected, said he now feared the Ministers would not act this side of a General Election.

"Around 15 victims of the Equitable Life scandal are dying each day across the country and I am personally aware of several individuals from Keighley and Ilkley who have passed away whilst waiting for compensation," he commented.

“It is very apparent that achieving justice for those affected by the collapse is of no concern to this Labour Government.

“Indeed, Ministers’ cold disdain for Equitable Life policyholders is matched only by their arrogant and dismissive attitude towards the Parliamentary Ombudsman who has been so critical of their refusal to act.

“Whilst this Labour Government must now be getting used to criticism from all sides on all sorts of issues, such negative comments from the Parliamentary Ombudsman are most unusual and really underline how far out of step Ministers are on this issue.

“As I have said so many times before, Equitable Life policyholders in Keighley and Ilkley deserve justice and they deserve it now.

”David Cameron has said an incoming Government will act on this issue if the Labour Government does not.

“But, with the General Election almost certainly a full year away, I sincerely hope local residents will not have to wait that long.”

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