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OAPs LOSING £315



Hit hard... pensioners

THE elderly will be £315 worse off after George Osborne's bombshell Budget, a study warned yesterday.

About 12million pensioners will be hit hard by the granny tax and VAT double whammy.

The figures emerged yesterday as the backlash over the Chancellor's tax grab mounted.

Senior advisers revealed they gave him FOUR options to cushion the blow for OAPs - but he dismissed them all. Mr Osborne is also under fire over child benefit cuts and slapping VAT on

By DAVID WOODING Associate Political Editor

pies. Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls declared last night: "This Budget will go down as one of the most unpopular, unfair and flawed in decades."

Fresh analysis shows the impact is worse than feared. About 4.5million pensioners will lose £83 a year because of the tax allowance freeze.

Slashing the pensions saving credit from next month takes away another £103 a year.

When the full impact of the Budget is taken into account, the average loss for over-65s is £315, says the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Broadcaster Joan Bakewell has launched a petition on the Downing Street website calling for a re-think. She said: "It's unfair that the Government is raiding pensioners' allowances at the same time as cutting tax for the richest one per cent."

"I am asking people of all ages to join me and tell George Osborne to think again."

£250K GETS YOU DINNER WITH PM

Tory resigns after boast in video sting

A TORY fundraiser quit early today after he was accused of brokering meetings with David Cameron in return for huge donations.

By DAVID WOODING Associate Political Editor

Mr Cruddas - worth an estimated £750million to £1billion - is heard boasting in a video: "Some of our bigger donors have been for dinner in Number 10 Downing Street in the Prime Minister's private apartment, with Samantha."

Mr Cruddas - caught by a Sunday Times sting - also says: "Things will open up for you, but you need to go in with a bit of, you know - it's no good scratching around and it's ten grand or 75 grand."

He goes on: "A hundred grand is not premier league. It's not bad - it's probably bottom of the premier league."

Two hundred grand or 250 is premier league. You will be able to ask him practically any question that you want. He says later: "If you're unhappy about something, we'll listen to you and we'll put it into the policy committee at Number 10. It'll be awesome for your business."

After quitting early today Mr Cruddas said: "I deeply regret any impression of impropriety arising from my bluster in that conversation."

"Clearly there is no question of donors being able to influence policy or gain undue access to politicians."

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Making offer... Cruddas, left, and in video, above

SAVINGS ALERT

FINANCIAL experts have warned that George Osborne's Budget is a "savings timebomb" for Britain's poorest families.

A quarter of people on incomes below £14,000 are forced into debt just to buy food, says a poll for consumer champion Which?

And a third dip into savings to afford daily essentials.

Sixty-two per cent are worse off than in 2007, with 43 per cent of low-income households expecting finances to get worse. Almost half

By AMBER ELLIOTT

have given up their annual holiday. Last week, the Chancellor predicted an increase in consumer spending. But Which? boss Richard Lloyd said presuming growth based on people's savings was "short-sighted and flawed."

He added: "Unless the Government does more to put money back into people's pockets more quickly, future economic growth is at risk."

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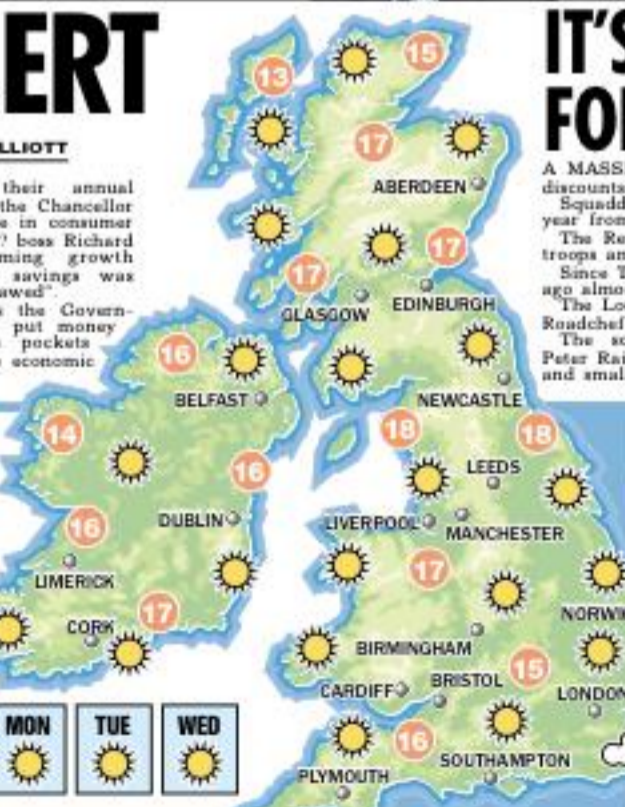
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IT'S A BARGAIN FOR OUR BOYS

A MASSIVE 216,000 troops have signed up for discounts in a scheme backed by The Sun.

Squaddies can save hundreds of pounds a year from 1,400 patriotic businesses.

The Reward for Forces card scheme provides troops and veterans with huge high street deals.

Since The Sun aired the campaign two weeks ago almost 20,000 troops have joined.

The London Eye and motorway services group Roadchef are among the latest firms to help.

The scheme was devised by businessman Peter Raith. He said: "We want more big names and small businesses to help the forces."

sky NEWS HD WEATHERS WITH NIGREEN GANTER

LOTS of warm sunshine across most of the country after any early mist and low cloud clears. Very mild for the time of year, but it may stay chilly along the East Coast. Top temperature 18°C (64°F).

Tonight will be chilly with clear skies. Outlook: Fine and dry tomorrow. Similar on Tuesday.

A BALMY spell of warm early spring weather saw temperatures hit 20°C (68°F) in Camden, North London, on March 25, 1991.

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