


NOTICE OF MOTION

To be submitted to the meeting of Full Council to be held on:
Wednesday 23rd October 2024

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in accordance with Standing Order Number 6.

	Name (in capitals)	Signature
Proposer:	Cllr SIÂN DAVIDSON	
Seconder:	Cllr Margaret Ratcliffe	

Motion: Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance and protecting pensioners from fuel poverty

1. This Council Notes

- 1.1 The Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- 1.2 The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
- 1.3 The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Halton and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- 1.4 The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- 1.5 The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

2. This Council believes:

- 2.1 That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- 2.2 While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, 19,809 across Halton sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- 2.3 The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and wellbeing of our poorest older residents.

2.4 The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

3. This Council resolves to:

3.1 Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit, which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.

3.2 Requests that the Council Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those not claiming Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.

3.3 Commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.

3.4 Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Halton are supported in claiming their entitlement.

(NB This motion must be submitted to the Chief Executive, c/o the Principal Committee Services Officer, at least seven clear working days prior to the date of the relevant Council meeting.

In accordance with SO6, if the subject matter of the motion comes within the province of any Panel, Board or Committee or Committees it shall without introductory speeches by the mover or seconder upon being moved and seconded stand referred without discussion to such Panel, Board or Committee or Committees, or to such other Panel, Board or Committee or Committees as the Council may determine, for consideration and report. However, the Mayor may, if s/he considers it convenient and conducive to the despatch of business, allow the motion to be dealt with at the meeting at which it is brought forward.)