

**COUNCIL
19 SEPTEMBER 2024**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

The following amendment to a motion has been submitted.

Motion on the Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance

The Government laid the *Social Fund Winter Fuel Payment Regulations 2024* before Parliament on 22 August 2024, which come into force on 16th September 2024, unless either the House of Commons or House of Lords pass a motion to annul the Statutory Instrument.

Under the Regulations, from winter 2024/2025, households in England and Wales will no longer be entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment unless they receive Pension Credit or certain other means-tested benefits as announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Government has failed to carry out a full impact assessment or public consultation, despite Age UK estimating that 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.

As a result of Labour's policy, 23,266 pensioners in North Hertfordshire face losing their winter fuel allowance, which not only risks leaving many pensioners across the district in financial hardship without the support they need, but will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.

Whilst some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across North Hertfordshire sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.

Therefore, Council resolves:

- 1. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asks the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.**
- 2. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Member of Parliament for Hitchin, the Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire and the Member of Parliament for Stevenage, urging them to ask the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty, as well as to press the government to reverse this decision which may impact 23,266 pensioners in North Hertfordshire.**

3. to continue to 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 North Hertfordshire are supported in claiming their entitlement.
4. To encourage Councillors to consider ~~Members to sign~~ the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK.
- 4.5. To acknowledge and understand that the financial blackhole that the previous 14 years of Conservative government has left our country in has an impact on the new government's financial decision-making.

Amendments proposed by: Councillor Alistair Willoughby

Amendments seconded by: Councillor Nigel Mason