

## Winter Fuel Allowance

Proposer: [Cllr Scott Emery](#) [Cllr Seema Chandwani](#)

Seconder: [Cllr Nick da Costa](#) [Cllr Cathy Brennan](#)

### Council notes:

- 14 years of austerity has left the UK economy, public sector finances and welfare state under severe financial pressure;
- ~~The Labour Government has [changed the criterion for eligibility restricted eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments](#) to those on means-tested benefits (primarily Pension Credit); [reducing the number of people eligible for Winter Fuel Payments from around 12 million to 1.2 million;](#)~~
- ~~[Pension Credit is one of the most underclaimed benefits with 37% of those eligible do not claim pension credit, and 780,000 pensioners earning below £11,400 per year will no longer receive the Winter Fuel Payment;](#)~~
- ~~[Since February 2023, Haringey has worked with the Labour Mayor of London to increase uptake of Pension Credits through the GLA's Pension Credits Programme;](#)~~
- ~~[Together with 23 London boroughs, we have worked to ensure older Londoners do not miss out on receiving all of their Pension Credit. Since then, more than 4,300 Londoners have claimed Pension Credit they are entitled to, resulting in £17.9m in direct additional annual income.](#)~~
- ~~[The government is set to receive a windfall of £1.5 billion from Octopus Energy, which would be enough to reinstate Winter Fuel Payments for this year;](#)~~
- ~~[The most recent statistics showed 27,145 households in Haringey were in receipt of the winter fuel allowance, an estimated 74% of whom will lose out under the government's rule changes;](#)~~
- To receive Pension Credit a single pensioner must have an income of less than £11,343.80 per year, compared with a full-time living wage salary of £20,820.8 per year;
- ~~[37% of those eligible do not claim pension credit, and 780,000 pensioners earning below £11,400 per year will no longer receive the Winter Fuel Payment under Labour's plans, according to the government's own equalities analysis;](#)~~
- Data from Policy in Practice shows that almost £17 million of pension credit goes unclaimed in Haringey each year, affecting over 4000 households;

~~[Last year, Haringey identified around 823 pensioners who were eligible for Pension Credits, with 154 pensioners claiming it. This resulted in a take up of £615,062 a year, which will result in £7,439,488 pension credits being taken up over an average lifetime.](#)~~

~~[This year, Haringey's officers have identified analysis shows that there are 815 eligible residents not claiming pension credit in the borough and has been targeting them to supporting them in uptake ;](#)~~

~~[Last week, letters were sent to all eligible residents and we will be in contact with them to help support take up.](#)~~

- 4 out of 5 pensioners due to lose the Winter Fuel Payment are on or below the poverty line according to Age UK;
- The Energy Price Cap has risen by 10% in October, which, combined with restricted eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments, will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty;
- ~~[That it will use the Many councils are planning to use the Household Support Fund to provide payments to pensioners who are low income and eligible for Pension Credits missing out on the winter fuel payment, and Haringey has confirmed its plans to](#)~~

provide a payment from the council to 2,804 pension aged households claiming council tax reduction scheme.

#### Council believes:

- ~~Balancing the government's budget on the back of vulnerable pensioners is morally wrong;~~
- ~~That ensuring that all those entitled to Pension Credits and other benefits are aware of their eligibility and are claiming them is a priority; The government's decision to use claiming pension credit as its criterion for receiving the winter fuel payment, whilst knowing that more than a third of those eligible do not claim, was an unethical choice;~~
- ~~It is wrong for councils to~~
- ~~Local government sector urgently needs a fairer funding settlement so it can continue to support all residents and transform Haringey into a fairer, greener borough; have to compensate for central government cutting support for some of the least affluent in society, particularly at a time of stretched budgets;~~
- ~~Elderly people with an income as low as £218.15 per week are not affluent, and many are vulnerable and at risk of health problems from cold weather;~~
- ~~It has responsibilities to the most vulnerable to protect them from avoidable public health risks;~~
- ~~Following this winter, there should be a review into the impact on the new means tested criteria for the Winter Fuel Allowance and will fully support the UK Government in a review or consultation That a review of the eligibility criteria for the Winter Fuel Allowance should should one take place. take place immediately, in consultation with pensioner representative groups, ensuring that pensioners on low and middle incomes are protected this winter.~~

#### Council resolves:

- ~~To continue with its plan to use the use the Household Support Fund to provide a payment from the council to pension aged households claiming from the council tax reduction scheme;~~
- ~~To continue to work with the Mayor of London in helping identify and supporting residents to claim the benefits they are entitled to;~~
- ~~To examine what support can be provided to these same households in future years; once the Household Support Fund has been removed by government;~~
- ~~To support the Mayor of London's comms campaign. redouble public information campaigns to encourage greater uptake of Pension Credits by those who are entitled to them;~~
- ~~To instruct the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to write to e write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, copied to Haringey's Members of Parliament, to set out why a fairer funding settlement is vital for local authorities to continue to support residents and transform Haringey into a fairer and greener borough. Haringey Council's concerns on this matter, to request that a review along the lines described above takes place, and to request that they reverse the policy of linking Winter Fuel Allowance payments to receipt of Pension Credit.~~

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