



Sir Ashley Fox MP
Member of Parliament for Bridgwater
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon. Rachel Reeves MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

17th September 2024

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to express my concern about the Government's plans for reducing the availability of the Winter Fuel Payment for low-income pensioners in the UK.

Many people have written to me in recent weeks about their own worries about heating their homes this winter, or out of concern for family members. Having listened to these vulnerable and worried residents I feel compelled to write to you and ask that you reconsider this policy.

Research by Independent Age has suggested that last year, if an extra £2.1bn of unclaimed Pension Credit support had been distributed to those who are eligible, around £4bn might have been saved in additional health and care costs. That is because older people on low incomes may not choose to heat their homes or eat properly, leading to poor health.

If the Government presses ahead with its current plan, then the following will happen:

- 1) It will endanger the health of those older people who are already struggling.
- 2) It will not achieve its goal of creating savings because of increased pressures on the NHS.

I know that colleagues on both sides of the House want to increase the number of eligible pensioners claiming Pension Credit. I ask that you consider delaying your plans to axe the Winter Fuel Payment for the majority of pensioners until you are able to ensure that more people secure this vital support.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Ashley Fox MP
Member of Parliament for Bridgwater