

Motion to: Council

24 September 2024

Subject: Winter Fuel Payment

Proposer: Councillor Lubbock

Seconder: Councillor Wright

This council notes:

- 1) The recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal Winter Fuel Payments and restrict the eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.
- 2) Though many agree that universal Winter Fuel Payments are not necessary, Council is deeply concerned that many pensioners on lower and middle incomes will not receive the payments.
- 3) Across England and Wales the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by £10m (from £11.4 million to only £1.5 million).
- 4) In Norwich the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 20,016. That means 83.80% of pensioners currently eligible for Winter Fuel Payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.
- 5) The concerning low take up of pension credit with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them – and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so.
- 6) The role the Council has to play to increase the awareness of benefits such as Pension Credit to ensure people are aware of the support they are entitled to.
- 7) The Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October, which combined by the removal of Winter Fuel Payments will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

This council believes that:

- 1) The Labour Government has set the Threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for Winter Fuel Payments far too low. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits. This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.

This council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy of linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be

immediately paused and introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments.

- 2) Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the two Members of Parliament for Norwich asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility
- 3) Ask Group Leaders to write a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the Winter Fuel Payment policy to be suspended and reviewed; and
- 4) Urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension. This will include the use of council publications, social media, the Council's website and targeted letters to those who may be eligible.