

<b>NOTICE OF MOTION</b>	<b>Date of Council Meeting:</b> 11/09/24
	<b>Mover:</b> Councillor Adam Carter
	<b>Seconder:</b> Councillor Drew Tarmey
	<b>Title of Motion:</b>  Winter Fuel Payments

**Summary/Background:**

Council notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.

Council also notes that the failure of successive Conservative governments has led to significant increases in heating costs in recent years.

Though many agree that universal Winter Fuel Payments are not necessary, Council is deeply concerned that many pensioners on lower and middle incomes will now not receive the payments. Across England and Wales the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).

In Rotherham the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 42,185. That means that nearly 87% of pensioners currently eligible for winter fuel payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.

Council believes that 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.

Council is also concerned by the low take up of pension credit with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them – and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so. Council recognises the role we have to play to increase awareness of benefits such as Pension Credit to ensure people are aware of the support they are entitled to.

Council further notes that 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.

**Therefore, this Council resolves to:**

1. Write to all MPs covering Rotherham asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.
2. Request the Council write a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new Winter Fuel Payment policy to be suspended and reviewed.
3. Urgently commence an awareness campaign to maximise the uptake of pension credit in Rotherham. This will include use of council noticeboards, social media, promotion in the local press and targeted letters posted to those who may be eligible.