

MOTION TO EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

29 October 2024

Winter Fuel Payments

This Council is asked to note that the withdrawal of the Winter Fuel Payments by both the UK Government in Westminster and the Scottish Government in Holyrood will have a significant and direct impact on millions of pensioners across the UK and here in East Lothian. According to estimates by the Scottish Government 900,000 Scottish pensioners will lose out and that the Scottish Parliament Information Centre estimates that over 16,000 pensioners will lose out here in East Lothian.

The Council is asked to further note that only an estimated 1,744 pensioners receive pension credit in East Lothian and will be protected from the change.

Additionally, it is believed that the choice of pension credits as a means test will not detract from the fact that there are many eligible for pension credit who don't receive it and many others who fall outwith this arbitrary means test and will suffer badly this winter, facing a choice between heating their homes and feeding themselves. It is also expected that this policy will result in higher excess winter deaths this year, which in Scotland are already the worst in 30 years.

We call upon the Council Leader to write to both the Prime Minister and the First Minister to protest against the withdrawal of Winter Fuel Payments, outlining the negative impacts; and to ask them to reconsider their position and bring back the Winter Fuel Payment to those pensioners who are not higher rate tax payers.

We also ask that a strategic communications plan be put in place to contact as many pensioners as possible through our libraries, community centres and other spaces, informing them of their right to claim pension credit and telling them in clear and precise terms how to make such a claim.

Proposed by (name): Jeremy Findlay

Date: 11 October 2024

Seconded by (name): Donna Collins

Date: 15 October 2024

Received by (name of officer): Carlo Grilli, Service Manager – Governance

Date: 11 October 2024