

Council – 17th October 2024

Notice of Motion: Pensioners Winter Fuel Payment

Members of Southend-on-Sea City council are deeply concerned by the financial failures of the last Conservative government which has resulted in a £22bn gap in our nation's finances.

To help balance the national budget, the Chancellor has announced the Winter Fuel Payment will now be provided only to those in receipt of Pension Credit, or eligible to claim.

With the Energy Price Cap rises meaning an annual increase in energy costs of around £150 a year, members are concerned how this will affect pensioners and Adult Services in Southend.

This Council therefore resolves that:

1. It urges all pensioners to check whether they are entitled to receive Pension Credit and notes that the administration has introduced LIFT (low-income family tracker) software which has already identified over 700 pensioners (by 30th September) in Southend who are entitled to Pension Credit but not currently claiming and urges Cabinet to continue to pursue this proactive approach.
2. The Leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor alongside other group leaders urging her to review the thresholds - where national finances allow - for those who would qualify for Pension Credit and those who may just miss out on those credits and the Fuel Allowance under the current rules.
3. We welcome the government's £150 Warm Home Discount for low-income households from October, extending the Household Support Fund with £421 million, to ensure local authorities can support vulnerable people and families, and ensuring around 1.3 million households in England and Wales will continue to receive up to £300 in Winter Fuel Payments.
4. This motion acknowledges the administration's proactive response by ring-fencing of £250,000 of Household Support Fund for the purpose of supporting pensioners who fall just outside of Pension Credit eligibility will help thousands of pensioners in Southend this winter should they require it.
5. The remaining Household Support Fund will continue to be used to support those in need, including pensioners, in line with guidance and existing eligibility criteria.

Proposer: Cllr D Jones

Seconder: Cllr K Murphy