

Winter Fuel Payment Campaigner Pack - Wales



Thank you so much for downloading this pack. We're so excited to work with you to save the Winter Fuel Payment for struggling pensioners!

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Why we're campaigning

Cutting the Winter Fuel Payment this winter, with virtually no notice and no compensatory measures to protect poor and vulnerable pensioners, is the wrong decision.

We're working alongside Age UK, and our other partner charities Age Scotland and Age Northern Ireland.

We want the Government to halt their proposed change to the Winter Fuel Payment and think again.

Thousands of struggling pensioners won't receive up to £300 they rely on to pay their bills.

We believe that thousands of pensioners in Wales who really need the money will now lose it, who find paying their energy bills a real stretch will be seriously hit by this cut. There are 3 key groups we're worried about:

- Those who just miss out on Pension Credit because their very modest incomes are slightly too high for them to be eligible, usually because they have a tiny occupational pension. Many of them are women.
- Those with high energy needs because of disability or illness, and/or who live in energy inefficient homes which cost a lot of money to heat, estimated at 200,000 people.
- Between 70,000 to 80,000 pensioners in Wales who don't receive the Pension Credit for which they are eligible because they do not claim it. The problem of low take up with Pension Credit is deeply entrenched, with about a third of all those entitled to it consistently failing to claim it over many years.

There's only been three months warning for this change – and older people will have expected to have this money in their pockets this year. There simply isn't long enough for many to work out another plan. The UK Government has said more will be done to encourage those entitled to Pension Credit to claim it but this will take time and won't stop many missing out this year.

To make matters worse, this isn't the only support with energy costs pensioners are losing meaning that pensioners could have £600 or more less this winter even though energy bills stay high.

This is because they are also losing the cost of living payment - to support with high energy costs over the last two years all pensioners received up to £300 on top of their Winter Fuel Payment in the last two winters. Those on low incomes or with a disability received more.

This cut is happening in England and Wales. In Scotland and NI decisions about the payment are devolved, and not yet clear, but the UK Government will no longer provide the money to cover the cost of what pensioners in those nations receive now. So, the Scottish and Northern Irish governments will have to decide whether to cover the shortfall from their budgets.

The UK Government should halt their proposed change to the Winter Fuel Payment and think again.

Join us to protect struggling pensioners this winter.

What you can do to help

- **If you have five minutes:** Sign the petition, if you haven't already. Just visit www.ageuk.org.uk/winterfuelpayment or print off the paper version (at the end of this document). You can also request one by writing to FREEPOST Age UK Campaigns.
- **If you have ten minutes:** Print of the paper petition and ask your friends, family, colleagues to sign it! You can also email your friends and family asking them to sign the petition. You can return it to us for free at FREEPOST Age UK Campaigns (no stamp needed!).
- **If you have an hour:** Write a letter to the Chancellor and your MP to tell them about how this decision affects you or a loved one – and to ask them to reconsider.
- **If you have longer:** Meet your MP to talk about what they can do to help and to gain their support for the campaign!

Template email to your friends and family

Hi,

I'm really worried about the news that the UK Government is cutting the Winter Fuel Payment for those not on Pension Credit. Age Cymru believes that thousands of pensioners in the Wales who really need the money will now lose it.

Cutting the Winter Fuel Payment this winter, with virtually no notice and no alternative measures to protect poor and vulnerable pensioners, is wrong.

I've signed the petition to stop the cut for struggling pensioners. Please [sign it too](#). It'll take 2 minutes.

Writing to the Chancellor and your MP

Write a letter or email to the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, and your MP. The more personal your letter is, the more both will see the human impact of the decision to cut the Winter Fuel Payment.

Write to the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, at ministers@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk or *The Correspondence and Enquiry Unit, 1 Horse Guards Parade, London, SW1A 2HQ.*

Find out who your MP is and their email address on the [UK Parliament website](https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP) (members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP). You can send post to your MP at *House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.*

If you receive a reply, please write your own response to it, and let us know what your MP or the Chancellor says. You can forward it on to us at campaigns@ageuk.org.uk, or by posting it to Freepost, Age UK Campaigns (no stamp needed!).

Tips for your letter

- **Shorter tends to be better** when writing to politicians as they are very busy.
- **Write a subject line at the top of your letter** about why you're writing to them, and what you'd like them to do.
- **Remember to stay polite** – and it's always better to try to stay politically neutral.
- **Share your own personal experiences** about the Winter Fuel Payment, and what the effect of cutting it will be on you or your loved ones.
- **Remember to say what action you'd like them to take:**
Your MP: you could ask them to write to the Chancellor, asking her to protect the people who will struggle without the Winter Fuel Payment.
The Chancellor: you could ask her to save the Winter Fuel Payment.

Meeting your MP

Face to face meetings with MPs are a great way to show them just how important the Winter Fuel Payment campaign is for you. It allows you to talk directly to them and they'll think about the issues you raise. It's a very powerful way of both building a relationship with your MP, and of influencing how they respond to policy decisions – such as with the Winter Fuel Payment.

This guide sets out how to go about meeting your MP, and what you might like to ask them to do.

1. Organise the meeting

If you want to meet your MP to discuss the Winter Fuel Payment, the first thing you need to do is to contact them to organise a meeting or see if they have information on their website about an upcoming surgery.

You can find out who your MP is, their contact details, and website on the [UK Parliament website](https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP) (members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP).

If you don't use the internet, you can write to them at (*name*), *House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA*. You can also call the House of Commons switchboard (020 7219 3000). You can ask to speak to your MP, and they'll put you through – it's unlikely the call will be answered by the MP. It will probably either be an answering machine or member of staff.

Don't be disheartened if it takes a few weeks to get a reply to your email/letter! MPs and their staff receive a lot. If you haven't heard back after a few weeks, please do follow up your request with a polite phone call.

When organising the meeting, keep your message precise and brief. You may need to be flexible about when you meet and will probably be able to meet for 15-30 minutes.

As it is now Summer Recess, your MP should be in the constituency most days though may already have a busy diary! It is always best to organise a meeting in advance to make sure the MP has enough time to talk to you.

2. Let us know!

If you manage to secure a meeting, please let us know (campaigns@ageuk.org.uk or Freepost, Age UK Campaigns) and we'll try to share some local statistics with you ahead of the meeting!

3. Preparing for your meeting

There are three main things to remember when you meet with an MP.

Firstly, don't be nervous! They won't expect you to be a policy expert, instead they'll be interested to hear about your personal experience. They might also have some useful resources that they want to share with you.

Secondly, don't be party political. Try to be polite and focus on the Winter Fuel Payment. Even if your MP doesn't agree with you about the Winter Fuel Payment, they may still decide to act on your behalf.

Thirdly, have a think about what you want to say to your MP, and if there's anything that you want to ask them.

If you want to, you can also print off our briefing for MPs to hand over to them and for you to have a read of ahead of time. You can download it here: ageuk.org.uk/wfpbriefing.

Some things you might want to talk to them about:

- **Your own personal experience** of Winter Fuel Payment, and how cutting it will affect you (or a loved one)
- **Age Cymru believe thousands of pensioners in Wales will be seriously hit by this cut.** These are people on low income who just miss out on Pension Credit, those with high energy needs because of disability/illness and the 70,000 to 80,000 pensioners who don't receive the Pension Credit for which they're eligible.
- **Means-testing the Winter Fuel Payment, with no notice and no compensatory measures to protect poor and vulnerable pensioners, is the wrong policy choice,** and one that

will potentially jeopardise the health as well as the finances of millions of older people this winter – the last thing either they or the NHS needs.

Some things you might want to ask your MP to do:

- Write to the Chancellor to ask her to reconsider.
- Contact Age UK to find out how they can help (they can email publicaffairs@ageuk.org.uk)
- Ask a question in Parliament about the impact this will have.

4. After the meeting

Stay in touch with your MP! Write to them to thank them for meeting with you, and to reiterate anything that either of you agreed to.

Let us know how it went! Send us an email at campaigns@ageuk.org.uk or give us a call at 020 3033 0568. Please note if you give us a call, we may not be able to pick up, but if you leave a message, we will call you back.

If you're only social media, you can also tag them in a post to thank them for meeting with you!

Good luck – and please let us know how you get on!

Appendix 1: Meeting cheat sheet

Date:

Time:

Location:

Meeting notes (space for you to write what you want to talk about):

Key points to discuss:

- **Your own personal experience** of Winter Fuel Payment, and how cutting it will affect you (or a loved one)
- **Age Cymru believe thousands of pensioners in Wales will be seriously hit by this cut.** These are people on low income who just miss out on Pension Credit, those with high energy needs because of disability/illness and the 70,000 to 80,000 pensioners who don't receive the Pension Credit for which they're eligible.
- **Cutting the Winter Fuel Payment for most pensioners not on Pension Credit, with no notice and no compensatory measures to protect poor and vulnerable pensioners, is the wrong policy choice**, and one that will potentially jeopardise the health as well as the finances of millions of older people this winter – the last thing either they or the NHS needs.

To ask your MP to do:

- Write to the Chancellor to ask her to reconsider.
- Contact Age UK to find out how they can help (they can email publicaffairs@ageuk.org.uk)
- Ask a question in Parliament about the impact this will have.

Actions agreed:

Appendix 2: petition sheets

If you or a loved one would like to sign offline you can:

- [Print a template of the petition](#) (follow this link, or print the next two pages in this pack)
- Request one by writing to FREEPOST Age UK Campaigns



Age UK

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One America Square

17 Crosswall

London EC3N 2LB

The Age UK network includes the charity, its trading companies and national partners (Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI). We also work closely with local Age UKs. For further details on how your data is used and stored by the Age UK network go to www.ageuk.org.uk/help/privacy-policy. Age UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1128267).