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Our Ref: SJ/KC  
Date: 18th October 2024



The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Chancellor of Exchequer,

**Stratford on Avon District Council  
Winter Fuel Payments**

I am writing to request that Government urgently review its decision to cease winter fuel payments for those pensioners who are not in receipt of Pension Credit.

On 14 October, Stratford on Avon District Council debated this issue on the basis that I write to you 'urging a review of the decision to means test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the Government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty'.

Stratford on Avon District Council has a high proportion of residents who are pensioners, over 35,000 of our residents are aged 65 or over. This move means that a significant proportion of which who have received the Winter Fuel Payments for the last 26 years, have been given less than 8 weeks' notice that they will no longer receive this valuable support. It is totally unreasonable to make such a change at this speed, there is insufficient time for pensioners to adjust.

I can assure you that although Stratford on Avon District Council area may be seen as an affluent area, the Council is aware that through the record use of foodbanks and access to the Council's own "Cost of Living Fund" that there are many of our pensioners who are just about managing. Such a move to deprive these individuals from this valuable support could have a devastating impact on their position. We are deeply concerned as to the impact this will have on the health and wellbeing of these pensioners, in some cases, this could be a matter of life or death.

Since the Government's announcement in relation to the future for "Winter Fuel Payments" the Council in partnership with the South Warwickshire CAB has been encouraging pensioners who we believe to be eligible for Pension Credit to apply as soon as possible. I am sure you are aware however, that the application form is 24 pages long and requires responses to 243 individual questions, this obviously is extremely daunting to several of our residents. Given that Government accepts that around 25% of all those individuals who are eligible for Pension Credit do not access this support this means that around 1,320 households of the most needy will not get the help they need. Whilst I accept that you have written to all pensioner households there will remain a significant proportion of residents who need this support that will not receive it. The short notice of the introduction of means testing simply does not give enough time for this to happen before this winter.

I therefore urge the Government therefore to reconsider its decision urgently in relation to Winter Fuel Payments.

Separately, I have written to the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to request funding for a local advertising and outreach campaign to raise awareness about Pension Credit and other benefits, targeting pensioners who may be eligible for these benefits but not currently claiming them. A copy of my letter is enclosed.

I am grateful for your consideration and look forward to your response which I will share with my Council.

Yours sincerely



**Cllr Susan Juned**  
**Leader**  
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**Stratford-on-Avon District Council**