



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

24 October 2024

Dear Chancellor,

Please Reverse the Cut to the Winter Fuel Allowance

With your Budget now due next Wednesday, 30 October, I am writing to you on behalf of around 300 or so of my constituents, who have contacted me to express their serious concerns about the decision to materially cut the eligibility for Winter Fuel Allowance (WFA). I wanted you to understand their worries about what you have proposed, as expressed in their own words, rather than just mine.

Even if you believe that eligibility for WFA should have been restricted, then to cap it at the level of Pension Credit, at approximately £13,000 per annum, is far too low and threatens to deny this vital benefit to up to ten million pensioners – whilst you have given train drivers a bumper pay rise.

As you will see from the 300 or so enclosed emails, some of my constituents really do rely on this money, especially to help tide them over through the winter months, in an era of much higher domestic fuel bills. In response, many have now begun applying for Pension Credit, mainly to try and maintain their eligibility for WFA. This involves them in having to fill in a complex form, with hundreds of questions, just to qualify for what they were already entitled to in the first place.

Moreover, if this is replicated across the country, the additional costs in Pension Credit payments could almost outweigh the supposed savings from restricting WFA. In other words, not only does this fly in the face of common sense, it really is a false economy - but one which has already led to considerable distress, including to many people who have faithfully paid their taxes to the Exchequer, throughout their working lives.

Given all of this I am asking you, on my constituents' behalf, to seriously think again and to reverse the proposed cut to WFA in your Budget Speech to the House of Commons, next week.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Francois'.

Rt Hon Mark Francois MP
Member of Parliament for Rayleigh and Wickford

PLEASE NOTE THAT I AM USING UP OLD LETTERHEAD (TO SAVE PUBLIC MONEY) AS DUE TO BOUNDARY CHANGES, I NO LONGER REPRESENT CANEWDON, PAGLESHAM OR STAMBRIDGE.
THESE AREAS NOW FALL UNDER THE NEW SOUTHEAST AND ROCHFORD CONSTITUENCY.

Serving the communities of Ashingdon, Canewdon, Hawkehill, Hockley, Hullbridge, Nevendon, Paglesham,
Rawreth, Rayleigh, Shotgate, South Fambridge, Stamborough & Wickford