

RT HON MARK FRANCOIS MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR RAYLEIGH & WICKFORD



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr James Newport  
Leader, Rochford District Council  
Council Offices  
South Street  
Rochford  
Essex  
SS4 1BW

18 November 2024

PLEASE QUOTE ON CORRESPONDENCE  
Our Ref: MS/Newport/MF27712

*Dear James,*

#### **Winter Fuel Allowance**

Thank you for your letter (sent by email in your capacity as Leader of Rochford District Council) of 30 September, in which you attached a copy of the letter sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP to raise the concerns from Rochford District Council's Full Council meeting held on 17 September regarding *"our deep concern at the Government restricting eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments to those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits."*

I have now received around 300 emails from concerned constituents about this topic – one of the largest responses on a single subject in my 23 years as an MP. I firmly believe that pensioners must be afforded dignity and respect in retirement, and I am deeply concerned that one of the first acts of this new Government was to announce their intention to scrap the Winter Fuel Payment for millions of pensioners, unless in receipt of pension credit or other means-tested benefits.

As you may be aware, I voted against this decision in the House of Commons on 10 September, (I have included a copy of the debate, taken from Hansard, the official record of the House of Commons, so that you can read not just my comments as your MP, but the whole debate yourself, should you so wish.).

On 24 October, I wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt Hon, Rachel Reeves MP, about this subject. I included each of the emails sent to me about this matter in an effort to make her aware of the very strong depth of feeling across my Rayleigh and Wickford constituency, about this subject. I have also attached a copy of my letter to the Chancellor, as reference.

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Rawreth, Rayleigh, Shotgate, South Fambridge, Stambridge & Wickford



In essence, I have protested strongly against what the Government are proposing and have called on the Government to reverse this decision. I cannot force the Chancellor to change her mind but I have, nevertheless, attempted to persuade her to do so, by setting out clearly the case against what she is proposing. Some of what I have written is based directly on the emails I have received from my constituents about this.

For the record, the last Government successfully delivered around 11.9 million Winter Fuel Payments and Pensioner Cost of Living Payments to older people across the UK in December 2023. These afforded pensioners security in retirement, something I am concerned this Government is not supporting.

I hope that the Chancellor might yet see sense and relent on this, although, post the recent Budget, I am afraid this is now looking increasingly unlikely.

Yours sincerely,

**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.