



Amanda Solloway MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Energy Consumers and Affordability)
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
1 Victoria St
London
SW1E 5ND

13 July 2023

Dear Minister,

Now you have had some time to settle into your new role, we thought it would be an appropriate moment to invite you to meet with End Fuel Poverty Coalition members and discuss how we will keep everyone warm this winter.

Many of our members have heard you speak passionately on the subject and we appreciate you sharing publicly your own experiences of fuel poverty as a young person - it is something which many people are reluctant to talk about.

We all know that this winter will be as challenging as the last for many households, with energy bills remaining around double what they were in winter 2020/21.

While last winter's unprecedented levels of Government support did indeed help households, we know that millions still spent the winter in cold, damp homes.

And this winter, people's ability to pay high energy bills has been further diminished by the increased cost of living (while inflation may be falling, the high prices will remain with us).

In the short-term there is both financial and non-financial support the Government could provide households.

As a minimum, you could direct the money returned to Government through unused Energy Bills Support Scheme payments and vouchers to be given to local authorities to use in the Household Support Funds (or equivalents in Scotland and Wales).

You could also introduce a ban on the forced transfer of households onto prepayment meters (PPMs). Our response to the recent Ofgem consultation [1] clearly sets out the dangers that this causes and our disbelief that ministers have not accepted the sensible amendments to the Energy Bill proposed by Anne McLaughlin MP or Lord Teverson. These amendments would have given ministers the power to protect vulnerable households and we would urge you to accept an amendment on this issue, or bring forward one of your own when the Energy Bill returns to the Commons at Report Stage.

We appreciate that a growing household energy debt mountain is a concern for energy firms as well as to households in debt. But we can't go back to forced PPMs. And the blame for this debt is not on the families struggling to keep themselves warm and fed, but on the soaring profits made by energy firms.

This is why the Government's Windfall Tax on energy firms met with our support. But rather than end it early, the Government could use funds raised through this to help introduce a "Help to Repay" scheme which is backed by a range of charities. [2]

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues above and our wider proposals to provide support for households this winter (and beyond) at our next meeting. We would be happy to arrange this at a time convenient to yourself and to host it on Zoom to enable the widest possible attendance.

If you would like to arrange a meeting, please do get in touch with the coordinator, Simon Francis, by email: simon.francis@campaigncollective.org / 07738487259.

Yours sincerely,

The End Fuel Poverty Coalition

The Coalition is a broad group of over 70 anti-poverty, environmental and health campaigners, local authorities, trade unions and consumer organisations. For more information visit: <https://www.endfuelpoverty.org.uk/who-we-are/>

[1]

<https://www.endfuelpoverty.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/230713-EFPC-Ofgem-June-PPM-Consultation.pdf>

[2] <https://www.endfuelpoverty.org.uk/charities-help-to-repay-energy-bills-debt-soars/>