



Rt. Hon. Humza Yousaf MSP
First Minister
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

21 December 2023

Dear First Minister,

From early 2024, Ofgem expects energy firms could begin to secure court warrants to forcibly enter Scottish homes and force struggling families onto prepayment meters.

It beggars belief that in the middle of winter, energy firms should be allowed by Scottish courts to force homes onto these meters which - if they run out of credit - switch off leaving people without power.

For many this means no heating or ability to cook food. For those who rely on energy to run medical equipment or charge mobility devices, the implications are far worse.

The latest figures from the [Warm This Winter campaign](#) suggest that already, a third of smart meter customers who have a prepayment meter setting say they live in a cold damp home with 27% of those on traditional PPMs saying the same.

The end result of people living in cold damp homes is more people falling ill, those with pre-existing health conditions deteriorating and ultimately people dying.

It is therefore unconscionable that the Scottish courts could consider allowing such prepayment meter warrants to be granted.

Campaigners have repeatedly asked for clarification on the conditions for restart of forced installations and the safeguards Scottish courts have in place to prevent warrants being issued against vulnerable customers.

Correspondence has been sent to Scottish Ministers, UK Ministers, the Scottish Courts Service and Ofgem to try to secure assurances.

However, the replies from all parties pass the responsibility onto other organisations and no one will take ownership of this issue. Some Scottish officials have not even replied to reasonable requests for information.

Among the most serious questions that have been raised is in relation to the training JPs have had in assessing the potential for harm to human life, the complexity of what constitutes vulnerability, etc.

Given the seriousness of this issue and the failure of the Scottish Government and Courts to respond to campaigners, will the First Minister personally speak to the Lord President?

We urgently need to secure a meaningful response to campaigners' questions and ensure that the Scottish courts understand the widespread concern about this issue.

The Lord President must instruct all JPs and Sheriffs that they must not agree to allow households to be forced onto prepayment meters until the Lord President is satisfied that no household which could be classed as vulnerable is liable to be forced onto a dangerous prepayment meter through a court process.

Without action, this barbaric practice will restart in a matter of weeks in towns, cities and rural communities across Scotland.

We - and other campaigners - would be happy to meet with you to discuss this issue further.

Yours sincerely,

The End Fuel Poverty Coalition

Letter copied to:

Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs
Neil Rennick, Director-General for Education and Justice, Scottish Government
Lord Carloway
Sheriff Susan Craig, Interim Director of the Judicial Institute for Scotland
Anne McLaughlin MP, Chair, All Party Parliamentary Group on Prepayment Meters
Frazer Scott, CEO, Energy Action Scotland
Jonathan Brearley, CEO, Ofgem

To discuss the issues raised above, please contact the Coalition coordinator, Simon Francis on 07738487259 / simon.francis@campaigncollective.org

The End Fuel Poverty Coalition is a [broad coalition of more than 70 anti-poverty, health, housing and environmental campaigners, charities, local authorities, trade unions and consumer organisations](#). It is also supported by academics, social enterprises and those working on the front line of fighting fuel poverty.

We believe that everybody has the right to a warm, dry home that they can afford to heat and power.

Members of the Coalition include [Action with Communities in Rural England](#), [ACE Research](#), [Advice for Renters](#), [AgeUK](#), [All Birmingham's Children](#), [Austerity Action Group](#), [Association of Green Councillors](#), [Association of Local Energy Officers](#), [Association for Decentralised Energy](#), [Asthma + Lung UK](#), [Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council](#), [Beat the Cold](#), [Brighton & Hove City Council](#), [Bruton Town Council](#), [Camden Federation of Private Tenants](#), [Child Poverty Action Group](#), [Church Poverty Action](#), [Chartered Institute of Environmental Health](#), [Chartered Institute of Housing](#), [Community Action Northumberland](#), [Centre for Sustainable Energy](#), [Climate Action Network West Midlands](#), [Disability Poverty Campaign Group](#), [Disability Rights UK](#), [E3G](#), [EBICO](#), [End Child Poverty Coalition](#), [Energy Saving Trust](#), [Energy Cities](#), [Fair Energy Campaign](#), [Epilepsy Action](#), [Foster Support](#), [Friends of the Earth](#), [Fuel Poverty Action](#), [Fuel Poverty Research Network](#), [Generation Rent](#), [Good Law Project](#), [Greenpeace](#), [Groundwork](#), [Hackney Foodbank](#), [Home Start Oxford](#), [Independent Age](#), [Inner City Life](#), [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#), [Lambeth Pensioners Action Group](#), [London Borough of Camden](#), [London Borough of Lewisham](#), [Mayor of London](#), [Moorland Climate Action](#), [National Pensioners Convention](#), [National Union of Students / Students Organising for Sustainability](#), [NCB](#), [National Energy Action](#), [New Economics Foundation](#), [National Federation of Women's](#)

Institutes, [Northern Health Services Alliance](#), [Oxford City Council](#), [Positive Money Tower Hamlets](#), [Redcar & Cleveland Council](#), [Repowering London](#), [Retrofit Bruton](#), [Right To Energy Coalition](#), [Ryecroft Community Hub](#), [Save the Children](#), [Scope](#), [Shaping Our Lives](#), [Social Workers Union](#), [South East London Community Energy](#), [Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations](#), [South West London Law Centres](#), [Stonewater Housing Association](#), [Stop The Squeeze](#), [Uplift](#), [UNISON](#), [Warm & Well North Yorkshire](#), [Warm & Well in Merton](#).

The coordination for the [End Fuel Poverty Coalition](#) is provided by social enterprise [Campaign Collective](#) and the Coalition is also part of the [Warm This Winter](#) campaign. In Scotland we work closely with [Energy Action Scotland](#). In Wales, we work with NEA Cymru and [Climate Cymru's Warm This Winter](#) activity and in Northern Ireland with the NEA-backed [Fuel Poverty NI coalition](#).

Contact: info@endfuelpoverty.org.uk