



To:

Martin McCluskey MP, Minister for Energy Consumers
Sarah Sackman KC MP, Minister for Courts and Legal Services
Jonathan Brearley, Chief Executive, Ofgem

CC:

Bill Esterson MP, Chair, Energy Security and Net Zero Select Committee
Andy Slaughter MP, Chair, Justice Select Committee

By email

31 December 2025

Urgent request for a new pause on forced prepayment meters

Dear Martin McCluskey MP, Sarah Sackman KC MP and Jonathan Brearley,

We write with deep concern regarding recent revelations that magistrates' courts continue to grant warrants enabling energy firms to obtain forced entry into people's homes to install prepayment meters, often through secret hearings and with minimal scrutiny of each case.

Fresh investigations by journalist [Tristan Kirk](#) have exposed that magistrates are routinely sitting in private and approving bulk batches of warrants without examining individual applications - in some cases without even seeing the underlying documentation. This practice persists more than three years after the original forced PPM scandal first emerged.

This has highlighted procedural flaws in the new system introduced following the original scandal, including confidential remote hearings in which warrants for mass applications are rubber-stamped, and court records that contain only limited information on the rationale for forcing entry.

The investigation also found that one magistrate examined ten warrant applications in detail as a 'sample' which would then determine the fate of other applications in the batch. But while two of the sample were found to breach procedural rules and withdrawn, two new applications that passed scrutiny were added and the remaining warrants were approved in bulk without further checks.

This implies that no effort was made to establish whether similar failings affected the rest of the applications.

In November 2023, when the new court process was being developed, the End Fuel Poverty Coalition wrote [[pdf](#)] to the Ministers then in Government (copied to Ofgem) to raise concerns that a "cloak of secrecy" appeared to have remained in place.

Following [media reports](#) about the behaviour of one firm, the letter set out that “the same old magistrates’ practices seem to have continued.”

“Distant hearings, nodding through batch applications, not checking for vulnerability and a failure to inform customers that they are due to have their case heard. No one can be confident of getting justice under the current system.”

These latest findings have - we understand from media reports - prompted the Chief Magistrate to launch a formal review of the warrant process.

However, in the meantime, the continuation of these practices means that vulnerable households remain at risk of being subjected to coercive measures that undermine justice and exacerbate energy insecurity.

These secret court hearings effectively punish families who are unable to afford their energy bills, without giving them any voice or opportunity to contest the warrants. Many of these households are already living in cold, damp homes and are experiencing record levels of energy debt.

The continued use of secret court mechanisms to authorise forced entry for energy firms (particularly when the process does not appear to meet basic standards of openness, accountability or fairness) is fundamentally incompatible with supplier licence conditions (SLC0) and the duty of care owed to consumers, especially those in vulnerable circumstances.

Given the seriousness of these procedural and human rights concerns, we call on Ofgem and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to impose an immediate and comprehensive pause on all forced prepayment meter installations and warrant-based forced entry actions until the following conditions are met:

1. The Chief Magistrate’s investigation into the magistrates’ warrant process is fully completed, published in full and subject to independent scrutiny, including clear assessment of how many warrants have been issued, in what circumstances, and if the safeguards introduced in 2023 have been breached.
2. Full transparency is restored to the warrant process so that public confidence in the justice system and regulatory oversight can be rebuilt.
3. The Ofgem investigation into British Gas’ conduct during the original scandal is concluded and customers affected are fully compensated.
4. Clear, enforceable protections are put in place to ensure that no household is subjected to forced entry or involuntary meter installation while systemic concerns remain unresolved.

We also urge Ofgem to communicate clearly and urgently with all suppliers that any pending or planned warrant applications should be suspended immediately.

Further to our comments in the regular meetings with the Ofgem stakeholder team, we also formally express our deep concern about the continued delay into publishing the outcome of

Ofgem investigation into British Gas during the pre-payment meter scandal of three years ago.

We appreciate that we are currently in the festive holiday period, so we will delay publishing this letter on our website (as is usual practice) until 7th January 2026.

Yours sincerely,
Simon Francis, End Fuel Poverty Coalition coordinator

About the End Fuel Poverty Coalition

The End Fuel Poverty Coalition is a [broad coalition of more than 100 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](#), [Age UK](#), [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](#), [Bruton Town Council](#), [Camden Federation of Private Tenants](#), [Carers Trust](#), [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](#), [Debt Justice](#), [Disability Poverty Campaign Group](#), [Disability Rights UK](#), [E3G](#), [Energise Sussex Coast](#), [Energy Advice Line](#), [Energy Cities](#), [Epilepsy Action](#), [Exeter Community Energy](#), [Fair Energy Campaign](#), [Fair By Design](#), [Foster Support](#), [Fuel Poverty Action](#), [Fuel Poverty Research Network](#), [Generation Rent](#), [Good Law Project](#), [Groundwork](#), [Hackney Foodbank](#), [Heat Trust](#), [the HEET Project](#), [Home Start Oxford](#), [Independent Age](#), [Independent Food Aid Network](#), [Inner City Life](#), [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#), [Lambeth Pensioners Action Group](#), [London Borough of Camden](#), [London Borough of Lewisham](#), [Marches Energy Action](#), [Marie Curie](#), [Mencap](#), [Mayor of London](#), [MECC Trust](#), [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](#), [Plymouth Community Energy](#), [Redcar & Cleveland Council](#), [Repowering London](#), [Retrofit Bruton](#), [Right To Energy Coalition](#), [Rossendale Valley Energy](#), [Ryecroft Community Hub](#), [Save the Children](#), [Sense](#), [Severn Wye](#), [Scope](#), [Shaping Our Lives](#), [Social Workers Union](#), [South Dartmoor Community Energy](#), [South East London Community Energy](#), [Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations](#), [South West London Law Centres](#), [Stop The Squeeze](#), [Tamar Energy Community](#), [Thinking Works](#), [Uplift](#), [UNISON](#), [Warm & Well North Yorkshire](#), [Warm & Well in Merton](#), [Winter Warmth Network](#), [Young Lives vs Cancer](#), [361 Energy](#).

The Coalition is also part of the [End Child Poverty Coalition](#) and the [Renters Reform Coalition](#). We work closely with [Energy Action Scotland](#), [NEA Wales](#) and the [Fuel Poverty NI coalition](#). The coordination for the [End Fuel Poverty Coalition](#) is provided by social enterprise [Campaign Collective](#).

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