

Rt. Hon Rishi Sunak
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Copied to the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

1st November 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

Firstly, congratulations on your appointment. We are writing from a coalition of the UK's leading charities to ask you, in your new role, to act now on the energy and poverty crisis.

Without immediate action from your government, it is estimated that around seven million households¹ will face an impossible winter, being forced to make unimaginably difficult choices between heating their homes and putting food on the table. In many cases it will be even worse than this as those with preexisting health conditions and disabilities are forced to face the severe health consequences of living in a cold damp home².

As we are sure you are aware, this will be felt particularly strongly in your constituency, with 26% of households, above the national average, already living in fuel poverty. By April, with the removal of the Energy Price Guarantee, 39% of households in your constituency could be forced to make decisions between basic lifelines³. But there is a way through: we believe there are two urgent priorities, which we would hope to see as a central part of your agenda, including in your Autumn Statement.

First, we urge you to expand the support available to people this winter. The support offered so far, such as the Energy Price Guarantee has been welcome. However, **so much more is needed, especially for those hardest hit by this crisis, to stave off the worst impacts**⁴. Alongside this, we need urgent clarity on the future of financial support from April of next year. The average bill is expected to be over £4000⁵, almost four times more than it was before the gas price crisis. **As a first step, the decision to uprate benefits in line with inflation, as has been conventional, should be confirmed and implemented as soon as possible.**

Second, the quickest, cheapest and simplest way to bring down bills in the medium-term is to embark rapidly on a massive national programme of insulating our homes, schools, hospitals and workplaces. The existing government schemes do not meet the scale of the crisis. We estimate that a proper insulation scheme could save households, on average, around £500⁶ on their bills each year, and such a programme would soon pay for itself⁷.

¹ <https://www.endfuelpoverty.org.uk/price-cap-methodology/>

² <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fuel-poverty-cold-homes-and-health-inequalities-in-the-uk>

³ <https://www.endfuelpoverty.org.uk/fuel-poverty-levels-in-sunak-mordaunt-johnson-hunt-seats-revealed/>

⁴ <https://www.warmthiswinter.org.uk/news/government-short-on-measures-to-tackle-fuel-poverty>

⁵ Based on latest Cornwall Insight predictions

⁶ <https://eciu.net/media/press-releases/2022/taxpayers-facing-18-billion-bill-for-failure-to-insulate-uk-homes>

⁷ <https://eciu.net/media/press-releases/2022/treasury-could-break-even-on-insulating-millions-of-homes-before-next-election>

Alongside these immediate measures, we urge you to instruct your new Business Secretary to **implement a plan for a rapid roll-out, in harmony with nature, of clean, renewable energy, moving the UK beyond expensive, volatile fossil fuels and enhancing UK energy security as soon as possible.**

Onshore and offshore wind and solar energy are many times cheaper than gas. Now is the time for our islands, with their huge renewable energy resources, to show the world how to tackle the cost of living and climate crises at the same time. **We must not look to the industries of the past at this moment of crisis: they are a distraction.**

By building out this vision, we can end this crisis and reinvigorate the economy. Clear policy signals and targeted public investment can unlock huge sums of private capital, driving a cost-effective transition that benefits homeowners, builds a stronger economy and protects the planet.

We wish you all the best in your role - and given the urgency of this crisis, we would appreciate a response to this letter as soon as possible, and would value an opportunity to discuss these issues in-person with you within your first month in office.

Yours sincerely,

Shaun Spiers, Green Alliance, Executive Director

Caroline Abrahams, Age UK, Charity Director

Gwen Hines, Save the Children UK, CEO

Polly Neate, Shelter, CEO

Dr Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, Oxfam GB, CEO

Melissa Green, National Federation of Women's Institutes (WFI), General Secretary

Joe Cole, Advice for Renters, Chief Executive

Jane Collins, Foster Support, Chief Executive

Joan Edwards OBE, The Wildlife Trusts, Director of Policy and Public Affairs

Simon Francis, End Fuel Poverty Coalition, Co-ordinator

Katy Styles, We Care Campaign, Founder

Ellen Lebethe, Lambeth Pensioners Action Group, Chair

Sue Riddlestone OBE, Bioregional, Chief Executive

Jan Shortt, National Pensioners Convention, General Secretary

Max Wakefield, Possible, Co-Director

Janine Michael, Centre for Sustainable Energy, Deputy Chief Executive

Nick Owen MBE, The Mighty Creatives, CEO

Gavin Smart, Chartered Institute of Housing, CEO

Liz Emerson, Intergenerational Foundation, CEO

Andrew Pendleton, Global Action Plan, CEO (Acting)

Frazer Scott, Energy Action Scotland, Chief Executive

Ross Matthewman, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Head of Policy and Campaigns

Ruth London, Fuel Poverty Action

Rev Dr Simon Woodman and Rev Vanessa Conant, Citizens UK, Co-chairs - Just Transition Campaign

Will Snell, Fairness Foundation, Chief Executive

Patrick Marples, South West London Law Centres, Chief Executive

Sarah Woolnough, Asthma + Lung UK, CEO

Miriam Turner & Hugh Knowles, Friends of the Earth, Co-Executive Director

Martin O'Brien, Association of Local Energy Officers

Kamran Mallick, Disability Rights UK, CEO

Harriet Lamb, Ashden, CEO

Richard Quallington, Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), Executive Director

Alan Markey, National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers, Chair

Mark Knox, Aspire NI, CEO

Sam Ward, Climate Cymru, Manager

Rowan Ryrie, Parents for Future UK, Founder

Seamus McGibbon, Creators' Rights Alliance. Public Relations and Campaigns

Deborah Tomkins, Green Christian, Co-chair

Dr Laura Santamaria, Fair Energy Campaign, Campaign Chair

Robert Taylor, Camden Federation of Private Tenants (CFPT), Organiser

Sabine Goodwin, Independent Food Aid Network, Coordinator

Svetlana Kotova, Inclusion London, Director of Campaigns and Justice

J Todd, Climate Action Network West Midlands, Treasurer

Alicia Kennedy, Generation Rent, Director

John McGowan, Social Workers Union, General Secretary

Joseph Howes, End Child Poverty Coalition, Chair

Tessa Khan, Uplift, Executive Director

Chris Meregini, Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations, Chair

David Hillman, Stamp Out Poverty, Director

Garry Campbell, Groundwork UK, Communications Manager

Katie-Jo Luxton, RSPB, Executive Director

Andy Atkins, A Rocha UK, CEO

Mark Hodgkinson, Scope, Chief Executive

Roz Davies, The Green Estate CIC, CEO

David Cowdrey, MCS Foundation, Director of External Affairs

Angela Francis, WWF, Director of Policy Solutions

Tufail Hussain, Islamic Relief, UK Director

Sarah Greenfield Clark, Climate 2025, Director

Anna Henry, The Movements Trust, Director

Pamela Healy OBE, British Liver Trust, Chief Executive

Revd Dr Darrell Hannah, Operation Noah, Chair

Julie Harrington, Guts UK Charity, CEO

Rachel Kirby-Rider, Young Lives vs Cancer, Chief Executive

Marshall, National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi), Chief Executive

Alice Harrison, Global Witness, Strategy Lead, Fossil Fuels Newsroom

Carys Roberts, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), Executive Director

Adam Scorer, NEA (National Energy Action), CEO