



Defend the Winter Fuel Payment

Campaign report to 7th November 2024



Campaign highlights

We have established Unite as the voice of pensioners in opposition to the winter fuel cuts, pushing our narrative of a wealth tax to the front of the national debate.

- Demonstration outside Labour Party Conference – over 100 pensioners attend in the driving rain.
- Unite motion passes at Labour Party Conference, defeating the Labour leadership. Motion called for winter fuel to be reinstated, a wealth tax to be introduced, and fiscal rules to be abandoned.
- Unite led the news for three days over Labour Conference, appearing on the front pages of the BBC, Guardian and Sky websites and the front page of the print edition of the Express. High-profile coverage in all the major outlets.
- Over 500 attend mass lobby of Parliament.
- 100 attend rally outside Stormont.
- Letter threatening legal action against the government has been sent and papers for a judicial review application are being prepared.
- Almost 12,000 have signed up to get involved in the campaign.



Update 1 – 12th August 2024

The campaign was launched with a mass email to all Unite retired members. We asked members to show their interest in getting involved in the campaign by signing up online – over 5,600 responded.

Campaign narrative

The campaign has focused on the following key messages:

- After 14 years of Tory cuts, Labour could have chosen to tax the wealthy to fix broken Britain. Instead, they have chosen more cuts.
- 10 million pensioners are set to lose hundreds of pounds per year.
- Means-testing will mean almost one million more are likely to fall through the cracks – those who are eligible for pension credit but not claiming it.
- Meanwhile, energy companies have more than tripled their profits.
- And the 50 richest families in Britain own a combined £500 billion in wealth - the same as half the UK population.

Collective actions

5,646 people signed up to get involved in the campaign through our online action.

You can view the online action here: <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/join-the-campaign-to-defend-the-winter-fuel-payment>

Over the next few weeks we will send out a survey to all those who have signed up to find out more information about them. This will help us to map everyone who has signed up and bring them into the various strands of the campaign:

- Mobilisation within the Labour Party
- Mobilisation for the mass Lobby Day in October
- Local campaigning

We have also completed a phonebank of all retired member branch secretaries. 36 branch secretaries said their branch would get involved in the campaign and 17 agreed to organise CLP motions. 12 branch secretaries thought they could get people to the mass Lobby Day in Parliament and a further 11 said they would discuss with their branch.

We have also begun phonebanking geographical and industrial branches about the campaign.

Response to the campaign

The immediate response to the campaign from Unite members has been overwhelmingly positive. There has been some limited criticism sent in via email. The most common criticism says that Labour is right to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment, as wealthy pensioners do not need it. Often this is coupled with a cynicism about a wealth tax.

A number of people (both critics and supporters) have suggested we should be running a campaign to sign pensioners up to pension credit.

Media

Labour's decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment has received widespread coverage in the media.

The Unite General Secretary, Sharon Graham, has condemned the decision twice in the *Daily Mirror*, once on 1st August (print only) and once on 9th August.

Link to *Mirror* article on 9th August here:

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/british-manufacturing-unite-the-union-33424122>

See below for extracts from the articles.

Defend the Winter Fuel Payment Campaign Report



Daily Mirror 1st August:

“We have to make sure we do not pit pensioners against public sector workers. The 50 richest families in Britain are worth £500 billion, which is the same as half the population. If you tax the top 1%, 1% of their net assets, that would give you £23 billion, meaning the black hole would be gone. Why is that such an awkward choice to make?”



Daily Mirror 9th August:

“Cutting the winter fuel allowance is going to do absolutely nothing to secure the public finances. Frankly, the money involved is relatively small beer, but the story that decision tells is worrying.

“It will mean that less retired people will get what they are due. This is at a time when energy prices have sky rocketed thanks in no small part to Big Energy profiteering. So, while vast dividends are paid out to the shareholders of the energy giants, more elderly people will now go cold this winter.



“The politics of change cannot become about picking winners. Pitting young versus old or vice versa. It’s time to change course.”

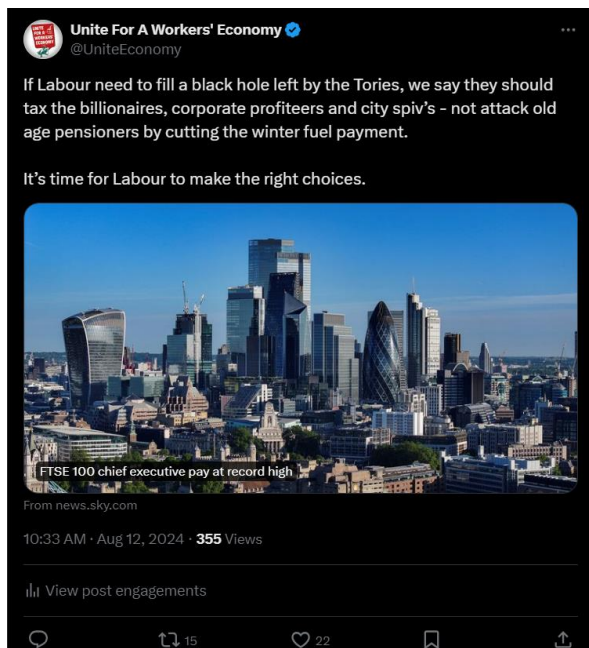
Defend the Winter Fuel Payment Campaign Report



Social media

We have pushed out campaign messaging across all Unite for a Workers' Economy social media platforms. See examples below.

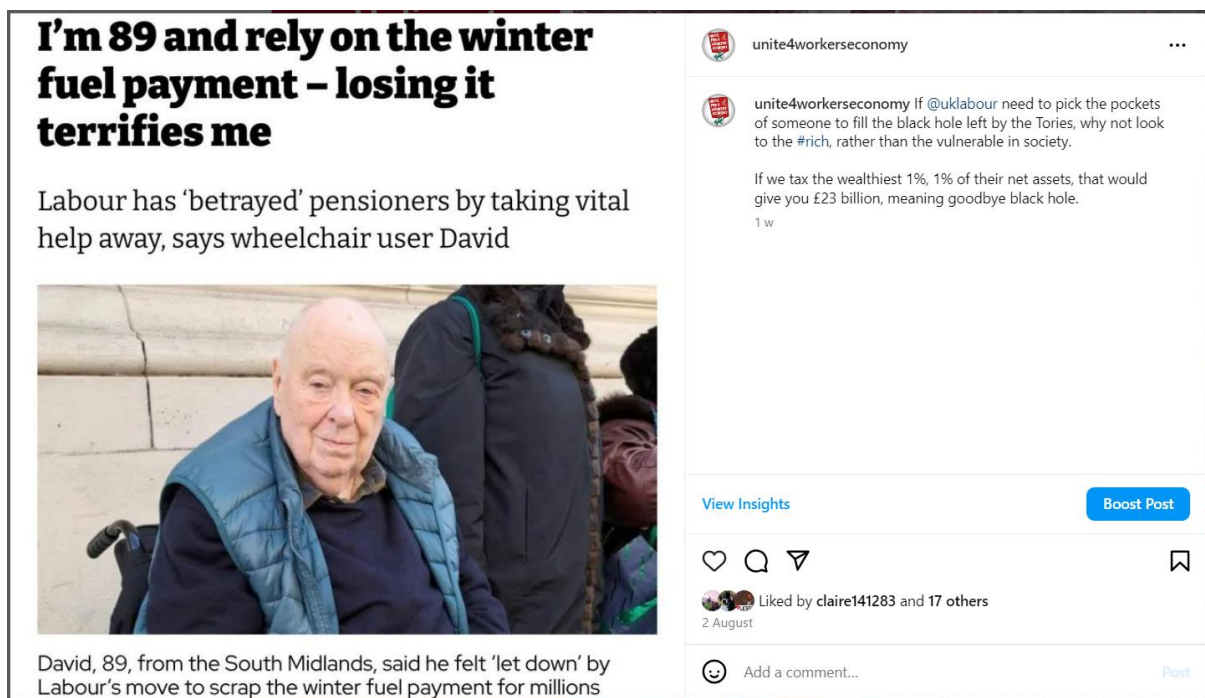
X/Twitter



Facebook



Instagram



Update 2 – 10th September 2024

The campaign is now in full swing with extensive media coverage of our demands and a list of supporters which has now grown to almost 8,000.



Front page of the Sunday People, 8 September 2024. See below for more media coverage.

Mass zoom

We are running an online zoom meeting this Thursday 12th September from 2-3pm to give a more detailed update on the campaign and coordinate activity over the coming months. We are keen to have a representative from every branch in attendance.

Please register here: <https://unitetheunion-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJErde-srj0sEtRqKYj-3hgP5Ssp2OC5NkFF>

Political

The government has bowed to pressure and there will now be a vote on the bill on 10th September. The expectation is that the bill will pass comfortably, as Labour will be imposing a three line whip. However a

rebellion by Labour backbenchers – either in the form of abstentions or votes against – will help move this issue forwards.

We have commissioned polling which shows that Labour is now the least-trusted party by pensioners, and we are briefing Labour MPs on this. We are asking them to vote against and are pushing our message in the media too.

The polling is currently embargoed so we are not able to share further details at this moment.

Collective actions

7,896 people have now signed up to get involved in the campaign through our online action ([click here to view](#)).

Branches have also begun submitting motions to CLPs, applying pressure to the Labour leadership through the grassroots. Motions have so far been submitted to CLPs in London, the North West, the North East and Wales.

You can view the model CLP motion by adding your details here:

<https://actionnetwork.org/forms/submit-a-motion-to-your-clp-about-the-winter-fuel-payment>

Upcoming actions

We are planning an action at the Labour Party conference to highlight the sense of betrayal felt by pensioners towards the Labour Party.

And we are also planning a mass lobby of Parliament on 7th October, joint with the National Pensioners Convention and Scottish Pensioners Forum, to bring the campaign directly to the politicians. Some funding will be available to help branches send delegates to the mass lobby. We will need to prioritise members from strategically important constituencies, such as Labour seats with a small majority and a high number of pensioners.

For more information contact organisers

Josh Berlyne (Joshua.Berlyne@unitetheunion.org)

Aidan Harper (Aidan.Harper@unitetheunion.org)

Media

Our campaign received extensive media coverage over the weekend ahead of TUC Conference, where Unite is bringing a motion calling for a wealth tax to fund wide-reaching change, including to maintain the Winter Fuel Payment.



- *Sky News*: Government 'picking pockets of pensioners' by cutting winter fuel payments, says Unite boss ([click to see](#))
- *BBC Radio 4*: Sharon Graham interviewed by Nick Robinson on the Today programme ([click here to listen](#))
- *The Guardian*: They talk about tough choices: they mean cuts. Is Labour on the side of working people or not? Sharon Graham ([click here to read](#))
- *Telegraph*: Trade unions demand Starmer reinstates winter fuel payments for pensioners ([click to read](#) – behind paywall)
- *Mirror*: Exclusive: Labour must tax richest Brits instead of 'pick pocketing' pensioners, says Unite's Sharon Graham ([click to read](#))

Research

We have commissioned a research paper from Unite's research department. This is currently being put together.

Social media

Posts about the Winter Fuel Payment on Unite for a Workers’ Economy social media platforms are performing extremely well.

You can follow Unite for a Workers’ Economy by clicking the links below:

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

Below are examples of the best-performing posts from the past two weeks.

Instagram

King Charles’ £45 million pay rise could fund...

2 September · Duration 0:41

▶

♥

💬

🗑

🔖

567

15

0

--

0

Overview ⓘ

Accounts reached	419
Reels interactions	--
Profile activity	0

Twitter/X

Thousands of pensioners have pledged to fight for the winter fuel payment through their union, Unite.

The 50 richest families in Britain own more than £500bn. Don't pinch from pensioners to pay for the mess left by the Tories.

<https://t.co/IDNPimWdxn>

Sep 1, 2024 · 11:11


19,726

♥ 894 · 💬 65 · ↻ 553


Facebook (below)


Defend the Winter Fuel Payment Campaign Report








unite Retired members

Sunday 1 September 2024, 15:54 · 










4,317

298

102

47

Overview 

Impressions

4,317

Reach


4,275


Post reactions, comments and shares


447


Total clicks


941


Post reactions, comments and shares 














253

8

2

0

1

34

Reactions

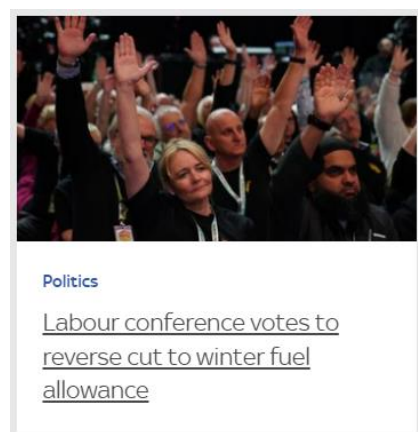
298

Comments

102

Update 3 – 27th September 2024

Unite's motion at Labour Party conference passed successfully. The motion was moved by Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham and called for the winter fuel payment to be reinstated.



Sharon Graham successfully moves the motion calling for the reinstatement of the winter fuel payment. We are leading on most major news sites including BBC, the Guardian and Sky News.

Demonstration at Labour conference



Around 100 pensioners gathered outside Labour Party Conference in Liverpool on 23rd September to demand the government reverses its decision to cut the winter fuel payment. We were joined by Merseyside Pensioners Association, WASPI women, PCS and UCU unions.

The demonstration was lively despite the torrential rain and received widespread media coverage (see below).

Political

Unite brought a motion to Labour Party conference calling for:

- A reversal of the cuts to winter fuel payment
- A wealth tax
- An end to the fiscal rules limiting government spending

The motion passed, despite repeated efforts by the Labour leadership to silence our campaign. Watch Sharon Graham's speech to move the motion here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-CQX_DNzKc&t=1s

Demonstration at Scottish Parliament

On 26th September, in conjunction with the Scottish Pensioners' Forum, Unite held a demonstration outside Holyrood calling for action from the Scottish government on winter fuel payments.

The demonstration was reported on STV and BBC Scotland TV news bulletins that evening.



Collective actions

10,465 people have now signed up to get involved in the campaign through our online action ([click here to view](#)).

Branches are continuing to submit motions to CLPs, applying pressure to the Labour leadership through the grassroots. View the model CLP motion by adding your details here: <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/submit-a-motion-to-your-clp-about-the-winter-fuel-payment>

Upcoming actions

We are planning a mass lobby of Parliament on 7th October, joint with the National Pensioners Convention and Scottish Pensioners Forum.

The event will begin with a rally at midday outside Parliament, at the **George V statue, Abingdon St, London SW1P 3JY.**

This will be followed by a mass meeting inside Parliament from 2-4pm. You will need a formal invite to gain entry to Parliament. Everyone attending should write to their MP, asking to meet and asking them to attend the rally and mass meeting. A template letter will be made available shortly.

We currently have 350 members who have expressed interest in attending. We are funding a limited number of train tickets and have written to those whose travel we can fund this week.

For more information contact organisers

Josh Berlyne (Joshua.Berlyne@unitetheunion.org)

Aidan Harper (Aidan.Harper@unitetheunion.org)

Media

Our campaign has led the news at Labour Party conference with extremely high-profile coverage across all major news outlets.

Unite was mentioned on average 435 times in the media in the past week, an increase of 2672% on the previous week. Sharon Graham was

mentioned on average 238 times in the media in the past week, an increase of 4544% on the previous week.



Headlines



Unite leader Sharon Graham accuses Labour of 'walking us into austerity mark 2'

13m ago | 2,358

DAILY EXPRESS



Pensioner protest aims to shame Starmer into U-turn at party conference

EVEN LABOUR'S UNION BACKERS WANT FUEL CUTS SCRAPPED



Good to see you Kate! Princess at Balmoral



Thursday, September 26, 2024 METRO.co.uk

We've spoken out for poorer pensioners, says rebel voter

» continued from page 1

rebellion at the Liverpool conference. The defeat was purely symbolic – the change has already become law – but is another sign of splits over the party's direction less than three months since its election landslide.

Health secretary Wes Streeting – also under pressure from some NHS chiefs for gloom-mongering as he repeatedly calls it 'broken' – said there would be no U-turn.

The government 'doesn't have the luxury of ducking the difficult choices and decisions', he insisted afterwards.

Sharon Graham, leader of Unite, which proposed the motion, told members ministers had cut cash handouts for the old but left the super rich 'untouched', adding: 'This is not what people voted for, it's the wrong decision and it needs to be reversed.'

Labour MP Jon Trickett, who voted against the cut, said: 'The conference spoke for poorer pensioners.'

Before flying to a UN summit, Sir Keir refused four times to apologise for the change – which Labour's own analysis in 2017 predicted would kill 4,000 people.

Asked by Susanna Reid on ITV's Good Morning Britain how he justified the cut, he said: 'Well, it's tough and I think the first thing to say and to explain is why we had to do it. We inherited a really damaged economy, we did an audit and we discovered an undisclosed £22billion black hole this year, which we have to fix.'

Pressed if he wanted to apologise to pensioners, he said: 'It's a really difficult set of choices. But what I don't want to do is to allow the economy to run out of control.'

'What I want to make sure is that every single pensioner, there is that increase through the triple lock each and every year.'

Told again that he had an opportunity to say sorry, the PM said: 'The people who should be saying sorry are the last government who left a hole of £22billion, and they should be sorry for that and they should apologise for that.'

Reid persisted: 'So you're not going to apologise?'

Sir Keir said: 'I've come in to fix the mess, fix the problems, and that's tough, really tough decisions. The cost of not doing it is to run the risk that we lose control of the economy again.'

'I'm not going to do that because if I do, you will be saying to me in two or three years' time, if we lose control of the economy, will you now say sorry for having lost control of the economy?'

Power: Unite leader Sharon Graham and T-shirt rebels yesterday PA/REUTERS

CHANGE BEGINS

UNITE RETIRED MEMBERS DEFEND THE WINTER FUEL PAYMENT



- *BBC News*: Unions win non-binding vote on winter fuel cuts ([link](#))
- *Sky News*: Labour conference votes to reverse cut to winter fuel allowance in embarrassing blow to Starmer ([link](#))
- *Guardian*: Labour leadership loses conference vote on winter fuel payments ([link](#))
- *Big Issue*: 'It's time to listen': Labour conference votes for government to reverse winter fuel payment cuts ([link](#))
- *Spectator*: Labour conference votes to reverse Starmer's winter fuel cuts ([link](#))
- *Telegraph*: Starmer humiliated by Labour winter fuel revolt ([link](#))
- *Times*: Keir Starmer loses vote on winter fuel cut — as it happened ([link](#))
- *Huffington Post*: Labour Conference Votes To Reinstate Winter Fuel Payments For All Pensioners In Blow For Keir Starmer ([link](#))

- *Express*: Keir Starmer 'loses support from party and paymasters' after winter fuel vote revolt ([link](#))
- *LBC*: Unions embarrass Keir Starmer as Labour conference votes to scrap winter fuel payment cut ([link](#))
- *The Herald*: Labour conference backs call to reverse winter fuel payment cut ([link](#))
- *Independent*: Unions win vote to reverse winter fuel cut in blow for Keir Starmer ([link](#))
- *Evening Standard*: Labour members vote against axing winter fuel payments for pensioners following protest ([link](#))
- *Sky News*: Union boss says change to winter fuel allowance is 'a cruel policy' ([link](#))
- *Mirror*: Keir Starmer must reverse 'cruel' winter fuel payment cut, says Unite union boss ([link](#))
- *Observer*: Sharon Graham column - No one expected socialism, but unless wealth is challenged, what's the point of Labour? ([link](#))
- *Guardian*: No 10 braced for potential defeat in Labour conference winter fuel vote ([link](#))
- *Good Morning Britain*: Sharon Graham interview ([link](#))
- *Express*: 'Cruel and embarrassing!' Keir Starmer blasted by union boss over winter fuel cuts ([link](#))
- *Telegraph*: Starmer faces winter fuel revolt at Labour conference ([link](#))
- *Express*: Keir Starmer faces crunch vote as union demands winter fuel payment U-turn ([link](#))
- *LBC*: Starmer urged to reverse winter fuel payment cuts as Unite general sec slams PM's 'cruel choice' of policy ([link](#))
- *Independent*: Unite union boss steps up call for Labour to reverse winter fuel allowance cut ([link](#))
- *Morning Star*: Labour must not be allowed to deliver Austerity Mark II ([link](#))
- *Sky*: 'Grotesque' plan to reduce access to winter fuel allowance leaves pensioners feeling 'ashamed' ([link](#)) – interview with Kevin from our Northamptonshire Retired Members branch
- *BBC*: Winter fuel vote delay an outrage, says union ([link](#))

- *i*: Winter fuel cut an 'own goal' as Labour accused of silencing opposition ([link](#))
- *Huffington Post*: Unite Union Issues Bleak Warning To Labour For Trying 'To Silence Voice Of Pensioners' ([link](#))
- *Sky News* coverage of protest ([link](#))
- *ITV* coverage of protest ([link](#))
- *Express*: I met with pensioners protesting winter fuel cuts - why Rachel Reeves should be worried ([link](#))
- *Express*: Keir Starmer sent huge warning as union stages winter fuel protest at Labour conference ([link](#))
- *ITV*: Merseyside pensioners protest against cuts to winter fuel allowance ([link](#))
- *Evening Standard*: Pensioners stage protest against winter fuel cuts at Labour conference ([link](#))
- *The National*: Pensioners fume at Keir Starmer at Labour conference protest ([link](#))
- *GB News*: Pensioners stood in the pouring rain to protest Winter Fuel Payment cuts...and you can feel the anger ([link](#))
- *Manchester Evening News*: Manchester pensioners among winter fuel protesters at Labour conference ([link](#))
- *Liverpool Echo*: 'We may be old, but we don't want to be cold': pensioners' fury at winter fuel cut ([link](#))
- *Evening Standard*: Unite billboard campaign urges Government to reverse winter fuel allowance cuts ([link](#))



Defend the Winter Fuel Payment Campaign Report



Unite was mentioned over 3,000 times in the media in the past week, an increase of 2672% on the previous week.

Sharon Graham was mentioned over 1,600 times in the media in the past week, an increase of 4544% on the previous week.

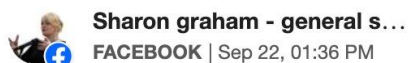
Social media

The number of people we are reaching through social media has steeply increased over the past week.

Sharon Graham's posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were seen by 111,000 people, an increase of 170% on the previous week.

A selection of the best performing posts are below. Click the images to see the posts.

Facebook



Keir Starmer and The Labour Party must re...



Reactions	690
Comments	57
Shares	191
Post clicks	934
Video views	21,079
Impressions	36,274
Reach	25,103
Engagements	1,872
Engagement rate	7.46%

Twitter



Moving the #WinterFuelPayment motion to W...



Likes	4,864
Replies	390
Reposts	1,900
Quote posts	95
Video views	96,348
Impressions	179,074
Engagements	7,985
Engagement rate	4.46%

Instagram



UNITE WINS WINTER FUEL PAYMENT VOTE AT ...



Likes	274
Comments	16
Saves	13
Plays	4,092
Shares	40
Reach	2,942
Engagements	343
Engagement rate	8.38%

Defend the Winter Fuel Payment Campaign Report



Advertising

We commissioned advertising to put our message out across Liverpool during Labour Party conference. This included a four-page spread in the Liverpool Echo and billboards across the city.



Update 4 – 15th October 2024

Over 500 pensioners descend on Westminster and Stormont to lobby their political representatives over winter fuel, organised jointly with the National Pensioners Convention and Scottish Pensioners Forum.



Clockwise from top: rally in Westminster; Unite Retired Chair Monica Taylor and Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham give speeches at Westminster rally; rally at Stormont.

Mass lobby of UK and Northern Irish parliaments

On 7th October, pensioners gathered in London and Belfast for a mass lobby of political representatives. Roughly 500 gathered at the UK Parliament at Westminster and roughly 100 gathered at the Northern Irish Parliament at Stormont. The mass lobbies were organised jointly with the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) and Scottish Pensioners Forum (SPF).



Top left: rally at Stormont; right: rally at Westminster; bottom left: Daily Express front page, 8th October.

Speakers at Westminster included Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary; Monica Taylor, Unite Retired Members Chair; Jan Shortt, NPC General Secretary; Sally Tsoukaris, Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance; John McDonnell MP; and Dennis Reed, Silver Voices Campaign.

Speakers at Stormont included Dymphna McGlade, Unite Belfast Retired Branch; Eddie Lynch, Older People's Commissioner; John Martin, NPC; Victor Murphy, Unison Retired Members; Patrick Mullholland, NIPSA Union; Lawrence Huston, Communication Workers Union Retired Members; Donal O Cofaigh, Fermanagh Trades Council.

Attendees of the Westminster rally then entered Parliament to lobby their MPs through the "green card" system—there were so many entering that the queue lasted over 90 minutes.

Inside Parliament, a meeting was also convened between pensioners and MPs, organised by the NPC. Speakers included Maggie Roberts, Unite Retired Members Vice Chair; Caroline Abrahams, Age UK; Jan Shortt, NPC and others. Around 10-15 MPs attended. Labour MPs in attendance who either abstained or voted through the cuts to winter fuel payments were held to account by Unite members in the audience.

Political

The Labour leadership continues to dig its heels in over winter fuel.

In Scotland, the Scottish Parliament voted through a symbolic motion, brought by the SNP, to condemn the UK government over the cuts to winter fuel. Two Labour MSPs, Richard Leonard and Alex Rowley, rebelled against the Scottish Labour whip and voted with the SNP.

Retired and community branches in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have written to all party leaders in the devolved parliaments asking them to put party politics aside and sign a joint statement calling on the UK government to reverse its decision on winter fuel at the upcoming budget on 30th October.

Field



*Belfast Retired branch stall
outside City Hall, 14th
October*

Defend the Winter Fuel Payment Campaign Report



On 1st October, Unite Community held a day of action which included demands to reverse the winter fuel cuts. Stalls and protest actions were held across England, Wales and Scotland.

Dundee Retired Members branch have been holding weekly stalls.

South Yorkshire Retired Members held a demonstration in Doncaster on 8th October.

Belfast branch held a stall outside City Hall on Monday 14th October.

Clydebank TUC have held stalls protesting the winter fuel cuts.



Demonstration in Doncaster, 8th October.

Collective actions

11,191 people have now signed up to get involved in the campaign through our online action, an increase of 700 in the past 2 weeks ([click here to view](#)).

149 attended a mass organising call on Zoom on 10th October, where we outlined and discussed the next steps for escalation. Notes from the call can be [accessed here](#).

Escalation – next steps for the campaign

1. We will be launching an **online action** shortly to keep the pressure up.
2. We are exploring **legal action** against the UK government over the cuts. We are currently in the process of identifying potential claimants in the case – we are looking for people who are claiming non-means tested disability benefits (e.g. attendance allowance) but who just miss out on pension credit.
3. We are looking to coordinate protest motions in **local councils** across the UK.
4. Finally, we are looking to coordinate **protest actions** up and down the country from November, as winter begins.

Media

Our campaign continues to receive widespread media coverage.

- *BBC News*: 'We don't feel valued' - Call to restore winter fuel payment ([link](#))
- *Mirror*: 'Losing winter help is time bomb for pensioners like us - we're scared' ([link](#))
- *UTV Live News*: Segment on Stormont demo ([link](#))



- *The Irish News*: Pensioners gather at Stormont to protest at winter fuel payment cuts ([link](#))
- *Labour Outlook*: John McDonnell: Opposition to Winter Fuel Payment Cut Keeps Growing ([link](#))
- *Doncaster Free Press*: "Doncaster says no to winter fuel allowance cut": Protest held in city centre ([link](#))
- *Express*: Pensioners rally against Winter Fuel Payment cuts ([link](#))
- *VIEWDigital*: VIDEO: Fuel payment cut will lead to deaths this winter, warns NI Commissioner for Older People ([link](#))
- *Express*: Furious protesters demand Labour U-turn on 'cruel' winter fuel cuts outside Parliament ([link](#))

'We don't feel valued' - Call to restore winter fuel payment



| Margaret Galloway says the executive should not have followed Westminster

Bernadette Allen
BBC News NI



London, UK

Campaigners take part in a protest against the government's decision to scrap the winter fuel allowance for pensioners, outside the Houses of Parliament in Westminster, central London. The protest has been organised by the Unite union with the National Pensioners Convention and Scottish Pensioners Forum

Photograph: Lucy North/PA



Social media

A selection of the best performing posts are overleaf.

Defend the Winter Fuel Payment Campaign Report



Facebook



All out to defend the Winter Fuel Payment
Monday 7th October, 12 noon, Houses of Parlia...
Post · 4 October 05:24

Comment

Overview

Reach	6,039
Impressions	6,432
Interactions	198
Link clicks	--

Reach

6,039

↑ 2.87K% vs median reach of your recent posts

7K

Twitter



Unite For A Workers' Economy
@UniteEconomy

All out to defend the Winter Fuel Payment

Monday 7th October, 12 noon, Houses of Parliament. Meet George V statue, Abingdon St, SW1P 3JY

As the campaign continues to grow our demand to @UKLabour is clear - fully reinstate the winter fuel allowance with immediate effect.



14k reach

Instagram



Winter fuel cuts, no way
Tax the rich and make them pay.
Reel · 7 October 05:47 · 00:14

Overview

Reach	551
Impressions	584
Interactions	26

Reach

551

↑ 194.7% vs median reach of your recent reels

Update 5 – 7th November 2024

Our threat of legal action against the government is announced. This follows the Budget which confirmed the cuts to winter fuel and announced no new support for pensioners this winter.



Unite launches judicial review process over Winter Fuel Payment cut



Sunday 3 November 2024

 Share

Legal action

Unite has sent a pre-action protocol letter to Liz Kendall, the secretary of state at the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP), requesting the government reverse the removal the Winter Fuel Payment and repeal the regulations introduced in August 2024.

Our case is built on the belief that the government has acted unlawfully and its action will have a terrible effect on millions of older people in society and will likely cause an increase in cold related deaths.

The pre-action notice was submitted on 29 October. The government has been given until 7 November to respond to the letter and reverse its

decision. If it does not reverse its decision then Unite will seek leave of the High Court to mount a full judicial review.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: *“People do not understand, I do not understand how a Labour government has taken away the fuel allowance of millions of pensioners just as winter approaches.*

“Given the failure to rectify this in the budget, Unite has now commenced judicial review proceedings challenging the legality of the policy.

“It is not too late for Labour to register the hurt that this cruel policy has caused, step back from picking the pockets of pensioners and do the right thing.”

Unite is challenging the removal of the Winter Fuel Payment on several grounds including:

- The government had a legal duty to refer the cut to the Social Security Advisory Committee. Its failure to do so makes the regulations void.
- The government should have gathered considerable evidence about the policy on the impact of the cut, meaning that the decision is irrational.
- Under the Equality Act there is a Public Sector Equality Duty to consider the impact of the decision particularly on the disabled who have higher heating costs.
- The requirement to take into account relevant considerations has been breached, including relating to fuel poverty and financial circumstances of those living just above the pension credit threshold.
- In Wales there is a specific legal duty to consider the full impact of the policy, this was ignored
- The Human Rights Act requires particular areas of vulnerability to be taken into account, which could include the impact of the policy on older people, those with a disability and potentially on race.

Given the cut has already come into effect and the worsening winter weather, providing the courts allow the judicial review to proceed then we anticipate a fairly rapid hearing of the case.

The Budget

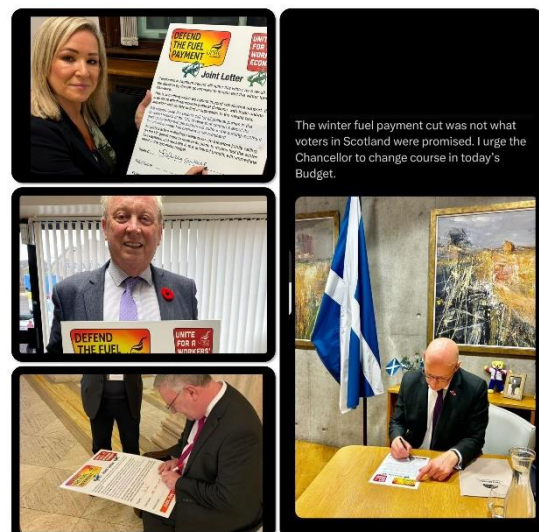
The Budget on 30th October confirmed the cut to the winter fuel payment and did not announce any extra funding to support pensioners this winter:

- Means-testing of winter fuel confirmed
- Personal income tax allowance threshold to remain frozen until 2028, meaning more low-income pensioners will be dragged into paying tax
- Commitment to the triple lock, advertised by the government as an increase of “up to” £471 next year. No acknowledgement that pensioners on the basic state pension (the majority of pensioners) will see a maximum rise of £361 next year – significantly less than the headline figure.
- Significant increases to public spending over next two years – however this will drop significantly afterwards with a demand for “efficiency savings” from public services. Could be characterised as “austerity delayed”.
- Very small increases on taxes on wealth such as capital gains tax, inheritance tax, energy company windfall tax. Essentially symbolic – will not raise significant revenue or tackle wealth inequality. Nothing close to the 1% wealth tax on assets over £4 million that Unite has been calling for.

At Prime Ministers’ Questions before the Budget, Rachael Maskell MP asked whether a Pensioner Poverty Taskforce would be set up. The Prime Minister ignored the question.

Political

The leaders of all major parties in the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland signed our joint letter to the UK government demanding a reversal of the cuts to winter fuel. See pictures of major party leaders signing, right.



Defend the Winter Fuel Payment Campaign Report



Derry & Strabane Council passed a motion condemning the UK government decision to cut winter fuel, supporting the Unite campaign and calling on the Northern Ireland Executive at Stormont to reverse the cuts in the absence of action from Westminster. Our campaign & the local community rallied outside the council meeting.



Rally outside Derry and Strabane Council meeting.

Field



Derry Retired Members branch stall.



Basildon & Thurrock Trades Council campaigning against the cuts to winter fuel.

Collective actions

11,895 people have now signed up to get involved in the campaign through our online action, an increase of 700 since the last update ([click here to view](#)).

We are now building towards the Day of Action on 30th November. To get involved, contact UFWE@unitetheunion.org

Media

Our threat of legal action received widespread coverage in the press and online.



Article in the print edition of the Sunday Times, 3rd November.

- *The Times*. Labour union backer Unite starts legal fight over winter fuel cut ([link](#))
- *BBC*. Unite union may bring legal action over winter fuel payments ([link](#))
- *ITV*. Trade union Unite threatens legal action over winter fuel cut ([link](#))
- *Mirror*. Union threatens Labour with legal action over cuts to winter fuel payments ([link](#))
- *Morning Star*. Unite launches legal challenge to overturn winter fuel payment cut ([link](#))
- *Independent*. Labour facing legal challenge over winter fuel payments cut ([link](#))
- *LBC*. Labour's biggest union backer bringing legal challenge against government over winter fuel payment cuts ([link](#))
- *Irish News*. Trade union threatens legal action over winter fuel cut ([link](#))
- *The Star*. Winter Fuel Payment cut: union launches legal challenge over 2024 winter allowance cuts - will it be reversed? ([link](#))
- *MyLondon*. Pensioners given winter fuel payment hope as new ultimatum given with November 7 deadline ([link](#))
- *Nation.Cymru*. Major trade union threatens legal action over winter fuel cuts ([link](#))
- *ChronicleLive*. Union launches legal challenge over axing of Winter Fuel Payment affecting 10 million pensioners ([link](#))



Social media

A selection of the best performing posts are below.

Facebook



Winter fuel not reinstated. Tax thresholds frozen meaning state pension will soon be taxed. No ex...
Post • 1 November 03:11

Comment

Overview ⓘ

Reach	2,057
Impressions	2,142
Interactions	45
Link clicks	--

Reach ⓘ

2,057

↑ 634.6% vs median reach of your recent posts

Twitter



Unite For A Workers' Economy
@UniteEconomy

BREAKING NEWS

Unite launches judicial review process over Winter Fuel Payment cut. Legal action is set to begin unless government reverses decision.

08:57 · 03/11/2024 · 19K Views

28 280 758 4

Most relevant replies



Unite For A Workers' Economy @... · 4d
Unite, the UK's leading union, has launched a judicial review process on behalf of the union and its retired members to overturn the government's decision to cut the winter fuel payment to all but the poorest pensioners.

1 10 31 718



Unite For A Workers' Economy @... · 4d
Unite's case is built on the belief that the government has acted unlawfully and its action will have a terrible effect on millions of older people in society and will likely cause an increase in cold related deaths.

Instagram



Some people think this is a generational issue but it's not. It's about who this gove...
Reel · 22 October 01:18 · 00:34

Overview ⓘ

Reach	448
Impressions	479
Interactions	18

Reach ⓘ

448

↑ 224.6% vs median reach of your recent reels