

Scottish government confirm plans to means-test winter fuel payments

Plans to means-test Winter Fuel Payment in England and Wales will see the Scottish Government's funding cut by up to £160 million.

Social Justice Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville has confirmed the Scottish Government therefore has no alternative but to replicate the decision in Scotland and restrict payments to pensioners who receive eligible benefits.

Social Justice Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said: "Despite all efforts to review our financial position we have been left with no choice but to follow the UK Government and restrict payments to older people who receive relevant eligible benefits.

"This is a necessary decision when faced with such a deep cut to our funding and in the most challenging financial circumstances since devolution. The reduction we are facing amounts to as much as 90% of the cost of Scotland's replacement benefit, the Pension Age Winter Heating Payment.

"Given the UK Government's decision to restrict payments to those in receipt of means-tested benefits, such as Pension Credit, and the implications for the Scottish Government detailed above, I have urged the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to undertake a benefits take-up campaign for Pension Credit and to move forward with plans for a social energy tariff.

“Both of these measures will provide some further protection to energy customers in greatest need.”