



## **Press Release from Buckinghamshire Council**

03 October 2024

### **Calling Bucks pensioners – can we help reduce your energy bills?**

Buckinghamshire Council has extended the eligibility criteria of one of its key programmes to help lower heating bills, following the government's decision to remove the Winter Fuel Payment from the majority of Buckinghamshire pensioners.

The council's 'Energy Doctor' scheme involves a home visit from one of their Energy Doctors to assess 'easy interventions' to lower energy bills, funded by the council, such as fitting LED light bulbs and draught proofing.

Now the council has extended the scheme to include all residents of State Pension age whose homes have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rated D-G.

It's part of a range of help the council wants local pensioners to access if losing their Winter Fuel Payment leaves them struggling to meet heating costs. The Winter Fuel Payment will only be made this year to pensioners receiving Pension Credit or another related benefit. It means some 95,000 pensioners in Buckinghamshire will no longer receive this payment so Buckinghamshire Council is working hard to remind those residents about what other support is available.

The council's Energy Doctors have visited more than 800 Buckinghamshire homes in the last 18 months, and the energy saving measures they have put into those homes are saving each household on average an estimated £129 on annual energy bills.

The Energy Doctors use low-cost 'retrofit' measures to reduce energy costs, such as:

- draught proofing

- installing LED lightbulbs
- installing secondary glazing
- providing heated throws
- installing aerated shower heads and shower timers

Thomas Broom is Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment. He said:

"As a council we have made clear our extremely strong objections to the government removing this critical support for pensioners and have written directly to the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to ask that this policy is reversed. We are also doing all we can to support our local pensioners as we move into the colder months and expanding our Energy Doctor scheme is one way we can help.

"Please find out from our team if you're eligible for a visit as our Energy Doctor could make a real difference in helping to make heating the home more affordable. I also urge family and friends of local pensioners to make sure they're aware of our Energy Doctor scheme which has already helped so many local households – please spread the word!"

**ENDS..../**

#### **Notes to Editor**

To find out more about Energy Doctor please visit our website at: [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/energy-doctor](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/energy-doctor)

Buckinghamshire Council is also urging local pensioners to check if they're eligible for Pension Credit to enable them to claim the Winter Fuel Payment. Find out more at: [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/pension-credit](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/pension-credit)

Any Buckinghamshire household facing financial hardship can contact the council's Helping Hand service. Find out more at: [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/helping-hand](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/helping-hand)



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