# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Cost-of-living summit**  |
| **DATE**  | **18 February 2022** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt, MS Minister for Social Justice**  |

This statement updates Members about the cost of living summit, which I chaired yesterday afternoon. I was joined by the Minister for Climate Change and the Minister for Finance and Local Government, as well as key stakeholders from across Wales.

We discussed the actions the Welsh Government is taking to help Welsh households manage the cost-of-living crisis, including the announcement this week of a further package of support worth more than £330m.

This package will enable us to:

* Provide a further Winter Fuel Support Scheme in 2022-23, giving more people on low incomes a non-repayable £200 cash payment towards their energy bills
* See investment in the Discretionary Assistance Fund, extending the flexibilities, ensuring more people receive emergency financial support when they need it
* Provide a £150 cost-of-living payment to all households living in properties in council tax bands A to D and to all households receiving support from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in all council tax bands
* A further £25m will be available to local authorities in the form of a discretionary fund. They will be able to target this additional funding to help households which may be struggling.

This funding is in addition to our current £51m Household Support Fund, which we announced in November 2021 and the doubling of the Winter Fuel Support Scheme announced in January.

However, the summit recognised the need to develop actions which not only address the immediate needs of vulnerable households but also support them to build resilience in the face of the challenges to come.

The summit underlined the importance of working as partners and galvanising our combined efforts to have a greater, more lasting impact.

Recognising the powers and the fiscal resources needed to help people with the rising cost of energy and increasing living costs lie mainly with the UK Government, we looked at what more we can do as a nation to support our most vulnerable citizens through this crisis.

I thanked partners for their ongoing work to tackle the cost of living crisis and called on them to work with Welsh Government and others to develop a strategic approach to tackling the impacts of this crisis, making sure that support reaches those who are most in need. With more than 140 people in attendance at the virtual summit, I believe this shows the level of commitment there is to develop solutions during these challenging times.

We were joined by a wide range of key stakeholders who spoke about the real challenges people are facing during this difficult time. Councillor Anthony Hunt, Leader of Torfaen Council, Shavanah Taj, General Secretary of the Wales TUC, Victoria Winckler, Director of the Bevan Foundation, Rebecca Woolley, Director of Citizens Advice Cymru and Ben Saltmarsh, Head of National Energy Action Cymru shared their insights as well as their suggestions for solutions going forward.

What is clear from the summit is that, while Welsh Government has a duty to lead this work, noone organisation can tackle a problem of this magnitude alone and a strategic partnership approach is the only way forward.

I have given a commitment to hold a follow up event before the summer when I will provide an update on how this work is progressing.