

Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AC/AM
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister for Wales



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: OAQ(3)1514(FM)

Darren Millar AM/AC
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

7 January 2009

Dear Darren

During First Minister's questions on 2 December, you asked what the Assembly Government is doing to support cancer patients in Wales who are finding it difficult to pay increased fuel bills this winter.

Three main factors contribute to fuel poverty: energy prices, income levels and the energy performance of the home a person lives in. The first two factors lie largely outside the control of the Assembly Government, although we do work closely with the UK Government and Ofgem to progress action on these issues. The Assembly Government has a greater direct role in relation to the third factor affecting fuel poverty, the energy efficiency of the home. The Home Energy Efficiency Scheme is our main programme aimed at addressing this specific issue. Under this programme, households are offered benefit entitlement checks as well as a range of energy efficiency measures including cavity wall insulation.

Over the past few years, and as a reflection of our commitment to helping those in fuel poverty, the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme budget has increased significantly for example, in 2004/05 the budget stood at £14.5 million. The Home Energy Efficiency Scheme budget was £19.8 in 2008/09 and the recent Strategic Capital Investment Fund announcement will ensure that additional funding will be available to support energy efficiency action focused on those in fuel poverty.

As a One Wales commitment, we are developing a National Energy Efficiency and Savings Plan for consultation in February 2009. Work on developing the Plan is encompassing a review of our Fuel Poverty Strategy and Home Energy Efficiency Scheme and eligibility criteria and targeting will be among the key issues we will address in the consultation.

On the 24 November, the Chancellor of the Exchequer Alistair Darling announced in his Pre-Budget Report that he was bringing forward April's increase in Child Benefit to January, increases of the Child Tax Credit and a payment of £60 to all pensioners equivalent to bringing forward the April increase in the basic state pension. These measures will benefit some cancer patients in Wales.

Jane Davidson is due to meet Cath Lindley from the Macmillan Cancer Support organisation shortly to discuss key issues including fuel poverty issues relating to cancer patients in Wales.

Yours and a Happy New Year!

Rhodri

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Ffacs * Fax 029 2089 8198
rhodri.morgan@wales.gsi.gov.uk