

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

2nd December 2020

Dear Constance,

RE: FUEL POVERTY.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding fuel poverty; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

Let me first be clear, no-one should be struggling to afford to keep their home at a reasonable temperature in a modern society, and although we have seen progress towards this goal, there is still so much my colleagues and I can do to make this a reality.

One of the principal ways in which we can tackle fuel poverty in the long-run is to improve the energy efficiency of homes. In the *Clean Growth Strategy*, the Government set out its aspiration for as many homes as possible to be Energy Performance Certificate Band C by 2035 where cost effective, affordable and practical, and to reach this standard by 2030 for fuel poor homes.

Following the Chancellor's Summer Statement, I am pleased that homeowners and landlords in England are now able to apply for £5,000 vouchers from a £2 billion Green Homes Grant scheme to pay for green improvements such as loft, wall and floor insulation that could save some households hundreds of pounds a year on their energy bills. I am also assured that low-income households can apply for a voucher of up to £10,000.

Households struggling with their bills are eligible for insulation measures, including solid wall insulation, through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme. Homeowners and those in privately rented homes who are on specific benefits may also be eligible for support towards heating improvements, including oil-fired boiler replacements, through ECO Affordable Warmth.

Moreover, in March 2020, the Government agreed new emergency measures with the energy industry to protect the domestic energy supply of those most in need during the disruption caused by Coronavirus. This included nominating a third party for credit top ups, having a discretionary fund added to their credit, or being sent a pre-loaded top up card so that their supply was not interrupted.

Any energy customer that was in financial distress was to be supported by their supplier, which could include debt repayments and bill payments being reassessed, reduced or paused where necessary, while disconnection of credit meters was completely suspended. Customers with pre-payment meters who were not able to add credit were able to speak to their supplier about options to keep them supplied. This benefited over four million customers.



As well as this, there is further support for energy bills for low-income and vulnerable consumers through the Warm Home Discount, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments.

In addition, to provide support and protect incomes throughout the winter, the Government has extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until the end of March 2021. The third self-employed grant, covering November to January, is also increasing from 55% to 80% of trading profits.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom'.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**