OGM March 2024

An article in issue 180 of ‘Campaign’, the newsletter of the National Pensioners Convention (NPC), as seen at [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org/), reports that the NPC, Unite Community, and the Fuel Poverty Action (FPA) want the government to act to end the totally avoidable deaths of thousands of people across the UK each year because they cannot heat their homes.

By rallying at 12 noon on College Green, Westminster – and in towns and cities around the country including Ipswich, and the day before at a leaflet stall in Norwich, protesting that ‘Cold Homes Kill’, we aim to make our voices heard as Chancellor Jeremy Hunt gets up to deliver his key pre-election Budget. But despite figures showing how many die from health conditions related to living in cold homes – there were 4,950 excess winter deaths in 2023/24 alone - we fear the Chancellor’s Budget will fail to address the crisis.

NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt said: “We hope as many people as possible support our Budget Day protests calling for an end to the scandal of people in the UK dying because of the cold. At a time when the NHS and care services are struggling to cope, high heating costs and poorly insulated homes are the cause of many hundreds of thousands more, often older and vulnerable people ending up in hospital due to cold related illnesses. This is a totally avoidable tragedy of disastrous proportions.

“The Government’s Warm Homes Discounts, Cold Weather Payments and Winter Fuel Payments simply do not meet the level of need, “she said: “What is needed is emergency support in the short term, and a long-term programme to upgrade millions of poorly insulated homes, and deal with ever-increasing heating bills. While energy providers continue to hike up their profits, people are struggling and dying. Until we have a basic level of free fuel, a removal of the energy standing charge, and a complete end of the force-fitting of fuel prepayment meters in the homes of those who fall behind with their bills, along with evictions of those who cannot pay, we will continue to see many more deaths.”

Christopher J. Brooks, Chair Suffolk,

& Anglia Region Pensioners Associations (NPC)