

Amendment Cost-of-living; Pension Credits - Councillor Lewis Quigg to move, Councillor Chris McManus to second

~~Older people in Oldham face a harsh winter this year, with the cost of living crisis affecting older people disproportionately. The government's support schemes haven't gone far enough to support vulnerable older people and the new chancellor's announcement have done little to give people confidence or stability in the coming months.~~

Over three million households in the UK are eligible to claim pension credits, however over 800,000 of these households don't claim it. In Greater Manchester this means that £70m in benefits went unclaimed last year, with over £6m in Oldham alone.

~~The Labour administration has pledged to ensure that residents in the town will have access to all support that they are entitled to, as people cannot rely on the government to support them when they are unable to support their own policies.~~

~~With energy bills, food, fuel and household essential prices rising, many older people in Oldham are forced to choose between staying warm or eating. Whilst government policy is ever changing, the Prime Minister cannot be trusted to help our older people, Oldham Council has taken action to support those who are most vulnerable during this cost-of-living crisis with our £3m We Can Help Campaign.~~

This Council notes:

- That ~~during the Tory cost of living crisis,~~ £6m in pension credits went unclaimed in Oldham last year, preventing those who are eligible to receive them using this money to support themselves during these difficult times.
- Last year Oldham's Welfare Rights Team supported residents by helping them access over £1.8m worth of social security support.
- ~~The government has failed to provide the necessary support and guidance to eligible pension credit recipients.~~
- As a local authority we are committed to ensuring that our vulnerable residents can access all the support they are eligible to receive.
- The work that the council are undertaking across all departments to ensure that the most vulnerable residents are supported.

This Council resolves to:

- Ensure that the council continues its joined up approach to supporting residents during the cost-of-living crisis, working across all areas to ensure that no resident suffers hardship due to their financial situation.
- Continue to support residents to access all the benefits they are entitled to access, through the Council's Welfare Rights Team.
- Commit to working alongside Age UK to identify how the council can support older people during the cost-of-living crisis, including ensuring that everyone has access to food and heating.

This Council further resolves to:

- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, asking them to make changes to the benefits system to ensure that eligible residents receive benefits automatically, rather than having to claim them; asking them to commit to raising all social security benefits in line with inflation.
- Work alongside the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Ageing Hub to identify more avenues of support for older people in the borough.

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The government's support schemes to support vulnerable older people in Oldham through this winter include:

- A £400 payment to all homes paid as £66 a month over winter.
- A £650 payment to those on benefits (half's already been paid).
- A £150 payment to those with disabilities.
- £300 cost of living payment to pensioners.
- As well as a removal of green levies on household bills, worth about £150 off bills.

Over three million households in the UK are eligible to claim pension credits, however over 800,000 of these households don't claim it. In Greater Manchester this means that £70m in benefits went unclaimed last year, with over £6m in Oldham alone. However, £60m was wasted by the Labour Mayor of Greater Manchester on the Clean Air Zone Charge in Greater Manchester, which could have been better spent on helping older people in Greater Manchester.

With energy bills, food, fuel, and household essential prices rising, due to rising inflation and the War in the Ukraine, the US Federal Reserve has said that the war (in Ukraine) will reduce global GDP by about 1.5 percent and leading to a rise in global inflation of about 1.3 percentage points. Locally residents of all ages face higher Council tax bills something which this Council can remedy but chooses not to do so.

The Council has pledged to ensure that residents in the town will have access to all support that they are entitled to.

This Council notes:

- That £6m in pension credits went unclaimed in Oldham last year, preventing those who are eligible to receive them using this money to support themselves during these difficult times.
- Last year Oldham's Welfare Rights Team supported residents by helping them access over £1.8m worth of social security support.
- As a local authority we are committed to ensuring that our vulnerable residents can access all the support they are eligible to receive.
- The work that the council are undertaking across all departments to ensure that the most vulnerable residents are supported.
- The £3m 'We Can Help Campaign' to help local residents who need help.

This Council resolves to:

- Ensure that the council continues its joined up approach to supporting residents during the cost-of-living crisis, working across all areas to ensure that no resident suffers hardship due to their financial situation.
- Continue to support residents to access all the benefits they are entitled to access, through the Council's Welfare Rights Team.
- Commit to working alongside Age UK to identify how the council can support older people during the cost-of-living crisis, including ensuring that everyone has access to food and heating.
- Stop punishing people with higher Council tax bills and to commit to freezing those bills instead.

This Council further resolves to:

- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, asking them to make changes to the benefits system to ensure that eligible residents receive

benefits automatically, rather than having to claim them; asking them to commit to raising all social security benefits in line with inflation.

- Work alongside the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Ageing Hub to identify more avenues of support for older people in the borough.
- Condemn the £60m wasted by the Labour Mayor of Greater Manchester on the Clean Air Zone Charge in Greater Manchester, which could have been better spent on helping older people in Greater Manchester.