



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

John Street
Corporate Manager
Democratic and Civic Support
Exeter City Council
Civic Centre, Paris Street
Exeter, EX1 1JN

Your ref: Nom190722
10 March 2023

Dear Mr Street,

Thank you for your letter of 27 October to the Prime Minister enclosing correspondence outlining Exeter District Council's call for immediate financial support to help people to manage the cost of living and noting Exeter District Council have resolved to declare a 'Cost of Living Emergency'. Your letter has been passed to HM Treasury and I am replying as the Minister responsible for public spending. I would like to offer my sincere apologies for the delay in responding.

I am sorry to hear of the difficulties your constituents find themselves in.

The Government understands that people are worried about the cost of living challenges ahead. That's why decisive action has been taken to support households across the UK, whilst remaining fiscally responsible.

At the Autumn Statement on 17 November 2022, the Government announced further support for this year designed to target the most vulnerable households.

This cost of living support is worth £26 billion in 2023-24. This action taken by the Government means that over 8 million of the most vulnerable households across the UK will continue to be supported through next winter via additional Cost of Living Payments. The Government will provide households on means-tested benefits with an additional Cost of Living Payment of £900 in 2023-24. In the same year, pensioner households will receive an additional £300 Cost of Living Payment, and individuals on disability benefits will receive an additional £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment. The Government is also protecting the most vulnerable in society by increasing benefits from April 2023 in line with inflation, measured by September CPI – 10.1 per cent. This uprating is worth £11 billion to working age households and people with disabilities.

This support for 2023-24 is in addition to the generous support already in place to support households this winter. The Government has announced £37 billion of support for the cost of living in 2022-23. As part of this financial year's cost of living support millions of the most vulnerable households will receive £1200 of support this year through the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme, £150 Council Tax rebate and one-off £650 Cost of Living Payment for those on means-tested benefits, with additional support for pensioners and those claiming disability benefits.

For those in need of additional support, the Government has provided a further £1 billion to enable a twelve-month extension to the Household Support Fund. This will enable Local Authorities to support households with the cost of food, energy and other essentials.

Regarding energy and fuel poverty, the Government acted across the UK to bring down the cost of energy and support households and businesses. This winter, the Government are spending £55 billion to directly help households and businesses with their energy bills - amongst the largest support plans in Europe. The Government will continue to provide support to all households through the Energy Price Guarantee, which will save the typical household around £900 this winter and £500 in 2023-24. The Government has also doubled to £200 the level of support for households that use alternative fuels, such as heating oil, LPG, coal or biomass, to heat their homes. This support will be delivered as soon as possible this winter.

Finally, through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme the Government is providing a discount on wholesale gas and electricity prices for all non-domestic consumers (including UK businesses, the voluntary and public sectors), protecting them from soaring energy costs and providing them with the certainty they need to plan through the acute crisis this winter. In addition to this, the Government will also provide a fixed payment of £150 to all UK non-domestic consumers who are off the gas grid and use alternative fuels, with additional 'top-up' payments for large users of heating oil based on actual usage.

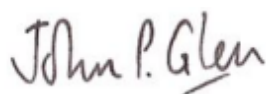
The Government is also prioritising the health sector. At the Autumn Statement, in November, the Government provided £3.3 billion to the NHS in each of the next two years to ensure that the NHS can take rapid action on issues such as improving urgent and emergency care and getting elective performance back to pre-pandemic levels.

The Government is also providing a generous Business Rates package worth £13.6 billion over the next five years to support high streets and protect businesses from large bill increases. This includes over £500 million of support to the smallest businesses with a three year Supporting Small Business (SSB) scheme. The SSB will cap bill increases at £600 per year for any business losing eligibility for some or all Small Business Rate Relief or Rural Rate Relief at the 2023 revaluation.

The Government is continuing to keep the situation under review and focus support on the most vulnerable whilst ensuring whilst acting in a fiscally responsible way.

Thank you for taking the trouble to make me aware of these concerns and for the actions you are taking to support the most vulnerable in your council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "John P. Glen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

THE RT HON JOHN GLEN MP