Fuel Bank Foundation Room 10,
Wombourne Civic Centre,
Gravel Hill,
Wombourne,
Staffordshire,
WV5 9HA

www.fuelbankfoundation.org

Dear Chancellor,

Fuel Bank Foundation helps people in the UK who face living without heat, light and power in their home because they can't afford to top up their prepayment energy meter or fill their heating oil tank. We gift them at least ten days' worth of energy and help them to get back on top of their finances through practical advice and support, whilst also campaigning for systemic change to solve the problem at its roots.

We know that if people can stay warm and clean, cook nutritious meals and use essential appliances, they stand a far better chance of escaping poverty and living a happy, healthy and productive life.

Having now delivered support to over two and a half million people, Fuel Bank Foundation has gathered compelling insights into the lives of those we help and the daily challenges they face.

Sadly, choosing whether to eat or heat has now become commonplace for many people. Two in five of the people we surveyed this year had to make the choice between having a hot meal or heating their home at least once a week.

Debt is also a big issue for our clients. Forty-nine per cent of people who received emergency financial help from us had to use it to pay down debt on their prepayment meter before they could switch the heat and lights back on. Some were also repaying loans from

friends and family and, more worryingly, from unregulated lenders that they had to turn to so that they could pay for energy.

With predictions of a significant increase to the Price Cap from 01 January, this situation will only get worse.

With competing priorities for Treasury spending, we understand the huge challenge that you face in providing financial support to the millions of people who need it whilst also balancing the country's books.

But we think that finding money to support households in fuel crisis is not only right for them, but also for the country as a whole.

Living without the energy they need is robbing too many people of their health, happiness and capacity to contribute to society. And it's not just the individuals themselves who are impacted, with extensive research demonstrating that cold homes impose substantial costs on the NHS and also cause lost productivity.

So, the things we'd like to see in your Budget on 28 October to support the people that we help are clear:

- Targeted financial support (added directly to their energy bills) to shelter those with the greatest need from the impacts of soaring gas and electricity prices. We would suggest recipients of the Warm Home Discount would be an appropriate group to make this payment to.
- Split payments across the winter months to mitigate the ~£294 premium that prepayment meter customers pay in comparison to Direct Debit customers whose payments are smoothed evenly throughout the year.
- For The Warm Homes Plan to be delivered in full, and at pace, so that more people have decent homes that don't cost a fortune to keep warm, and

- Urgent implementation of the Debt Relief Strategy, which should have been delivered at the beginning of the year, but which has now stalled.

These interventions, recommended from our practical experience in delivering help to millions of households, would go some way in tackling the fuel crisis that too many people are stuck in across the country and would demonstrate this Government's drive to help those in the most desperate circumstances to realise their full potential.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Cole,

CEO, Fuel Bank Foundation.