

Press release: Ministers welcome protection of 1 million more from high energy prices

- Ministers welcome move by regulator to protect more vulnerable consumers
- Move will now see a total of 5 million consumers protected by safeguard cap this winter
- Government's new energy price cap legislation will be introduced later this year

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry today (7 February) welcomed the protection that 1 million more vulnerable consumers will get this winter from the extension of the energy regulator's safeguard tariff cap.

With the cap in place, these consumers will only see an increase of around 3.7% in their bills compared to an average 8% increase of dual-fuel standard variable tariffs of the Big Six last year.

Ofgem's extension of the current prepayment meter cap to those who receive the Warm Home Discount means 5 million people are now protected from unfair energy price rises.

The move comes as the government's own energy Tariff Price Cap Bill is expected to be introduced to Parliament shortly. The Bill will extend the price cap to the highest tariffs.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry said:

It is a positive step that a million vulnerable consumers are now being protected from unfair energy price rises through the energy cap.

But energy tariffs are still too high – customers of the Big Six energy suppliers are overpaying by up to a staggering £1.4 billion a year. This is totally unacceptable and why government will continue to go further – including by bringing in new laws in the forthcoming energy Tariff Price Cap Bill to put an end to rip-off standard tariffs.

Notes to Editors:

1. More information on Ofgem's safeguard tariff cap can be found [here](#)
2. Based on Ofgem's current typical domestic consumption values the new prepayment meter dual fuel cap will be £1089 from April 2018 compared to £1050 in April 2017, an increase of 3.7%. All figures include VAT.
3. In 2017 the six largest energy suppliers increased their standard variable tariffs by an average 8% (based on a simple unweighted

average).

4. The latest figures from Ofgem show that 57% of the ten largest energy firms' domestic customers were on standard variable tariffs and that the average customer could save over £300 by switching to a cheaper deal.
5. The energy Tariff Price Cap Bill will give delegated powers to Ofgem to amend industry licences for the purposes of implementing and managing the price cap. The Bill will require Ofgem to place a price cap on all poor value standard variable tariffs.
6. The government is committed to an energy market that works for all which is why we have put in place a series of measures, in addition to the planned introduction the Tariff Price Cap Bill. These include:
 - The rollout of smart meters, which will put consumers in greater control of their energy use and will save £300 million off bills in 2020 alone
 - ECO: Help to Heat which was launched in April 2017 will upgrade the energy efficiency of more than 300,000 homes a year, tackling the root cause of fuel poverty. This includes installing measures like including solid wall, cavity wall and loft insulation
 - Under the Warm Home Discount Scheme, 2 million low income and vulnerable households will be provided with a £140 rebate off their energy bill each winter
 - These proposals combined will see £770 million of support for low income and vulnerable households each year in 2017-2018.

Press release: Millions to benefit from enhanced rights as government responds to Taylor review of modern working practices

- millions of workers to get new day-one rights with sick and holiday pay to be enforced for vulnerable workers for the first time
- reforms will ensure employment law and practices keep pace with modern ways of working created by rapid technological change
- for the first time the government will be accountable for good quality work as well as quantity of jobs – a key ambition of the UK's Industrial Strategy

Millions of flexible workers will receive new rights under major government reforms as the UK becomes one of the first countries to address the challenges of the changing world of work in the modern economy.

Today's 'Good Work plan' comes in response to the [independent Taylor Review](#), published last year, which investigated what impact modern working practices are having on the world of work. The review found that the strength of the UK's labour market is built on flexibility but that a clearer focus is needed on quality of work as well as the quantity of jobs.

The reforms are a vital part of the [Industrial Strategy](#), the government's long-term plan to build a Britain fit for the future by helping businesses create better, higher-paying jobs in every part of the UK.

Delivering on the Prime Minister's pledge to not just protect but build on workers' rights, the government today (7 February 2017) set out proposals to ensure workers know their rights and receive the benefits and protections they are entitled to, and that action is taken against employers who breach workers' rights.

In some cases the government plans to go further than the review's proposals, including:

- enforcing vulnerable workers' holiday and sick pay for the first time
- a list of day-one rights including holiday and sick pay entitlements and a new right to a payslip for all workers, including casual and zero-hour workers
- a right for all workers, not just zero-hour and agency, to request a more stable contract, providing more financial security for those on flexible contracts

The Prime Minister said:

We recognise the world of work is changing and we have to make sure we have the right structures in place to reflect those changes, enhancing the UK's position as one of the best places in the world to do business.

We are proud to have record levels of employment in this country but we must also ensure that workers' rights are always upheld.

Our response to this report will mean tangible progress towards that goal as we build an economy that works for everyone.

Matthew Taylor recognised that the UK's employment law and tax law can fail to provide the clarity that employers and individuals need. The Government is also launching a detailed consultation examining options, including new legislation, to make it easier for both the workforce and businesses to understand whether someone is an employee, worker or self-employed – determining which rights and tax obligations apply to them.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

The Taylor Review said that the current approach to employment is successful but that we should build on that success, in preparing for future opportunities.

We want to embrace new ways of working, and to do so we will be one of the first countries to prepare our employment rules to reflect the new challenges.

We will take forward Matthew Taylor's recommendations and commit to pursuing the quality of work as well as number of jobs.

The 'Good Work plan' puts the UK at the front of the pack in addressing the challenges and opportunities of modern ways of working, it is an important part of the Industrial Strategy and will enhance our business environment as one of the best places to work, invest and do business.

The government will seek to protect workers' rights by:

- take further action to ensure unpaid interns are not doing the job of a worker;
- introducing a new naming scheme for employers who fail to pay employment tribunal awards
- quadrupling employment tribunal fines for employers showing malice, spite or gross oversight to £20,000 and considering increasing penalties for employers who have previously lost similar cases

The government will ensure workers are paid fairly by:

- providing all 1.2 million agency workers with a clear breakdown of who pays them and any costs or charges deducted from their wages
- asking the Low Pay Commission to consider the impact of higher minimum wage rates for workers on zero-hour contracts
- considering repealing laws allowing agencies to employ workers on cheaper rates

The government will increase transparency in the business environment by:

- defining 'working time' for flexible workers who find jobs through apps or online so they know when they should be being paid
- launching a task force with business to promote awareness and take-up of the right to request flexible working introduced in 2014
- making sure new and expectant mothers know their workplace rights and raise awareness amongst employers of their obligations
- launching a new campaign to encourage more working parents to share childcare through Shared Parental Leave – a right introduced in 2015

Quality work will also be considered by the government when agreeing new sector deals with industry, encouraging employers to show how they are

investing in their workforces to improve productivity.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will work with labour market experts, trade unions and the business community to measure the standards of quality work established in the Taylor Review.

The [UK's Industrial Strategy](#) is a long term plan to build a Britain fit for the future through a stronger, fairer economy. Through this we will help businesses to create better, higher-paying jobs – setting a path for Britain to lead in the high-tech, highly-skilled industries of the future.

Today's 'Good Work plan' comes in response to Matthew Taylor's Review: [Good work: the Taylor review of modern working practices](#) in which he outlines the "7 principles for good quality work for all".

The review found that:

"maintaining the flexible and adaptable approach to labour market regulation that has benefitted the UK so far, but focusing more closely on the quality of work as well as the number of people employed, will take us in the right direction". (p.31)

"determining employment status must be simpler, clearer, and give individuals and employers more information, a greater level of certainty and an understanding of which rights and responsibilities apply. We feel it is time that the government takes a fresh look at the legislation". (p.35)

Today the government will launch the following consultations to inform what the future of the UK workforce looks like:

- Consultation on enforcement of employment rights recommendations
- Consultation on agency workers recommendations
- Consultation on measures to increase transparency in the UK labour market
- Consultation on employment status

These are complex issues and the government will consider the impacts of these reforms on business and other groups before implementing changes.

Over the coming months the government will work with industry to consider ways of encouraging the development of online tools for self-employed people to come together and discuss issues that are affecting them.

The government has acted on all but one of Matthew Taylor's 53 recommendations. It rejected his proposals to reduce the difference between the National Insurance contributions of employees and the self-employed following Budget 2016 and subsequently have no plans to revisit the issue.

The employment status consultation makes very clear that changes to the rates of tax or NICs for either employees or the self-employed are not in scope.

The government has acted on all but one of the joint Work and Pensions and Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committees' 11

recommendations.

Their report '[A framework for modern employment](#)' echoed many of the recommendations in the Taylor Review including greater clarity around employment status, better upfront information to workers and increased enforcement of employment rights.

The government is determined workers receive their rights and pay:

- this year we are spending a record £25.3 million on minimum wage enforcement
- last year we recovered a record £11 million in back pay for 98,000 workers – a 70% increase
- since 2013, through our naming and shaming scheme we have named 1,500 employers for underpayment of minimum wage and recovered £8 million for 58,000 of the UK's lowest paid workers

Our National Minimum and Living Wage Campaign seeks to drive awareness and compliance. The government research 'The experiences of individuals in the gig economy' to be published today found that gig workers enjoyed the flexibility and freedom to choose when they worked.

[Press release: Alun Cairns brings Welsh to Westminster in Welsh Grand first](#)

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will open the Welsh Grand Committee debate in the House of Commons in Welsh for the first time later today (7th February).

It follows a UK Government decision last year to support the use of Welsh in parliamentary debates.

Addressing the Welsh Grand Committee in his first language in Westminster today, Mr Cairns will take the opportunity to highlight the UK Government's commitment to delivering for Wales, and the decisive action it is taking to put the nation's economy on the path to long-term prosperity.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

I am proud to be using the language I grew up speaking, which is not only important to me, my family and the communities Welsh MPs represent, but is also an integral part of Welsh history and culture.

This is a historic day for Parliament and for Wales, and I pay tribute to those in the committee who have campaigned for this change over many years.

In his speech the Welsh Secretary will outline the UK Government's priorities to strengthen Wales' economy through cross-border growth, including the milestone announcement to abolish the Severn Crossing tolls by the end of this year – a decision set to save the average commuter £1,440 per year.

He will highlight how last year's Autumn Budget sets out a powerful package of measures which will help shape Wales' economy into one that is fit for the future.

The commitment to formally enter into negotiations over a growth deal for North Wales to secure its position as part of the Northern Powerhouse – as well as kick starting early discussions for a growth deal for Mid Wales are significant pan-Wales announcements, he will say.

He will also say that the opportunities of cross border growth between England and Wales will be further bolstered by planned rail infrastructure investments.

Improvements on the Wrexham to Bidston line, as well as £16m of investment in the Halton Curve which will introduce direct services from North Wales to Liverpool.

People in west Wales will also benefit from new IEP trains and infrastructure upgrades to provide direct services from Pembroke Dock to London via Carmarthen.

As well as budgets and cross-border growth, the parliamentary debate is expected to focus on the UK Government's commitment to working closely with the Welsh Government and urge it to use the levers at its disposal to deliver economic growth for Wales.

Alun Cairns added:

I know that Wales is in a strong position to capitalise on the economic opportunities presented to us as we leave the European Union.

But we can't act alone to deliver the changes Wales needs. I look forward to further discussions with the First Minister as we negotiate a successful exit for Wales from the EU, and call on the Welsh Government to be ambitious for the Welsh economy so that prosperity is felt by all.

The Secretary of State will be joined in the debate by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales Stuart Andrew MP, who takes part in his first Welsh Grand debate as a Wales Office Minister.

UK Government Minister for Wales Stuart Andrew said:

I welcome the opportunity to discuss the future opportunities available to Wales, and the UK Government's budget is an example of how we are delivering growth and prosperity through a range of commitments.

In my role I will use every opportunity to make sure the whole of Wales contributes and benefits from these commitments. The North Wales Growth Deal is one example which will transform the way North Wales' towns and villages govern themselves, shifting powers to local leaders who are better placed to take decisions that affect their communities.

From these initiatives it is clear that Wales remains an attractive destination to work, invest and do business, and the UK Government will work collectively to ensure this continues.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The Welsh Grand Committee, formed of 40 Welsh MPs and five invited members meets to discuss issues relevant to Wales, and provides MPs the opportunity to question ministers, debate current matters and for ministers to make statements.
- The Committee last met in 2016, but MPs have spoken in Welsh when the Committee has previously met in Wales.
- The UK Government [brought forward a motion February last year enabling MPs to speak in Welsh](#) when the Welsh Grand Committee meets in Westminster.

[Press release: PM call with President Trump: 6 February 2018](#)

A Downing Street spokesperson said,

“The Prime Minister spoke to President Trump this evening.

“They discussed the Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data (CLOUD) Act, due to be considered by the US Senate later this month. The Act covers how the US can access data stored in another country, when it is needed to prosecute serious crime or to disrupt terrorism. It will also authorise the US Attorney General to enter into agreements with like-minded allies like the UK to allow

reciprocal compliance with US and foreign court orders. With it, law enforcement officials in the US and the UK will be empowered to investigate their citizens suspected of terrorism and serious crimes like murder, human trafficking, and the sexual abuse of children regardless of where the suspect's email or messages happen to be stored.

"The Prime Minister stressed the great importance of the legislation to the UK authorities in investigating criminal and terrorist activity in the UK. The Prime Minister and President Trump agreed the passage of the Act through the US legislative system was vital for our collective security."

Speech: PM's Vote 100 speech: 6 February 2018

The 6th of February 1918 may not be as well-known or instantly recognisable as the dates of the wars, battles and coronations that have shaped our nation's history.

But there is no doubt it was a day that forever changed our nation's future. A day when, for the first time, we went from being a country where most people could not vote to one where most people could.

It was another decade before equal suffrage was achieved.

But on that February day – seven centuries after Magna Carta, almost 90 years after the Great Reform Act – the Mother of Parliaments finally earned the right to call itself a true democracy.

A 1909 postcard published by the Women Writers Suffrage League shows a woman being dragged from the feet of Justice by the masked thug of Prejudice. And so it was in real life.

Because the right to vote was not handed over willingly. Rather it had to be forced, over many years of struggle, from the hands of those who held it for themselves. All around us here today are reminders of what that struggle looked like.

Through that small door away to my right is the cupboard where Emily Wilding Davison hid on census night. Up the stairs is St Stephen's Hall, where the statue of Viscount Falkland still bears the mark of Margery Humes, who chained herself to its spur.

Outside, beyond the grand arched window, lie New Palace Yard and Parliament Square, scene of such brutality when suffragettes clashed with police on Black Friday. Now these stories now dwell in the history books, dusted off to share with visiting constituents and schoolchildren. Yet in this hall tonight

we see the living legacy of the suffrage campaigners. Hundreds of female Parliamentarians, past and present.

Women who serve or have served as ministers and shadow ministers. A female former Speaker of the House of Commons. A female Prime Minister.

A century after women won the right to send MPs to Westminster, nearly all the parties represented here have a female leader or deputy leader.

The women in this hall come from every corner of the country, indeed from right across the world.

We represent many parties and almost every point on the political spectrum.

None of us are exactly alike, none of our stories are the same.

Yet every one of us is here today because of the heroic, tireless struggle of those who came before us.

Women who led a campaign not just for themselves or their families, but for generations as yet unborn.

Of course, women were not the only people brought into public life by the 1918 act.

It also enfranchised, for the first time, more than five million working class men. Men who – for four, bloody years – had been expected to fight and die for their country, yet had not been trusted with the right to choose who governed it.

So the granting of Royal Assent was a truly momentous moment in our history. Yet when it came, the celebrations were muted.

In 1918, Europe was still at war. In the words of Emmeline Pankhurst – the founder of the Women's Social and Political Union, who I'm proud to say was later adopted as a candidate for the Conservative Party – "the sorrows of the world conflict precluded jubilations". A century on, we're putting that right.

And not just this evening. As we've heard, the celebrations and commemorations will run all year long, both in here in Parliament and across the country.

In an age where millions around the world are denied the right to vote and millions here at home are apathetic about exercising it, it's only right that we all learn more about those who fought so hard to extend the franchise.

We don't hear enough about these Edwardian radicals.

In fact I think for many people, the first time many of us encounter the suffragettes is when we see Mrs Banks in Mary Poppins. It's certainly an entertaining introduction to the "soldiers in petticoats". But in terms of detail I think it leaves a little bit to be desired.

We owe such a debt to the suffrage campaigners that they deserve greater recognition. And that's why, later this year, a statue of Millicent Fawcett will be unveiled in Parliament Square, It's why the government is also helping to fund a statue of Emmeline Pankhurst in her home town of Manchester.

And it's why the Government has put £5 million towards events marking this year's centenary. Events that will recognise and celebrate not just the Pankhursts and the Fawcetts, significant though they were. But also the many other women whose roles are often overlooked. Marion Wallace Dunlop, the illustrator of children's books who staged the first suffragette hunger strike. Sophia Duleep Singh, the Maharaja's daughter who faced both sexual and racial prejudice as she played a leading role in the Women's Tax Resistance League.

Helen Ogston, the "woman with the whip", who in 1908 was driven from the stage by an angry mob during a suffrage rally in Maidenhead – a town that, many years later, I have the privilege of representing in Parliament. And, of course, the thousands – tens of thousands – of ordinary women and men whose names are lost to history. Some risked arrest and imprisonment. Others were forced out of their jobs. All faced being shunned by family, friends and society.

Yet each played their part in securing a right we should never take for granted – and a right that is still not secure today. Because a century after women were first enfranchised, some are still prevented from taking their place on the electoral roll. Many survivors of domestic abuse are unable to register for fear of revealing their address to an ex-partner. That effectively means the threat of violence is removing women's right to vote, something that is simply unacceptable. That's why just before Christmas, the Government laid a series of statutory instruments that will make it easier for those who are at risk of abuse to register and vote anonymously.

Those changes will be debated in the House of Commons tomorrow. I'm sure that, in the week of this significant anniversary for women voters, MPs of all parties will set aside their differences to support this important change.

The need to expand anonymous registration is a reminder that the Act we're commemorating tonight was only one step on a long journey.

I'm the 54th person to be Prime Minister of this country, but only the second to be a woman. Women make up half the population of this country, yet only a third of its MPs. I've long campaigned to get more women into public life at all levels. It's not about appearances, or even just about giving women an equal chance to get on. I want to see more women in politics and government because greater female representation makes a real difference to everyone's lives.

The same is true of the many other groups who do not see themselves properly reflected in public life.

People from minority ethnic groups, members of the LGBT community, people with disabilities, or those from less privileged backgrounds. At last year's election, the proportion of MPs who were educated at comprehensive schools reached a record high – but it's still just 51 per cent.

So let us celebrate this centenary, and give thanks to those who gave their all so that we might be here today.

But let us also commit ourselves to continuing their work.

To carrying forward the torch they passed to us.

To securing the rights they fought for and ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, is able to play a full and active role in our democracy.

The brave women and men who came before us left us the most precious inheritance.

Now let us all, through words and deeds, be their fitting heirs.