



Pensioners face dire winter emergency - Government MUST help. 'Tens of thousands will die'

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PENSIONERS will die this winter because they cannot afford to heat their homes or eat properly as energy and food prices soar, campaigners warn. The Government must take action now.

By HARVEY JONES

07:00, Thu, Jan 6, 2022 | UPDATED: 11:58, Thu, Jan 6, 2022



13



Martin Lewis explains how to reduce your energy bills



Get **pensions** news and advice plus latest money alerts for FREE now

Enter your email address here

SUBSCRIBE

We use your sign-up to provide content in ways you've consented to and to improve our understanding of you. This may include adverts from us and 3rd parties based on our understanding. You can unsubscribe at any time. [More info](#)

It's tough being a pensioner in the UK but this winter is set to be harder than ever. If campaigners are correct, huge numbers will die from cold and hunger and the Government can't just stand by and watch. Yet Boris Johnson has rejected calls to cut VAT on fuel, saying it would help people "who don't need the support". So what about those who do?

RELATED ARTICLES

- › Free NHS prescriptions 'axed from April' - £9.35 charge to be hiked
- › Council tax to hit £2,000 from April - pensioners can cut bill to zero

Later life campaigner Baroness Ros Altmann, a former pensions minister, says pensioners face a perfect storm this winter as fuel prices and inflation soar but the State Pension fails to keep up.

Excess winter deaths among the elderly average tens of thousands a year in normal times, often due to respiratory illnesses caused by the colder weather.

This year the death toll will be much higher, especially as older people living in freezing cold homes are even more susceptible to Covid.

Altmann has issued an impassioned plea for the Government to draw up an emergency manifesto to address the crisis. So far, there has been no reply.



More than two million pensioners were in poverty even before the pandemic, with more than a million in extreme fuel poverty.

It's almost impossible to imagine the hardship they face now.



COMMENT

Harvey Jones

It will be a long, cold winter for millions and the Government must act (Image: Getty)

The energy price cap was hiked by £139 to £1,277 in October but could rise by an incredible £600 from April 1, taking it to £1,877 a year.

Those taking out new fixed-rate gas and electricity contracts are already paying more than £2,000.

Millions were struggling to afford their bills even before these disastrous hikes kicked in.

How they will pay now I cannot begin to imagine.

The Government does offer extra help for pensioners who are struggling with the heating bills, but as Altmann points out, Winter Fuel Payments are actually lower than they were back in 2009.

Cold Weather Payments of £25 a week have not risen since 2008. The Warm Homes Discount of £140 a year has not increased for more than 10 years.