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Frazer Scott
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Copy to:

25 March 2026

Dear Frazer,

Thank you for your letter of 24 March to the First Minister on the risks posed to so many across society by the current and potential effect of global events on energy prices. I can assure you that we share your serious concerns about the ramifications of further increases in household bills, especially for those specified in your letter.

The renewed pressure on energy costs has come as an unwelcome shock to many people, particularly in rural and island areas. You will have seen confirmation of our immediate response earlier today concerning households who use heating oil and LPG; this followed our announcement last week that the Scottish Government will allocate further funding of £5.4 million to the £4.6 million made available by the UK Government for affected households in Scotland.

I have announced this morning that the Scottish Emergency Heating Oil Scheme will be delivered through Advice Direct Scotland (ADS), and that households will be able to apply to ADS for support with their heating oil and LPG bills from the scheme's launch on 1 April.

The scheme will provide a payment of £300, paid directly to suppliers where possible, to help qualifying households to place an order. We envisage that the scheme will run for up to six months with two opportunities to apply during that period. It will focus on low-income households, including those on means-tested social security, but will also be open to applications from other people on who have unavoidable additional heating needs, such as people with disabilities, or who are at risk of self-rationing fuel.

I am encouraging households to engage with ADS via their website and helpline to access this support from 1 April. Information will be available there as soon as possible. ADS will continue, ahead of this scheme opening, to provide vital energy advice and assistance to concerned consumers.

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However, while I believe that our immediate action and support will provide comfort and reassurance to those affected, I agree that more needs to be done.

The most effective solutions lie in the use of powers over energy policy and regulation which are reserved to the UK Government. As you may know, the First Minister wrote to Sir Keir Starmer on March 19, urging that his government take immediate action on energy bills to provide further protection for consumers and seeking an emergency Four Nations Heads of Government council to discuss these matters.

While that letter has yet to receive a response, I note that the Chancellor spoke to some of these issues in the House of Commons yesterday. Her comments included the potential need for future energy support to take a more targeted approach – which is consistent with the Scottish Government’s long-standing calls for the introduction of a social tariff focused on households in greatest need of assistance. I continue to believe that this measure, introduced quickly and targeted effectively, would reduce some of the pressures and strain on those at most risk.

As you know, the pre-election period begins tomorrow ahead of the vote for a new Scottish Parliament on May 7. I am certain that the matters which you have raised, and which our announcement today seeks to address, will form a significant part of the discussions and debate in the coming weeks. In the meantime, our Scottish Emergency Heating Oil Scheme will be in place, supporting the immediate pressure for those reliant on unregulated oil and LPG systems.

I am certain that incoming Ministers will wish to engage urgently with you, your colleagues and others in this space on the need to ensure that the most effective actions are being taken to protect and reassure those in the greatest need.

As I depart from this role, allow me to pass my sincere thanks to you and your colleagues for all that you do to represent the interest of consumers during what has and continues to be, a profoundly difficult time. The Scottish Government continues to place the greatest importance on protecting households from fuel poverty.

Yours sincerely,



MÀIRI MCALLAN

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