

# Press Release

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## Call for a commission to tackle fuel poverty as figures reveal 11 pensioners died every hour last winter

Britain's biggest pensioner organisation, the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) has called on the government to launch a new fuel poverty commission to urgently address the scale of annual winter deaths among the country's older population.

The call comes as official figures today show an estimated 34,300 excess winter deaths occurred in England and Wales in 2016/17; the second highest number in the last five years. This equates to 9720 more people dying this winter than in 2015/16 and represents a 39.5% increase. In total, the figures represent 285 deaths a day or 11 deaths an hour.

Jan Shortt (double t), NPC general secretary said: "Successive governments have simply ignored the problem of winter deaths amongst the older population and seem to have a policy of crossing their fingers and hoping things will improve. Today's figures show that this policy simply doesn't work – in fact things are getting worse.

Using the government's official definition of fuel poverty, around 1.4 million older people in England are at risk. In addition, almost one in three older people live in homes with inadequate heating or insulation making their homes more difficult to heat or keep warm. In total, this accounts for around 3.5 million older people at risk or suffering from fuel poverty.

The key to tackling winter deaths is to make sure older people have got a well-insulated, warm home and the income needed to pay the fuel bills. This is a basic requirement of what a decent society should do. A fuel poverty commission should be set up as a matter of urgency with the task of finding solutions to this problem such as rolling out a more effective programme to insulate homes, building more suitable properties for older people, raising the winter fuel allowance and tackling the excessive profits of the big six energy companies."

**ENDS**

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