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**18 June 2025**

Dear Collette,

Thank you for your letter of 17 June regarding the Winter Heating Assistance (Pension Age) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2025, and the impact of the UK Government's recent announcement on Winter Fuel Payment.

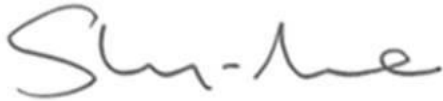
As you know, on 9 June the UK Government announced an intention to expand eligibility to the Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) in England and Wales to pensioners with an individual income of £35,000 or less per year. This decision was announced with no prior engagement with the Scottish Government, and Ministers and Officials have worked at pace to understand the implications of the UK Government's decision.

The decision came just days after we laid the Winter Heating Assistance (Pension Age) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2025 ("the Regulations") before the Scottish Parliament on 6 June 2025. The intention of those regulations was to introduce a universal Pension Age Winter Heating Payment (PAWHP) of £100 to all pensioners in Scotland from winter 2025-26. Pensioners in receipt of eligible benefits would continue to receive £203.40 or £305.10, depending on age, in line with the original regulations which came into force for winter 2024-25 and following the uprating of payments from 1 April 2025.

Following careful consideration of the options available, the Scottish Government has decided to mirror the approach taken by the UK Government for our Pension Age Winter Heating Payment (PAWHP). From this winter onwards, PAWHP will be a payment of £203.40 per pensioner household with no individual aged 80 or over, or £305.10 per pensioner households with an individual aged 80 or over. We are in discussion with the UK Government to extend the proposed arrangements in England and Wales to recover payments from those pensioners with an individual income of more than £35,000 through the tax system. The intention is that the payment will be recovered automatically, and pensioners will not need to register with HMRC for this or take any further action. To introduce this payment, we will withdraw the current amendment regulations before the Scottish Parliament and bring forward amendment regulations in due course. Further details will be provided once we have agreed a revised timetable.

In taking this decision Ministers have considered carefully the importance of prioritising the additional funding available to those who need it most. This approach will ensure that a higher level of support will be provided to those most in need, with over 720,000 Scottish pensioners estimated to benefit from the higher payment. Revised Impact Assessments will be updated and published alongside the updated regulations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Shirley-Anne'.

**SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE**