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- Critics have warned Labour's plans to scrap universal winter fuel payments will impact many on tight budgets - Stefan Rousseau

Labour's winter fuel raid could be blocked by a motion in the House of Lords next week.

Ros Altmann, the former pensions minister, has tabled a so-called "fatal motion" which would stop the policy from being implemented if it was passed.

She has issued a plea for peers to back the move, warning that three million poor pensioners who depend on payments of up to £300 [are due to suffer this winter](#).



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Baroness Altmann told The Sunday Telegraph: "This shouldn't be a political issue. This is an issue of social policy for some of the frailest and [most vulnerable people in the country](#).

"They are easy targets to pick upon. Many of them won't or can't demonstrate or make a fuss. They will be in their nineties, housebound, many aren't even on the internet or are disabled at home. They need to keep warm for their health.

"Nobody warned about taking away £300 quid from them, just as winter is coming and energy costs are going up again. It was never, ever mentioned in the Labour manifesto."

Earlier this year, Rachel Reeves, the Chancellor, announced plans to scrap universal winter fuel payments for up to 10 million pensioners [who do not qualify for pension credit](#).

Critics have warned that means not just wealthy pensioners but many on tight budgets will be impacted. One analysis estimated five in six pensioners under the poverty line will lose out.



└ Baroness Altmann said 'this is an issue of social policy for some of the frailest and most vulnerable people in the country' - Heathcliff O'Malley for The Telegraph

On Tuesday, MPs will vote on the cut. More than a dozen Labour MPs have [openly criticised the policy](#).

Next week, the Trades Union Congress will also vote on a motion expressing opposition to the cut at their annual conference, with multiple union sources expecting it to pass.

▶ Related video: MPs vote in favour of cutting winter fuel payments in the House of Commons (Metro)



Baroness Altmann's attempt to block the policy in the Lords is unlikely to be successful since the Tories and the Liberal Democrats are yet to get behind the push.

But she is hoping as many peers as possible support the motion, which she intends to force to a vote on Wednesday, to send a signal of concern to the Government.

Baroness Altmann, a former Tory pensions minister who is now an independent, said: "I implore colleagues around the House of Lords to understand beyond the rhetoric the true implications of this policy for [up to three million of the very poorest elderly people](#) who've done nothing wrong.

"If it means we have to give winter fuel payments to everyone this year, that may be unfortunate for the public finances, but isn't it better to pay that bit of money and to keep pensioners safer?"

Labour has justified the need to end universal winter fuel payments by pointing to what it claims is a £22 billion "black hole" in public spending plans left by the Tories.



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Treasury insiders have argued that the cut is "difficult" but "necessary" given savings are required to improve the public finances.

The Prime Minister defended the approach last week when challenged by Rishi Sunak, the acting Tory leader, about how the cut squared with large pay rises for public sector workers approved by Labour.

Sir Keir said: "This government was elected to clear up the mess left by the party opposite, to bring about the change that the country desperately needs. Our first job was to audit the books, and what we found was a £22bn black hole."

He added: "So we've had to take tough decisions to stabilise the economy and repair the damage, including targeting winter fuel payments whilst protecting pensioners."