



Dear Chancellor of the Exchequer,

The UK is, without doubt, facing its bleakest winter for decades, with inflation at 10.1%, soaring energy and food prices and NHS resources stretched to the limit. I recognise hard decisions lie ahead to tackle this current crisis, but call on you, as you prepare your Autumn Statement, to include measures to protect the wellbeing of an often-forgotten group of people whose health may otherwise be placed in jeopardy, particularly as winter approaches: those living with Raynaud's.

Raynaud's affects around 10 million people in the UK and its impact can be debilitating. The condition is aggravated by the cold – even the smallest drop in temperature can trigger painful attacks where the blood temporarily stops flowing to your extremities, affecting fine motor skills and making it difficult to carry out even the simplest everyday tasks. When the blood finally returns, it can be extremely painful. Some people experience attacks so severe they can be hospitalised.

Despite the government's welcome package of support in the form of the Energy Price Guarantee and the Energy Bills Support Scheme, many people with Raynaud's are finding it increasingly difficult to heat their homes and their health is suffering as a result. I fear this situation will only get worse when the Energy Price Guarantee ends in April as people with Raynaud's typically need to use more energy for longer periods of time than others in order to stay warm and manage their condition.

Having spoken to more than 1,600 people with the condition, we know

- more than three in four (77 percent) are experiencing more Raynaud's attacks due to stress caused by the current cost of living crisis
- 76 percent have suffered a painful Raynaud's attack because they have been too worried about their energy bills to turn their heating on
- the number of people with Raynaud's paying over £700 per month for their energy has almost doubled in the last year.

As the only charity in the UK dedicated to supporting people with Raynaud's, we are increasingly hearing how our supporters are 'terrified' to put their heating on due to rising costs. I urge you not to turn your back on the millions of people with Raynaud's and consider

- extending the Energy Price Guarantee for vulnerable groups, to include people with Raynaud's
- increasing the Energy Profits Levy with a particular focus on the biggest oil and gas companies, such as Shell and BP who have recently posted record multi-billion-pound profits, and using a proportion of the extra money raised to provide financial assistance to those with conditions like Raynaud's whose health depends on affordable heating
- including Raynaud's as a criterion for the annual Warm Homes Discount.

We simply cannot allow ourselves to live in a country where keeping warm is solely for the well-off, especially if it directly affects people's health.

Sue Farrington, Chief Executive, Scleroderma and Raynaud's UK (SRUK)