



MORE HELP FOR THE LOW PAID AND PENSIONERS



What's been coming through to me on the doorstep when I'm out and about in Corby and East Northamptonshire is that while Labour has helped children and families with increased child tax credits there are other groups we need to do more to help.

Two groups we have already helped are Pensioners over 65 through increased pension credits and many low paid workers through the extension of the working tax credit.

But we are determined to do more, and this week the Chancellor announced further measures to help low paid workers without children and pensioners aged 60-64.

- For pensioners aged 60-64, the Government is going to see if those households who have lost out from the removal of the 10p starting rate of income tax can be helped through the mechanism that already exists to pay the Winter Fuel Allowance.

- For other low paid families currently outside the working tax credit system, while the Government will examine all practical propositions, the focus is on potential changes to the tax credits system to allow the average losses from the removal of the 10p starting rate of income tax to be offset. At the same time, the Government has asked the Low Pay Commission to report on what changes could be made to the minimum wage regime to support younger workers.

As the PM said during Prime Ministers Questions: *"We are determined to take action because we are the party of fairness tackling poverty. I would prefer to be on this side cutting poverty than the Conservative Party when they were in power trebling poverty."* I couldn't agree more.

For over a decade with the minimum wage and child and pension credits this government has done more than any government in a century to tackle child poverty and help low income families.

The government will announce its findings by November so I'll keep you up to date with what happens.

I think it is important to remember the government's record in helping low-income households. I'm proud to have been part of a Labour Party in Government that has fought poverty in Corby and East Northamptonshire.

Across the country as a result of direct tax and benefit measures since 1997, from April 2008, in real terms:

- ✓ Households will be on average £1,150 a year better off;
- ✓ Families with children will be on average £1,800 a year better off;
- ✓ Families with children in the poorest fifth of the population will be on average £4,500 a year better off;
- ✓ Pensioner households will be on average £1,500 a year better off;
- ✓ Poorest third of pensioner households will be on average £2,100 a year better off

In stark contrast the Tories opposed the minimum wage, would cut tax credits and refuse to pledge to eradicate child poverty.

Their economic policy of £10 billion of unfunded tax pledges would undermine economic stability and risk taking Britain back to the days of 15 per cent interest rates and three million unemployed.

For all the Tories' opportunism this week it is Labour that always has been and always will be the party that do the most to relieve poverty.

TACKLING FUEL POVERTY

With recent rises in energy prices, it is clear that vulnerable households in Corby and East Northamptonshire need further help.

So I was really pleased that 100,000 households could be lifted out of fuel poverty by an extra £225 million to help with rising fuel bills

Households struggling to pay their fuel bills are set to receive significant extra help with the cost of warming their homes.

The money is being provided by domestic energy suppliers in a deal brokered by Energy Secretary John Hutton.

This follows last month's Budget decision to increase the winter fuel payment and secure an increase in the amount of money suppliers spend on their social programmes, providing help with fuel bills to those who need it most.

£50bn OF SUPPORT TO HELP STABILITY IN LENDING MARKET

Labour is acting to promote the return of **stability in financial services**.

We stepped in to save Northern Rock and prevent its problems spreading to other banks or building societies - unlike the Tories who had no policy for Northern Rock and would have let it go bankrupt.

Now we are taking new action with the Bank of England our European and international partners and with the financial sector to promote conditions to encourage banks to start lending to each other again - unlike the Tories who will not work with European partners.

The Government has acted to help families, businesses and the mortgage market this week to help resolve the difficulties in the financial markets resulting from uncertain global economic conditions.

The Bank of England and Government has announced that it is providing £50bn of liquidity support to banks and mortgage lenders to help maintain stability in the financial markets, protect the economy and help homeowners.

This will help banks continue to lend to businesses and homeowners and pass on the benefits of interest rate cuts by the Banks of England.