



ACCESS TO ENTITLEMENTS - PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Report by Chief Executive

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Report seeks authorisation to undertake public awareness to support eligible people in na h-Eileanan an Iar to receive entitled benefits.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Strategic Anti-Poverty Steering Group, a Sub-Group of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership, at its meeting on 18 September 2024 noted that that public awareness campaigns have been delivered in the past by Community Planning partners to promote access to entitlements, which had proved successful in supporting people in the islands to make claims and receive entitled support. Recent decisions by the UK and Scottish Governments to introduce means testing for winter fuel payments meant that it was an opportune time to revisit a similar initiative.
- 2.2 In order to receive the Pension Age Winter Heating Payment eligible pensioners in the Western Isles must ensure that they are registered for pension credits before the 19 December deadline. There is a need to ensure that everyone who is eligible for this applies in time to qualify for this support; Pension Credit can also passport pensioners to additional help with housing costs, council-tax, and heating bills. The Strategic Anti-Poverty Steering Group recommended that the Comhairle should lead a public awareness campaign to encourage access to entitled benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle undertake a public awareness campaign in relation to available supports to address poverty, including the support and promotion of access for all eligible pensioners to register for pension credits.**

Contact Officer: Derek Mackay dmackay@cne-siar.gov.uk

Appendix: None

Background Papers: Strategic Anti-Poverty Steering Group Minute 18 September 2024

IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	None
Equalities/Child Rights	None
Corporate Strategy	Support resilient communities and quality of life
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	None