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### **Energy Standing Charges:**

I appreciate the concerns raised on this issue. Standing charges have increased substantially as a proportion of our energy bills. Indeed, analysis by the Resolution Foundation shows that despite a decrease in the energy price cap from the start of October, more than a third of households will still be facing higher bills because of higher standing charges, alongside the end of the energy bills support scheme. This disproportionately affects those in poorer households and those using the least energy.

I know that there have been calls for Ofgem and the Government to act on this issue, including from fuel poverty campaigners and the House of Commons Energy Security and Net Zero Committee. Ofgem has said it reviewed this issue previously and that it found the current method of calculating the price cap protects higher consuming users with greater energy needs, such as disabled users.

However, it has also said it is “very interested” in having conversations with Government to adapt the system and that it is looking at how operating costs are dealt with in the price cap. I hope it will give proper consideration to the important concerns you highlight in this process and can assure you that I will continue to monitor this issue.

More widely, I am concerned that the Government has shown a lack of serious interest in protecting households from a retail energy market that is not working for those most in need. When it published a call for evidence on the retail energy market in July, for example, I know that fuel poverty campaigners expressed serious concern that it failed to raise the option of a social tariff in its proposed reforms, despite previous promises to do so.

I believe the Government should be extending more help to people during the cost-of-living crisis, by closing the loopholes in the windfall tax on energy companies that are costing billions. I also believe we should act to reduce energy bills over the longer term by bringing 19 million homes across the country up to standard over the next decade and accelerating the deployment of cheap, homegrown renewables as part of a plan for zero-carbon electricity by 2030. These plans would save billions of pounds on their bills every year.

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