

Protecting families from heating oil profiteering is top of the Prime Minister's agenda as he visits Belfast

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As global events continue to impact the daily lives of communities across the UK, the Prime Minister is visiting Belfast today (Thursday 12 March) to highlight his relentless focus on cutting the cost of living for working people.

- On a visit to Belfast, the Prime Minister will set out his commitment to protecting working people from unfair heating oil practices or profiteering
- He will meet the First Minister, deputy First Minister and leaders of the five main NI political parties to discuss what UK Government is doing to make people better off in Northern Ireland
- Through a record Spending Review settlement, Northern Ireland is already benefiting from government action to cut the cost of living and create the conditions for growth

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Recognising that the majority of households in Northern Ireland rely on heating oil to heat their homes, the Prime Minister will send the strong message to companies that prices must be fair, transparent and justifiable, not inflated at the expense of working people. If companies hike prices without justification, the government will act, including through regulation.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said:

Global instability has real impacts on the lives of working people across the UK, and I know families in Northern Ireland are worried about what the war in the Middle East could mean for their finances – especially given so many households rely on heating oil to heat their homes.

Let me be clear: we will not tolerate profiteering or unfair practices. If companies fleece customers or rip them off, we will not hesitate to step in, and that includes on regulation.

This government stands with working people, no matter the headwinds. Today in Belfast I am spending my time meeting not only the politicians making decisions in Stormont, but also the people whose lives are shaped by conflicts abroad and the approach we take at home.

The Prime Minister will discuss what the UK Government is doing to protect families from rising heating oil prices in his meetings with Northern Ireland political leaders. The Government has already asked the Competition and Markets Authority to look urgently at extortionate prices and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury has held further discussions with Northern Irish MPs to explore further action we can take.

He will also set out his wider commitment to prosperity, security and stability across the UK. That includes how his government's approach is prioritising supporting working people with the cost of living, with the average driver in Northern Ireland saving £89 from the fuel duty freeze and new open data Fuel Finder scheme, and up to 140,000 people in Northern Ireland already benefiting from the increased National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage.

Following his meetings with political leaders, the Prime Minister will talk to members of the local community about how the UK Government can support them with the cost of living.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/protecting-families-from-heating-oil-profiteering-is-top-of-the-prime-ministers-agenda-as-he-visits-belfast>