

Dying in Poverty 2024



A summary of Marie Curie's research into people dying in poverty and fuel poverty



Marie Curie is the UK's leading end of life charity. We know that poverty can cause additional worry and strain to someone living with a terminal illness, and can worsen their mental and physical health.

We provide information about everything to do with the end of life through our website and Support Line, and train staff and volunteers to spot the signs of fuel poverty in people's homes. But to end financial insecurity at end of life, we need wider change.

Key findings from Marie Curie



More than **300 people die in poverty every day** – 111,000 per year.



A social tariff could prevent up to **54,000** people dying in fuel poverty.



Women are more likely to die in poverty than men.

110,000

people over 65 **die in fuel poverty** every year.

47%

of **Black people** who die while still of working age **face poverty at the end of life**.



If planned rises to the State Pension Age go ahead, over **15,000 people** a year **will die before accessing the State Pension**.



Of those who died in 2023, **28% of working-age people** and **16% of pension-aged people** did so in poverty

The last months, weeks and days of life should be a time to focus on what really matters: making memories with family and friends and living as well as you can. But too often financial pressures add further worry and strain to an already difficult time.

In our previous report, we found that 90,000 people a year died in poverty. Today, that has risen to 111,000. For all key groups, rates of poverty among people at the end of life were greater than the rest of the population.

Poverty affects some groups more than others, including women, minoritised ethnic groups, and people of working age. Some parts of the UK have many more people dying in poverty than others.

Our analysis also shows that without change, even more people will die in poverty after planned increases to the State Pension Age.

We also know that energy costs can increase dramatically for someone living with a terminal illness. At least 128,000 people died in fuel poverty in 2022, struggling to heat their homes or run vital medical equipment. A social tariff, and better and more consistent rebate schemes for at-home medical devices, could cut these bills.

Marie Curie's key recommendations:

1. Establish a **joint action plan to end poverty and fuel poverty at the end of life** across the UK.
2. Guarantee a **State Pension-level of income** for working-age people with a terminal illness.
3. Introduce a **social tariff for energy** that people with a terminal illness can access.
4. Implement a **comprehensive energy rebate scheme** for at-home medical devices.
5. Ensure **Universal Credit managed migration** does not risk people with terminal illness losing vital benefits.
6. Include **automatic entitlement to the mobility component of PIP** under the Special Rules for End of Life.

Simona's husband, David, died in June 2024 from a stage four glioblastoma. Simona has two children aged 16 and 18.

“We knew straight away that David's diagnosis was terminal, and he was given six months to live.

“All the medical equipment he needed was electric. It really raised the cost of our energy bills, and I still have an outstanding bill of £5,000 from the energy company. His condition meant that he was constantly cold, so we had to keep the heating on all the time. He also had a hospital mattress that had a pump to change his position and help to avoid bed sores. This needed to be on all the time.

“Families who have a loved one with a terminal illness need a cap on energy bills. Their loved ones depend on this equipment, and they need reassurance that they can keep the generators on that are powering all this equipment without worrying about the cost.”

For the full report and recommendations visit:



This will take you to mariecurie.org.uk/policy/poverty

Get in touch

Email Marie Curie's Public Affairs team:

parliament@mariecurie.org.uk