Dear\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ MP

I am writing to you today to bring to your attention an urgent issue regarding the Energy Bills Support Scheme. As an itinerant boat dweller, I travel through and stay in your

constituency every year, which is why I am hoping for your help with this issue.

As yet, itinerant boat dwellers have still not received an energy grant from the

Government, or been offered a user-friendly way in which to attain this grant. Most households across the UK are now into their fourth month of receiving help towards extortionate energy bills, yet we haven’t received a single penny to help with our soaring costs of coal, diesel and LPG gas to heat our homes.

As you will be aware, all households in the UK were promised the £400 grant back in March last year, and an article published on the 1st April 2022 on the [gov.uk](http://gov.uk/) website clearly states:

*“If you live in a park home, houseboat or off the grid…The government has confirmed that further funding will be available to provide equivalent support of £400 for energy bills for the 1% of households who are not eligible for the discount. This includes households without a domestic electricity meter and a direct relationship with an electricity supplier, for*

*example if you live in a park home, houseboat or you live off the grid.”*

Depending on how the above is interpreted, itinerant boat dwellers could be included

under either the “houseboat” or living off grid examples. Either way, it seemed like we were included as we obviously do not have a domestic electricity meter or a direct relationship with an electricity supplier and therefore meet the criteria. Since then, the Government have released several announcements regarding the EBSS, including an additional £200 Alternative Fuel Payment for those not using mains gas. However, none of their literature has directly referred to how itinerant boat dwellers will receive the grant.

The National Bargee Travellers Association have been in talks with the relevant

Government bodies for some time, and thanks to their efforts, a work around solution is now being trialled.

Unfortunately, the best solution the Government can currently offer is a perplexing

arrangement whereby the applicant applies for the energy grant, knowing it will be rejected as it will not meet the criteria needed, and then uses this rejection to apply for another grant from their Local Authority. This convoluted approach is currently only available in four specific Local Authorities across the UK, it could take weeks, or even months for this process to be carried out, and there is no guarantee of success.

Therefore, we still do not have a definitive answer on how or when the majority of itinerant boat dwellers will receive the energy grant. With many itinerant boat dwellers, including myself, spending upwards of £200 a month on heating this winter, the EBSS could relieve the difficult choice between “heat or eat” that numerous folk may now be facing.

I ask that you urge the Government to act now and find a quick and simple solution for

itinerant boat dwellers to receive the EBSS that everyone else across the UK is already

receiving. We’re fast approaching spring making it a year since the scheme was announced, and for us to have still not had any help is unjust. We are still facing the same energy crisis as everyone else, and unfortunately, it seems like we have been forgotten.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

**List of London MPs whose constituencies include the canal**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MP Name** | **Party** | **Constituency** | **Email** |
| Rushanara Ali  | Labour | Bethnal Green and Bow | rushanara.ali.mp@parliament.uk |
| Dawn Butler | Labour | Brent Central | dawn.butler.mp@parliament.uk |
| Barry Gardiner | Labour | Brent North | gardinerb@parliament.uk |
| Rupa Huq | Independent | Ealing Central and Acton | rupa.huq.mp@parliament.uk |
| James Murray | Labour CoOperative | Ealing North | james.murray.mp@parliament.uk |
| Virendra Sharma | Labour | Ealing Southall | sharmav@parliament.uk |
| Kate Osamor | Labour CoOperative | Edmonton | kate.osamor.mp@parliament.uk |
| Feryal Clark | Labour | Enfield North | feryal.clark.mp@parliament.uk |
| Diane Abbott | Labour | Hackney North and Stoke Newington | diane.abbott.office@parliament.uk |
| Dame Meg Hillier | Labour CoOperative | Hackney South and Shoreditch | meghilliermp@parliament.uk |
| Andy Slaughter | Labour | Hammersmith | slaughtera@parliament.ukandy@andyslaughter.com |
| John McDonnell | Labour | Hayes and Harlington | mcdonnellj@parliament.uk |
| Sir Keir Starmer | Labour | Holborn and St Pancras | keir.starmer.mp@parliament.ukkeir.starmer.constituency@parliament.uk |
| Emily Thornberry | Labour | Islington South and Finsbury | thornberrye@parliament.ukemilythornberrymp@parliament.uk |
| Felicity Buchan | Conservative | Kensington | felicity.buchan.mp@parliament.uk |
| Apsana Begum | Labour | Poplar and Limehouse  | apsana.begum.mp@parliament.uk |
| David Simmonds | Conservative | Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner  | david.simmonds.mp@parliament.uk |
| David Lammy | Labour | Tottenham | lammyd@parliament.ukmail@davidlammy.co.uk |
| Boris Johnson | Conservative | Uxbridge and South Ruislip | boris.johnson.mp@parliament.uk |
| Stella Creasy | Labour CoOperative | Walthamstow | stella.creasy.mp@parliament.ukoffice@workingforwalthamstow.org.uk |
| Lyn Brown | Labour | West Ham  | brownl@parliament.uk |
| Karen Buck | Labour | Westminster North  | buckk@parliament.uk |