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AGE CONCERN RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT'S COUNCIL TAX STATEMENT

Gordon Lishman, Director-General of Age Concern England, said:

"Thousands of pensioners will feel let down by the Government's failure to announce a solution to the council tax crisis. Council tax bills are a major strain for many pensioners, particularly those who live in valuable homes on a fixed income. Recognition that help is needed for people on low incomes is welcome but action is needed now. Pensioners are angry and will not be silenced until the Government acts.

"We need a system of taxation based on people's ability to pay as well as the value of their property. But it is essential that the basic state pension is also increased so that older people have enough to cover their daily living costs.

"In the meantime, it is vital that older people check whether they are claiming all the income benefits they are entitled to. Up to £770 million in council tax benefit for older people is lying unclaimed every year and up to 1.7 million pensioner households are missing out. By making a claim, the average pensioner could be more than £425 a year better off."

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