

1.8m older folk turned off heating this winter

BY **AMY-CLARE MARTIN**

PENSIONER poverty is “back with a vengeance”, a charity has said after a poll showed 1.8 million older people turned off their heating completely last winter.

The study by National Energy Action for a Dispatches probe found three in five over-65s used their heating less than usual and one in five went to bed early to stay warm.

The fuel poverty charity previously revealed 45 people died every day last winter due to living in cold homes.

Separate polling by Age UK found four million pensioners have cut back on social and leisure activities.

Doreen, 68, of Tynemouth, told the Channel 4 show she gets £732.92 a month to pay for her rent, food and bills. By the final week of the month she has “nothing... not a penny”.

The retired cleaner, who was admitted to hospital with pneumonia, went to bed at 7.30pm to stay warm.

Harry and Christine Molyneux, 82 and 77, were told by doctors to keep their home in Higham on the Hill,

Leics, at 19C to protect Army veteran Harry, who has a heart issue. It was 13C when journalists visited.

John Palmer, of Independent Age, said: “This shocking film paints a harrowing picture of poverty in later life.” Caroline Abrahams, of Age UK, said: “Pensioner poverty fell steadily for a generation but rose again and now it’s truly back with a vengeance.”

■ Britain's Forgotten Pensioners:
Dispatches, tomorrow, 10pm, C4.

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