



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

9 June 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: End the Young Parent Penalty

There are 1.8 million single parents in the UK – around 90% of whom are women. Nearly half of all children in lone-parent families in the UK are living in poverty.

The last year of lockdown has been very difficult for many people across the country – and will have had a disproportionate impact on single parent families. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's *Poverty 2020/21* report finds that lone parents, "are more reliant on local jobs, and are more likely to have struggled with childcare during lockdown".

It is therefore vital that necessary support is put in place for lone parent families.

However, the current welfare system makes it harder for younger single parents to access the appropriate level of support. There are almost 175,000 single parents under 25 across the UK.

Prior to the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013, single parents under 25 were able to claim social security benefits at the rate available for all people aged 25 and over. Under the 'legacy system' (Jobseekers' Allowance, Income Support and Employment Support Allowance,) single parents under 25 are exempted from the lower rate of support in recognition of the cost of caring for a child alone.

However, under Universal Credit, this support was scrapped – and young single parent families are only able to claim the lower standard allowance available to single people under 25 without children. As Universal Credit is being phased in, many young single parents lose the higher rate of income when they have a change of circumstances and have to move to Universal Credit – most often because their youngest child reaches 5 years and they can no longer claim Income Support.

The result is that young single parent families are up to £66.13 worse off per month under Universal Credit than with the legacy system – a drop of 20%. There is no reason to treat single parent families differently based on age. Whether under or over 25, single parents have a high percentage of their household income taken up by caring for a child as they are both the sole breadwinner and carer for their family. The Government's decision not to extend this support can only therefore be seen as a Young Parent Penalty.

We, the undersigned, urge you to End the Young Parent Penalty and extend the allowance to claimants of Universal Credit.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Chamberlain
Ed Davey

Liberal Democrats North East Fife
Liberal Democrats Kingston & Surbiton



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Munira Wilson	Liberal Democrats	Twickenham
Christine Jardine	Liberal Democrats	Edinburgh West
Layla Moran	Liberal Democrats	Oxford West and Abingdon
Tim Farron	Liberal Democrats	Westmorland and Lonsdale
Alistair Carmichael	Liberal Democrats	Orkney and Shetland
Wera Hobhouse	Liberal Democrats	Bath
Sarah Olney	Liberal Democrats	Richmond Park
Jamie Stone	Liberal Democrats	Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross
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Stephen Farry	Alliance	North Down
Stella Creasy	Labour	Walthamstow
Stewart McDonald	SNP	Glasgow South
Ben Lake	Plaid Cymru	Ceredigion
Alan Brown	SNP	Kilmarnock and Loudoun
Drew Hendry	SNP	Inverness, Nain, Badenoch and Strathspey
Alyn Smith	SNP	Stirling
Owen Thompson	SNP	Midlothian
Christopher Stephens	SNP	Glasgow South West
Anne McLaughlin	SNP	Glasgow North East
Alison Thewliss	SNP	Glasgow Central
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Claire Hanna	SDLP	Belfast South



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Paul Barker	Labour	Liverpool Wavertree
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Derek Mitchell, CEO, Citizens Advice Scotland

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Annie Gunner Logan, Director, Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland (CCPS)

Carolyn Sawers, Acting CEO, Corra Foundation

Ewan Aitken, Chief Executive, Cyrenians

Anton Babey, CEO, Drive Forward Foundation



Megan Davies, Head of Political Engagement, Drive Forward Foundation
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Dr Wanda Wyporska, Executive Director, The Equality Trust
Professor Nancy Loucks, Chief Executive, Families Outside
Cathy Ashley, Chief Executive, Family Rights Group
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Laura Millar, Strategic Manager, Fife Gingerbread
Susan McGhee, Chief Executive, Flexible Childcare Services Scotland
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