

First Minister  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Dear First Minister,

As a broad coalition of national organisations, community groups, academics, trade unions and faith groups, we are writing to you to urge you to use the upcoming Programme for Government to commit to doubling the Scottish Child Payment in this year's budget.

We welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to tackling child poverty, evidenced in the setting of statutory child poverty targets, introducing the Scottish Child Payment and the upcoming incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These steps have laid the foundation for tackling child poverty in Scotland and we have been delighted that they have been supported across Scotland's political spectrum.

This cross-party agreement was also evident in May's Holyrood elections, when all Scotland's five main political parties committed to doubling the Scottish Child Payment. Such political consensus is welcome, and provides the opportunity for your government to act quickly and decisively in doubling the payment now.

To do so would provide a lifeline to families who are struggling to stay afloat. Even before Covid-19, people across Scotland were being swept up in a rising tide of poverty, with child poverty rising in every Scottish local authority. And the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities in Scotland and pulled many more people – particularly women, disabled people, and Black and minority ethnic people – into hardship. With women's poverty being inextricably linked to child poverty, the pandemic's impact has pulled children across Scotland ever-deeper into poverty. It has hit lone parents - the overwhelming majority of whom are women - particularly hard, a group already disproportionately affected by years of social security cuts.

Unlocking people from this poverty requires long-term work to tackle the structural inequalities around the labour market - particularly for women, disabled people and Black and minority ethnic people – and it will also require action like further expanding childcare provision. But we also need action now to boost incomes in the short term.

Every level of government has a duty to boost incomes where it can, and we are clear that the UK Government must scrap its planned and unjust £20 Universal Credit cut. But just as the UK Government has a moral responsibility to do the right thing, so too does the Scottish Government have a moral responsibility to use all of the powers at its disposal to loosen the grip of poverty on people's lives.

We have the powers, we have the urgent need, and we have the cross-party consensus to double the Scottish Child Payment. If your government is to truly make ending child poverty a 'national mission', and if we are to ensure that a more just Scotland emerges from the pandemic, then we must not delay. Children growing up in the grip of poverty right now – as well as their parents and care-givers - simply cannot endure until the end of this Parliament

to be unlocked from poverty. Their lives and life chances are too important for this action to wait.

The evidence is clear that if it is doubled now, it will represent the single most impactful action that could be taken to help meet the interim child poverty targets in 2023, and would signal that ending child poverty will be a defining priority for this Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament. If it is not, more and more children will be pulled into poverty and the opportunity to meet the interim child poverty targets will be missed. Under the current roll out plan and value, the Scottish Child Payment will reduce poverty in Scotland by between 2 and 3 percentage points. This could leave child poverty rates as high as 26% in 2023/24, when the interim target in legislation for that year is 18%. We cannot allow that to happen.

We therefore urge your government to do the right thing, to capitalise on the cross-party consensus that already exists, and to commit to doubling the Scottish Child Payment in this year's budget. We look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

*Peter Kelly, Director, Poverty Alliance*

*Claire Telfer, Head of Scotland, Save the Children*

*Paul Carberry, Director for Scotland, Action for Children*

*SallyAnn Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Aberlour*

*John Dickie, Director, CPAG Scotland*

*Martin Crewe, Director, Barnardo's Scotland*

*Jamie Livingstone, Head of Oxfam Scotland*

*Satwat Rehman, Director, One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS)*

*Amy Woodhouse, Joint Interim CEO, Children in Scotland*

*Christine Carlin, Scotland Director, Home-Start UK*

*Clare Simpson, Manager, Parenting Across Scotland*

*Anna Ritchie Allan, Executive Director, Close the Gap*

*Polly Jones, Head of Scotland, The Trussell Trust*

*Mary Glasgow, Chief Executive, Children 1st*

*Eilidh Dickson, Policy and Parliamentary Manager, Engender*

*Hugh Foy, Director, Xaverians UK Region*

*Russell Gunson, Director, IPPR Scotland*

*Dr Patrycja Kupiec, CEO, YWCA Scotland - The Young Women's Movement*

*The Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC (Jim Wallace), Moderator of the General Assembly, The Church of Scotland*

*Emma Cormack, Chief Executive Officer, The Health Agency*

*Gillian Kirkwood, Chief Executive, Y sort it Youth Centre*

*Agnes Tolmie, Chair, Scottish Women's Convention*

*Linda Tuthill, CEO, The Action Group*

*Steven McCluskey, CEO, Bikes for Refugees*

*Trishna Singh OBE, Director, Sikh Sanjog*

*Professor Adrian Sinfield, Emeritus Professor of Social Policy, University of Edinburgh*

*Jimmy Wilson, CEO, FARE Scotland*

*Ian Bruce, Chief Executive, Glasgow CVS*

*Revd Gary Noonan, Minister, Houston and Killellan Kirk*

*Jacqui Reid, Project Lead, EBI Unites*

*Innes McMinn, Manager, Independent Living Support*

*Suzanne Slavin, CEO, Ayr Housing Aid Centre*

*Fiona Rae, Interim Chief Executive, Community Food Initiatives North East*

*Mhairi Snowden, Director, Human Rights Consortium Scotland*

*Juliet Harris, Director, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)*

*Tressa Burke, CEO, Glasgow Disability Alliance*

*Martin Wilkie-McFarlane, Director, Wellhouse Housing Association*

*Morna Simpkins, Scotland Director, MS Society*

*Kara Batchelor, Operations Manager, Alexander's Community Development*

*Murray Dawson, Chief Executive, Station House Media Unit*

*Ashli Mullen, Creative Director, Friends of Romano Lav*

*Professor John McKendrick, Co-Director of the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit, Glasgow Caledonian University*

*Justina Murray, Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Families Affected by Drugs and Alcohol*

*Rob McDowall, Chair, Welfare Scotland*

*Karen Birch, Chief Officer, Abundant Borders*

*Liane Coia, Operations Manager, Maryhill Integration Network*

*Annie Tohill, Project Worker, Kairos Women+*

*Traci Kirkland, Head of Charity, Govan Community Project*

*Emma Jackson, National Director Scotland, Christians Against Poverty*

*Alison Bavidge, National Director, Scottish Association of Social Work*

*Mairi McCallum, Project Manager, Moray Food Plus*

*Zoe Jordan, Stepping Stones North Edinburgh*

*Chris Birt, Deputy Director Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation*

*Martin Dorchester, CEO, Includem*

*Bethany Biggar, Director, Edinburgh Food Project*

*Rachel MacDonnell, Bureau Manager, East & Central Sutherland Citizens Advice Bureau*

*Larry Flanagan, General Secretary, EIS*

*Shona Blakeley, Executive Director, Women's Fund for Scotland*

*Rhona Willder, Development Manager, Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance*

*Joan McClure, Manager, Easterhouse Citizens Advice Bureau*

*Roy O'Kane FRSA, Chief Officer, Kanzen Karate*

*Craig Samuel, Scotland Representative, National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers*

*Margaret Caldwell, Chairperson, Care for Carers*

*Louise Hunter, Chief Executive, Who Cares? Scotland*

*Derek Mitchell, CEO, Citizens Advice Scotland*

*Emma Walker, Director, Camphill Scotland*

*Claire Burns, Director, CELCIS (Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection)*

*Moira Tasker, Chief Executive Officer, Inclusion Scotland*

*David Nallarattnam, Director, Cross Ethnic*

*Professor Ian Welsh OBE, Chief Executive, Health and Social Care Alliance (the ALLIANCE)*

*Louise Morgan, Director for Scotland, Carers Trust Scotland*

*Teresa Sutherland, Interim Executive Manager, Community Help and Advice Initiative*

*Graeme McAlister, Chief Executive, Scottish Childminding Association*

*Roz Foyer, General Secretary, STUC*

*Rachel Adamson, Co-Director, Zero Tolerance*

*Susan Capaldi, Manager, Home Start Cowdenbeath*

*Sabine Goodwin, Coordinator, Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN)*

*Pat Rafferty, Scottish Secretary, Unite Scotland*

*Gavin Yates, CEO, Homeless Action Scotland*

*Lorraine Kelly, Scottish Policy Officer, Magic Breakfast*

*Rosyn Neely, CEO, Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity*

*Biddy Kelly, Managing Director, Fresh Start*

*Professor Annette Hastings, Professor of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow*

*Margo Uprichard, Chief Executive Officer, The Louise Project*

*Alison Watson, Director, Shelter Scotland*

*Frazer Scott, CEO, Energy Action Scotland*

*Jane Brumpton, Chief Executive, Early Years Scotland*

*Alan Thornburrow, Country Director, Business in the Community Scotland*

*Pete Ritchie, Executive Director, Nourish Scotland*

*Elaine Downie, Co-ordinator, Poverty Truth Community*

*Jen Broadhurst, Bureau Manager, Argyll & Bute Citizens Advice Bureau*

*David Walsh, Public Health Programme Manager, Glasgow Centre for Population Health*

*Ewan Aitken, CEO, Cyrenians*

*Dr Marsha Scott, Chief Executive, Scottish Women's Aid*

*John McIntyre, Principal Trustee, Ferguslie Community Development Trust*

*Elodie Mignard, Programme Manager, Scottish Refugee Council*

*Dr Patrick Roach, General Secretary, NASUWT*

*Genevieve Ileris, British Psychological Society*

*Tanveer Parnez, Director of National Development, BEMIS*

*Sebastian Fischer, Chief Executive, VOCAL (Voices of Carers Across Lothian)*

*Professor Nick Bailey, Professor of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow*

*Professor Sharon Wright, Professor of Social Policy, University of Glasgow*

*Rami Okasha, Chief Executive, CHAS (Children's Hospices Across Scotland)*

*Kate Polson, Chief Executive, Rock Trust*

*Jimmy Paul, Director, WEAll Scotland*

*Claire Cairns, Director, Coalition of Carers in Scotland*

*Jan Savage, Director of Campaigns and Membership, ENABLE Scotland*

*Alison Wright, CEO, Carers of West Lothian*

*Frank Mosson, Manager, Bridgeton Citizens Advice Bureau*

*Sharon McAulay, Chief Executive, STAR Project*

*Professor James Mitchell, Professor of Public Policy, University of Edinburgh*

*John Cassidy, Chair, Scottish Communities for Health and Wellbeing*

*Brian Reid, Manager, Scottish Christian Alliance*

*Lesley Ross, Project Manager Youth Work Services, Pilton Youth and Children's Project*

*Sally Thomas, Chief Executive, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations*

*Duncan Cuthill, CEO, Edinburgh City Mission*

*Marguerite Hunter Blair, Chief Executive, Play Scotland*

*Sharon Colvin, CEO, 3D Drumchapel*

*Paul Stuart, Branch Secretary, UNISON Housing & Care Scotland Branch*

*Kelly McCann, Clackmannanshire Women's Aid*

*Fiona Dyer, Director – Interim, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ)*

*Professor Nancy Loucks, Chief Executive, Families Outside*