



WORKING TOGETHER TO COMBAT POVERTY

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tel: 0141 353 0440

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

16 March 2022

Dear Chancellor,

As part of a coalition of organisations from across the UK, we are writing to urge you to use your Spring Statement on 23<sup>rd</sup> March to commit to supporting families living in the grip of poverty by ending the benefit cap.

Right now, people across this country are facing a cost-of-living crisis. Energy hikes, stagnating wages, and the rising cost of food are putting enormous pressure on low-income households. For those affected by the benefit cap, whose social security payments already fall well below a sufficient level, this crisis is even more acutely felt.

Since its introduction, the benefit cap has trapped families across the UK in poverty's grip. By severing the link between need and entitlement, many of those affected by the cap have been forced to rely on food banks and pay-day loans just to get by and, for many, it has also caused poor mental health and led to homelessness.

These harmful impacts of the benefit cap disproportionately affect families with children, since eighty-three percent of capped households contain at least one child. According to the Supreme Court, the benefit cap breaches the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by depriving families with children from the income they need to stay afloat, at a time when they need it most. This is morally outrageous.

The benefit cap also discriminates against women and single-parent families. Sixty-two percent of households affected are single parents, nine out of ten of whom are women. A policy that so blatantly targets this group, who are already disproportionately at-risk of experiencing poverty, has no place in a just society.

Families from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are also more likely to be affected by the benefit cap because they are more likely to have larger families. Racial inequalities in the UK, such as income or health inequality, are caused and exacerbated in part due to social and economic policy, including the benefit cap. Lifting the cap would help redress some of these inequalities.

Not only does the benefit cap represent a moral failing in our society, but it also fails on its own terms. The cap was introduced, in part, to encourage those on benefits to move into employment. The reality, however, is that the majority of people affected by the cap are not

email: [admin@povertyalliance.org](mailto:admin@povertyalliance.org) - web: [www.povertyalliance.org](http://www.povertyalliance.org)

**The Poverty Alliance is a network of community, voluntary, statutory and other organisations working together to combat poverty**

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required to look for work due to ill-health or childcare responsibilities. Subjecting these families and individuals to the benefit cap knowingly and purposefully locks them into poverty when they cannot turn to employment to boost their income.

We urge you to use your Spring Statement on 23<sup>rd</sup> March to commit to giving families what they need to lead healthy, dignified lives, by scrapping the benefit cap.

Your sincerely,

Peter Kelly, Director, The Poverty Alliance  
Professor Mike Danson, Chair, Basic Income Network Scotland  
Jill Kent, Chair, Justice & Peace Scotland  
Jane Streater, Chair, North East Child Poverty Commission  
Kate Wimpres, Chair, SURF - Scotland's Regeneration Forum  
Agnes Tolmie, Chair, The Scottish Women's Convention  
Tracy Hill, Chair, Unison housing & care Scotland branch  
Terry McTernan, Chairperson, Ferguslie Community Council  
Matt Downie, Chief Executive, Crisis  
Neil Mathers, Chief Executive, Curiosity Collective  
Danielle Campbell, Chief Executive, Dr Bell's Family Centre  
Professor Nancy Loucks OBE, Chief Executive, Families Outside  
Ian Bruce, Chief Executive, GCVS  
Glenn Liddall, Chief Executive, People Know How  
Elaine Cameron, Chief Executive, Refugee Survival Trust  
Sally Thomas, Chief Executive, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations  
Sabir Zazai, Chief Executive, Scottish Refugee Council  
Sharon McAulay, Chief Executive, Star Project  
Carolyn Currie, Chief Executive, Women's Enterprise Scotland  
Alison Garnham, Chief Executive, Child Poverty Action Group  
Gillian Frayling-Kelly, Chief Executive, Positive Help  
Anela Anwar, Chief Executive, Z2K  
Mariam Ahmen, Chief Executive Officer, AMINA  
Ruth MacLennan, Chief Executive Officer, Care for Carers  
Paula Stringer, Chief Executive Officer, Christians Against Poverty  
Hilda Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, COPE Scotland  
Marie Ward, Chief Executive Officer, Cranhill Development Trust  
Ewan Aitken, Chief Executive Officer, Cyrenians  
Frazer Scott, Chief Executive Officer, Energy Action Scotland  
Jimmy Wilson, Chief Executive Officer, FARE  
Jonny Kinross, Chief Executive Officer, Grassmarket Community Project  
Graham Whitham, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Manchester Poverty Action  
Mariam Ahmed, Chief Executive Officer, Muslim Women's Resource Centre  
Satwat Rehman, Chief Executive Officer, One Parent Families Scotland  
Marsha Scott, Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Women's Aid  
Andy Peline, Chief Executive Officer, SWAMP Community Development Trust  
Sally Ann Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Aberlour  
Suzanne Slavin, Chief Executive Officer, Ayr Housing Aid Centre SCIO  
Mark Kennedy, Chief Executive Officer, Circle  
John Halliday, Chief Executive Officer, Community Renewal Trust  
Brenda Black, Chief Executive Officer, Edinburgh Community Food  
Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive Officer, EVOG  
Aaliya Seyal, Chief Executive Officer, Legal Services Agency  
Dave Liddell, Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Drugs Forum  
Gerry Baldwin, Chief Executive Officer, The Pavillion and Fuse Youth Café

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Viv Sawers, Chief Officer, Govan Home and Education Link Project (Govan HELP)  
Sara Redmond, Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)  
Moira Tasker, Chief Officer, Inclusion Scotland  
Ailsa MacKenzie, Chief Officer, The Pyramid at Anderston  
Sean Douglas, Acting Director, Provanhall Housing Association  
Henry Tyrrell, Campaigns Officer, Gingerbread  
Chris Mieзитis, Co-director, Fathers Network Scotland  
Professor Stephen Sinclair, Co-director, Scottish Poverty & Inequality Research Unit  
Betty Stone, Convenor, Edinburgh Tenants Federation  
Sabine Goodwin, Coordinator, Independent Food Aid Network  
Sara Cowan, Coordinator, Scottish Women's Budget Group  
Rachel Walters, Co-ordinator, End Child Poverty Coalition  
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Roz Foyer, General Secretary, STUC  
Larry Flanagan, General Secretary, The Educational Institute of Scotland  
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Polly Jones, Head of Scotland, The Trussell Trust  
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Teresa Sutherland, Interim CEO, Community Help & Advice Initiative  
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Tom Heron, Manager, Knightsridge Adventure Project- The Vennie  
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Alison Bavidge, National Director, Scottish Association of Social Work  
Danny Collins, National President, Society of St Vincent de Paul Scotland  
Liane Coia, Operations Manager, Maryhill Integration Network  
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Annie Tohill, Project Worker, Kairos Women+  
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Pat Rafferty, Scottish Secretary, Unite Scotland  
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