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Our Reference: 202100256343

Your Reference: Letter from East Dunbartonshire Council re- Universal Credit

2 December 2021

Dear Councillors,

Thank you for your email of 17 November to Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government regarding the UK Government's decision to end the £20-per-week uplift to Universal Credit. As Minister for Social Security and Local Government, I have been asked to respond.

I share the Council's concerns about this decision and we have written to the UK Government on several occasions to urge them to reconsider and make the £20-per-week uplift to UC permanent and extend this uplift to legacy benefits, and to extend the suspension of the Minimum Income Floor for a further twelve months.

The Scottish Government understands that failing to maintain the recent uplift to Universal Credit will increase hardship and poverty for people across the UK who are already struggling. To support the social and economic recovery that the whole of the UK needs, the Scottish Government will continue to urge the UK Government to reverse their decision and to strengthen the support offered by Universal Credit instead of weakening it.

Scottish Child Payment is tackling poverty head on. The latest statistics show that 105,000 children were actively benefiting from this new financial support, as of the end of June.

The Scottish Government is committed to eliminating child poverty and it will take the necessary action to do so. We will double Scottish Child Payment to £20 in April 2022, setting out further detail in our upcoming budget. This is four times what was originally asked for in the 'Give Me Five' Campaign.

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot



We aim to roll out the Scottish Child Payment to those with children aged 6-15 by the end of 2022, depending on the Department for Work and Pensions providing us with the data we need. In the interim, to provide immediate support to as many families as possible, we have introduced bridging payments worth the same as Scottish Child Payment. This £520 a year will be paid in 2021 and 2022 to around 150,000 children and young people of school age. Taken together, our investment in Scottish Child Payment and bridging payments will put £130 million in the pockets of families this year.

We have recently announced our new £41 million Winter Support Fund for low income households to help people struggling financially during the winter to help people heat their homes and with rising food costs. Key elements of the Fund include £10 million to help people who are struggling to pay fuel bills, £25 million flexible funding to help local authorities support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity based on local needs and £6 million for trusted third sector partners to support low income families. We are currently in discussions with Local Authorities and partners and the funding will be made available as soon as is reasonably practicable.

We have also invested £41 million in the Scottish Welfare Fund this year. The Welfare Fund, delivered by local authorities, continues to provide a vital safety net for those facing an unexpected crisis or emergency and for those needing help to maintain or establish a home within their community.

Thank you again for your correspondence and I look forward to future engagement. I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



BEN MACPHERSON

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