

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

Monday 15th August 2022

Dear First Minister,

Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments

We are writing as a broad range of organisations, community groups, academics, trade unions and faith groups, all working with and for families struggling on low incomes across Scotland.

Your government has been doing the right thing by investing in financial support for families, not least through the Scottish child payment. This is already making a big difference, as the recent initial evaluation on its impact lays out, and which the families we talk to make clear. The doubling of the payment since April has been especially timely in providing additional support to families with children under six at a time of soaring food and energy prices.

However, as you know, families with older children are yet to benefit. The roll out of the payment to eligible over fives and the further increase to £25 a week are not due until the end of the year. Bridging payments, originally introduced to provide "equivalent" support to the child payment for at least some of those older children, have **not** been doubled. At a time when further massive increases to household bills are looming, this is leaving a significant gap in the cash support available to families across Scotland.

We are therefore **writing to urge your government to help bridge that gap and, at the very least, double the October and Christmas bridging payments from £130 to £260**. This would be one straightforward and effective way of getting more cash support to many of the households struggling most in the face of the cost of living crisis. It would **help keep families afloat until the child payment itself is increased and fully rolled out**.

The families we work with are facing increasing hardship as the cost of energy and food spirals ever higher. Parents tell us they are going without food to feed their children, of feeling ashamed at the basics their children are going without, and of dreading the coming winter bills. A recent [Scotpulse](#) survey found that over half of adults with children felt their mental health was being negatively impacted by the cost of living crisis, with women particularly affected. Many of our organisations are, often with support from your government, doing everything we can to provide further assistance to those facing the greatest disadvantage. However charity hardship support cannot ever be a replacement for direct cash payments to low income families, and it should not be the role of charities to plug the financial support gap.

We will continue to urge the UK government to live up to its responsibility to provide a further package of support in response to the ongoing and worsening hardship that families are facing. In the meantime we **urge you and your government to continue do the right thing, prioritise support for children and commit to doubling the bridging payments** as part of wider action to support households through the cost of living crisis. We know and understand the pressure the Scottish budget is under but the budgets of our lowest income families are under even greater pressure. Acting to provide further cash support to families would help prevent further long term damage to

individual families and children, and would also support Scotland's much welcomed child poverty ambitions. We urge you to take this action.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Ann Kelly, Chief Executive, Aberlour Child Care Trust

Paul Carberry, Director for Scotland, Action for Children

Martin Crewe, Director, Barnardo's Scotland

Mary Glasgow, Chief Executive, Children 1st

Dr Judith Turbyne, Chief Executive, Children in Scotland

Anna Ritchie Allan, Executive Director, Close the Gap

John Dickie, Director of CPAG in Scotland

Christine Carlin, Director Scotland, Home-Start UK

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

Jamie Livingston, Head of Oxfam Scotland

Clare Simpson, Manager, Parenting Across Scotland

Peter Kelly, Director, Poverty Alliance

Claire Telfer, Head of Scotland, Save the Children

Polly Jones, Head of Scotland, The Trussell Trust

Karen Birch, Chief Officer, Abundant Borders

Drew McKinney, Manager, Agape wellbeing

Sara Redmond, Chief Officer of Development, The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)

Shulamite Ezechi, Director, ANYiSO

Shelley Hague, Chairperson, Arbroath FC Community Trust

Suzanne Slavin, Chief Executive Officer, Ayr Housing Aid Centre SCIO

Professor Mike Danson, Chair, Basic Income Network Scotland

Frank Mosson, Bureau Manager, Bridgeton Citizens Advice Bureau

Robert McGeachy, Policy and Engagement Manager, Camphill Scotland

Ruth MacLennan, CEO, Care for Carers

Jennifer Wallace, Director, Carnegie UK

Angus McIntosh, Principal Solicitor, Castlemilk Law and Money Advice Centre

Claire Burns, Director, CELCIS

Teresa Sutherland, Interim-CEO, CHAI Edinburgh

Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland

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

Dr. Colin Morrison, Co-Director, Children's Parliament

Emma Jackson, National Director Scotland, Christians Against Poverty

Mark Kennedy, Chief Executive, Circle

Derek Mitchell, CEO, Citizens Advice Scotland

Karl Kaliski, Sensei, Cloud Water Zen Centre

Claire Cairns, Director, The Coalition of Carers in Scotland

Fiona Rae, Chief Executive, Community Food Initiatives North East

John Halliday, Executive Director, Community Renewal Trust

Marie Ward, Chief Executive, Cranhill Development Trust

Ewan Aitken, Chief Executive, CYRENIANS

Kevin Young, Project Manager, DadsWork

Dr Carey Lunan, Chair of the Deep End Project in Scotland

Sharon Colvin, CEO, Drumchapel Community Centre

Jane Brumpton, Chief Executive, Early Years Scotland

Roslyn Neely, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Childrens Hospital Charity

Brenda Black, CEO, Edinburgh Community Food

Bethany Biggar, Director, Edinburgh Food Project

Betty Stone, Convenor, Edinburgh Tenants Federation

Andrea Bradley, General Secretary, Educational Institute of Scotland

Catherine Murphy, Executive Director, Engender

Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive, EVOC (Edinburgh Voluntary Organisation's Council)

Jacky Close, Director, Faith in Community Dundee

Rev Karen Hendry, Acting Convener, Faith Impact Forum, Church of Scotland

Prof Nancy Loucks OBE, Chief Executive, Families Outside

Jimmy Wilson, CEO, FARE

Terry McTernan, Chairperson, Ferguslie Community Council & Darkwood Crew

John McIntyre, Principle Trustee, Ferguslie Community Development Trust

Laura Falconer, Chief Executive, Forces Children Scotland

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

Ian Bruce, Chief Executive, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector

Revd. Gary Noonan, Minister, Houston and Killellan Kirk

Martin Dorchester, CEO, Includem

Sabine Goodwin, Coordinator, Independent Food Aid Network

Innes Isobel McMinn, Manager, Independent Living Support

Moira Tasker, Chief Executive, Inclusion Scotland

Urzula Glienecke, Member, Iona Community

Philip Whyte, Director, IPPR Scotland

Chris Birt, Associate Director for Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Jill Kent, Chair of Justice & Peace Scotland

Aileen Ogilvie, Manager, Lairg & District Learning Centre.

Niki Powers, Managing Director, Let's Talk (Young People) CIC

Dr Lindsey MacDonald, Chief Executive, Magic Breakfast

Liane Coia, Operations Manager, Maryhill Integration Network

Mairi McCallum, Project Manager, Moray Food Plus

Karen McCurry, Centre Manager, Multiple Sclerosis Centre, Mid Argyll

Craig Samuel, Scotland Representative, NAWRA

Pete Ritchie, Executive Director, Nourish Scotland

Jenny Miller, Chief Executive, PAMIS

Marguerite Hunter Blair, Chief Executive, Play Scotland

Narek Bido, Chief Executive, Recovery Scotland

Elizabeth Allen, Clerk, General Meeting for Scotland of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Shumela Ahmed, Managing Director, Resilience Learning Partnership

Dr Mairi Stark, Officer for Scotland, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH)

Richard Gass, Chair, Rights Advice Scotland

Alison Watson, Director, Shelter Scotland

Sharon Bell, Head of StepChange Scotland

Alison Bavidge, National Director, Scottish Association of Social Work (SASW)

Graeme McAlister, Chief Executive, Scottish Childminding Association

Justina Murray, CEO, Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

Daniela Rondina, Development Officer, Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA)

Irene Audain MBE, Chief Executive, Scottish Out of School Care Network

Professor Stephen Sinclair, Co-Director, Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit

Sara Cowan, Coordinator, Scottish Women's Budget Group

Paul Traynor, Head of External Affairs, Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance

Carolyn Lochhead, Director of Public Affairs, SFHA

Charandeep Singh BEM, Director, Sikhs in Scotland

Trishna Singh OBE, Director, Sikh Sanjog and Punjabi Junction Social Enterprise Project

Ben Farrugia, Director of Social Work Scotland

Jenny Cornfield, Lead, Soul Food Edinburgh

Susan Lyons, Manager, Spirit Advocacy

Professor John McKendrick, SPIRU, Glasgow Caledonian University

Rhona Matheson, Chief Executive, Starcatchers

Sharon McAulay, Chief Executive, STAR Project

Rozanne Foyer, General Secretary, STUC

Brian MacDonald, Chair, SURF – Scotland's Regeneration Forum

Linda Tuthill, CEO, The Action Group

Andrew Stevenson, Project Manager, The Destiny Project SCIO

Fiona Partington, Joint Acting Chief Executive Officer, The Health Agency

Angela Moohan, CEO, The Larder

Elaine Downie, Co-ordinator, The Poverty Truth Community

Ailsa MacKenzie, Chief Officer, The Pyramid

Jim McCormick, Chief Executive, The Robertson Trust

Agnes Tolmie, Chair, The Scottish Women's Convention

Danny Collins, National President, The Society of St Vincent de Paul Scotland

Juliet Harris, Director, Together Scotland

Tracey Dalling, Regional Secretary UNISON Scotland

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

Pat Rafferty, Scottish Secretary, Unite the Union

Neil Findlay, Director, Unity Consulting Scotland

James Mitchell, Professor of Public Policy, University of Edinburgh

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

Nick Bailey, Professor, University of Glasgow

Annette Hastings, Professor of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow

Prof. Sharon Wright, Professor of Social Policy, University of Glasgow

Tom Heron, Manager, Vennie Youth Club

Jimmy Paul, Director, WEAll

Rob McDowall FRSA, Chair, Welfare Scotland

Carolyn Currie, Chief Executive, Women's Enterprise Scotland

Hugh Foy, Director, Programmes and Partnerships, Xaverian Missionaries UK Region