

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

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> 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*

*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*