

# Open Letter

## Keep the universal credit uplift: our letter to the chancellor

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

21<sup>st</sup> September 2021

Dear Chancellor,

Our organisations support some of the country's most vulnerable young people, those who have experience of care or homelessness, and we are extremely worried about how the end of the Universal Credit uplift this month will affect them.

Younger Universal Credit claimants receive a smaller amount than those older than 25, with the assumption that they are supported by family or friends. For the young people we support, who cannot rely on this, this leaves them struggling to afford basic essentials.

There is no discount on food, bills and rent because you're under 25 – but the current system leaves them with less money to pay for them.

That is one reason the UC uplift has been such a lifeline to vulnerable young people since it was introduced last year. Cutting it now would reduce their income by more than a quarter (25.2 per cent) at a time when those sectors in the economy most likely to employ them are still recovering and many are struggling to find work.

Young people themselves are of course very worried too.

This year people supported by youth homelessness charity Centrepoint have been conducting their own research into the experience of young Universal Credit claimants, including how the uplift has affected them.

The research paints a grim picture of what young people expect to happen once their income is reduced after September. They found that many claimants will struggle to find the money to pay for rent and bills, with almost seven in ten worried about how they'll afford food and other essentials.

Many respondents worry the end of the uplift will damage their future prospects; almost half said cutting their income would make it harder to access work, education and training.

The end of the uplift will represent a financial challenge for all Universal Credit claimants but, for the young people we support, it will leave them facing impossible choices, again forced to choose between bills and food and at risk of repeat homelessness.

The past year and a half has been an incredibly difficult time for everyone - the action of the government in introducing the uplift at the beginning of the pandemic was a lifeline for Universal Credit claimants. Removing it now, when the effects of the pandemic are still being felt, will rip that lifeline away. We therefore urge you to ensure there is an adequate safety net for this incredibly vulnerable group of young people to ensure they are not put at risk.

# Open Letter

Yours sincerely,

Seyi Obakin, Chief Executive, Centrepont

Nick Connolly, Director, End Youth Homelessness

Dom Wood DL, Chief Executive Officer, 16 - 25 Independent People

Leona McDermid, Chief Executive, Aberdeen Foyer

Jo Moore, CEO, Accommodation Concern

Jessica Brannan, Manager, Broxtowe Youth Homelessness

Patrick Vercoe, CEO, BYHP

George O'Neill, CEO, Cardinal Hume Centre

Cordell Ray MBE, CEO, CCP

Charlotte Eddisford, Managing Director, CHAS Housing Advice Service Bristol

Sarah Hernandez, Managing Director, Derventio Housing Trust

Carol Gallagher, CEO, Doorway

Marie Davis, CEO, Falcon Support Services

Sian Elen Tomos, CEO, GISDA

Helen Elliott, Chief Executive, Herts Young Homeless

Robin Burgess, CEO, Hope Group: Northampton Hope Centre and Hope Enterprises

Kathy Mohan OBE, Chief Executive, Housing Justice

Caroline Ridley, CEO, Impact Initiatives

Hannah Brooman, Director, InUnity

Ursula Patten, Operations Director, Key-Unlocking Futures

Paul Morrish, Chief Executive, LandAid

Frances Beecher, Chief Executive, Llamau

Mr Matthew Bushnell, CEO, Mary Seacole Housing Association

Phil Kerry, CEO, New Horizon Youth Centre

Carol Scawthon, CEO, New Roots Housing

Nikki Burley, CEO, Newark Emmaus Trust

Jan Larkin, CEO, Nightsafe Ltd

Jackie Hooper, CEO, North Worcestershire Basement Projects

Chris Quinn, Director, Northern Ireland Youth Forum

Eddie Bailey, Manager, Park Lodge Project

Susan Sadler, Charity Manager, Redditch Nightstop

Ben Keegan, CEO, Roundabout

Philippa Robson, Chief Executive, SASH

Stela Stansfield, Manager, SLEAP Accommodation Services

Jean Templeton, Chief Executive & Executive Director, St Basils

Debbie Moreton, Chief Executive Officer, Step by Step Partnership

David Smith, Chief Executive, Stepping Stone Projects

Hillary Bartle, CEO, Stonepillow

Paul Rosam, Chief Executive, The Amber Foundation

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Chas Walker, CEO, YMCA DownsLink Group

Pauline Tomlinson, CEO, YMCA Heart of England

Andy Moreman, CEO, Young Devon

Tracy Underwood, CEO, Young People and Children First

Hannah Asquith, CEO, Youth Concern

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Emma Hughes, Trustee & Support Hub Manager, Sanctus  
Judith Ford, CEO, Wyre Forest and South Worcestershire Nightstop