



St Maximilian Kolbe House
63 Jeddo Road
London
W12 9EE

tel: 020 8749 1321
e-mail: info@catholicunion.org.uk
web: www.catholicunion.org.uk

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

Sent by email only.

3 September 2021

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to ask that you maintain the current levels of spending on social security.

As I'm sure you know, there is a great deal of concern that the uplift in Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits is coming to an end this month.

The decision to increase Universal Credit standard allowances and the Working Tax Credit basic element by £20 at the start of the pandemic has been a lifeline to millions of people.

I know that you intended the uplift to be a temporary safety net for those most at risk of financial hardship. While the worst of the pandemic is hopefully over, there is still a huge amount of work to do in helping families get back on their feet.

As the economic and health emergency of the pandemic begin to wane, the social problems caused by Covid are coming into view. These include increased pressure on family budgets and relationships.

The Centre for Social Justice has estimated that family breakdown costs the taxpayer £51 billion per year – a figure which has almost certainly increased as a result of the pandemic. Maintaining the £20 uplift would be a great help to some of the most vulnerable families in this country and help to prevent more children from growing up in poverty.

There are other options available besides continuing the uplift – these include scrapping the two-child cap on the childcare element of Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits, increasing child benefits, or moving towards fully transferable personal allowances. These would all help to get support to those families most in need. We would be delighted to meet you to discuss these options.

As Parliament returns from recess, we hope you will take the opportunity to confirm that there will be no overall cut to the social security budget this year and that you will do everything possible to support families as we recover from the pandemic.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Parker
Director
The Catholic Union of Great Britain
Email: director@catholicunion.org.uk

cc. Rt Hon, Therese Coffey MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

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