



the british  
psychological society

30 Tabernacle Street  
London  
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Rt.Hon. Boris Johnson  
Prime Ministers Office  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

Ahead of the Spring Budget we are writing to collective collectively to urge you to make the temporary £20/week increase to the standard allowance of Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit permanent from April, and address the inequality that currently exists by providing the same uplift to Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance.

As organisations working across health and care, we see the irrefutable evidence that poverty has significant negative impacts on individuals, their families and society more widely. This uplift in Universal Credit has been a lifeline for many people in supporting them through the pandemic, it is crucial that this is maintained as the country seeks to recover from its impacts.

This investment in our social security system is also an investment in our nation's health, ensuring many of those on the lowest incomes have access to essentials like food or heating. In a year marked by worry and uncertainty, the uplift has been a preventative lifeline keeping many afloat, protecting them from financial instability, debt and worsening mental health.

By April 2021, if the uplift is discontinued, this good work risks being immediately undermined. Overnight, 6.2 million families will face a £1,040 a year cut to their income. Based on modelling by Joseph Rowntree Foundation, this will result in 700,000 more people being pulled into poverty, including 300,000 children. There is an established link between poverty and poor health, which is worsening in the face of Covid-19. The excess mortality rates in the most socioeconomically deprived areas due to the virus is proof of this. We are therefore urging you to make the uplift permanent and to continue to support a recovery that puts health and flourishing at its heart.

The Government's commitment to invest in jobs, skills and infrastructure is a welcome and a necessary part of boosting opportunity. But without an equal emphasis on the health of those on the lowest incomes, this threatens to exacerbate and entrench health inequalities across the UK. Removing the £20 uplift will cut families adrift, forcing them to confront mounting bills and reducing participation in rebuilding their communities.

We cannot plan for the UK's economic recovery only to face another escalating health crisis for those on the lowest incomes. The impact of millions of families being swept into poverty will be a reduction in the health, wellbeing, and life chances of children and young people for decades to come.

Meanwhile, more than two million people on legacy benefits, most of whom are disabled people and people with long-term mental and physical health conditions, have not been offered the same lifeline. Many of these people are at greater risk from Covid-19, and are taking more extreme and prolonged measures, to protect themselves.



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This not only increases their living costs, but intensifies their mental and physical strain which in turn worsens health. We urge you to ensure that the full support of this lifeline is extended to those on legacy benefits.

We have recently welcomed what seems to be strong consensus against cutting this lifeline in the middle of a recession. However, we have been concerned of rumours of short-term extensions or one-off payments which would be insufficient and ineffective. We believe making the uplift permanent would be a worthwhile and sensible investment, and strongly urge the Government to keep doing the right thing, keep families afloat and keep the lifeline.

Signed,

Association of Directors of Public Health  
British Association of Social Workers  
British Psychological Society  
Faculty of Public Health  
Institute of Health Equity  
Mind  
Royal College of General Practitioners  
Royal College of Nursing  
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Royal College of Psychiatrists  
Royal Society of Public Health  
The Association of Mental Health Providers  
The Mental Health Network of the NHS Confederation