**Most important message to get across to your MP**

You can look up levels of child poverty in your constituency at [www.endchildpoverty.org.uk](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)

you are concerned about levels of child poverty and you want the

Government to take it more seriously.

* We are a compassionate and just society. We can all agree that a good childhood is one in which children have their needs met so that they can fully participate and flourish at school, in their home-life, with their friends and pursuing their passions.
* But poverty can make it much more difficult to have that type of childhood. Children tell us that with

poverty comes shame and isolation. And they are more likely to develop a range of physical and mental health problems and to leave school with fewer qualifications

The Department for Work and Pensions found in 2018/19 nearly 4.2m children were living in poverty, with 72% coming from a working household

than their better off peers.

* Even before the pandemic child poverty (particularly in working

families) was rising. Many families have entered the Covid storm

already cut adrift and many more will have been pulled into

poverty.

* **Poverty is not inevitable. We can develop a child poverty plan that is**

**ambitious, and cuts across Government departments. We want the**

We are urgently asking the Chancellor to keep the £20 uplift in Universal Credit and extend it to people on legacy benefits.

**Government to grasp the challenge and make it a priority.**

**Ask your MP to**

* Write to the Chancellor asking him to use the Budget in March to set out his

plan to end child poverty.

* Read the MP briefing which is available at [www.endchildpoverty.org.uk](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)

**What does a plan to end child poverty look like?**

If **family income** goes up then child poverty will fall. In order to increase family income we think there are three big areas the Government needs to address:

1. **Strengthen social security support**

*Most urgently we are asking the Chancellor to keep the lifeline he offered during the pandemic - £20 extra to Universal Credit. To keep families afloat he must make this permanent and extend to families on legacy benefits.*

Other measures could include increasing child benefit, ending the two-child limit and the benefit cap. We would like Free School Meals to be extended to all families on Universal Credit and equivalent benefits.

1. **Tackle low-pay and insecure jobs**
2. **Tackle the high cost of rents and childcare**

Families also need greater investment in **children’s services:** education, early years provision, social care and mental health services.

**Remember!**

You may not agree with all of the points your MP makes. You don’t need to debate every point, you can simply say that you care about the children living in poverty and want to see something done. We all agree that all children should have the best start in life.

* ***If your MP focuses on work as the best route out of poverty***,..

you don’t have to disagree with that, but you could point out that the Government’s own data shows that 72% of children living in poverty before the pandemic were in working households. We want to see more parents and carers able to be in work but more needs to be done to ensure that jobs are decent, with good pay and secure hours. The jobs market may be more challenging because of the pandemic so we do also need to support parents struggling to find work too, as well as those who can’t work.

* ***If your MP focuses on the investment that has already been put into the social security system during the pandemic***..

you can welcome interventions the Government has made. But we need them to recognise that child poverty was a problem even before the pandemic. We need long-term solutions to child poverty and that must include long term investment in social security.

* ***If your MP focuses on the need to rein in spending after the pandemic..***,

you could focus on the very difficult situation families were in before the pandemic – a decade of austerity, falling social security support and rising in-work poverty has left parents with nothing to cut. Syeda, a single father of two, shared his experience of the £20 Universal Credit uplift as part of the Covid Realities project, "The loss of the £20pw would have a huge impact. I am not sure I can afford to cut back on anything other than debt repayments.”

* ***If your MP is from one of the opposition parties…***

you can still ask them to write to the Chancellor, but you could also challenge them to set out what their party’s plan for ending child poverty looks like.