

The Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare the shortcomings with the UK social security system. While the Westminster Government's efforts to temporarily support the social security system – most notably through a £20 weekly uplift to Universal Credit – were welcome and much needed, ultimately they have been insufficient to make our benefits system fit for purpose.

Ahead of the Budget on 3rd March 2021, our research collaboration is joining a growing number of academics, campaigners, charities, and activists to make the case that the Government must keep, and extend, the £20 uplift in order to address the severe hardship and inequalities faced by those living on a low income.

There is a strong case to do more for low-income families with children, and to prevent rising levels of hardship and destitution. We would like to see a commitment to maintaining the uplift beyond October 2021, and extending it to those on legacy benefits and passed on in full to those subject to the benefit cap. Additionally, a real terms increase to the level of Child Benefit is long overdue and would not be subject to the problems associated with means testing that can undermine Universal Credit.

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