

Dear Chancellor

Putting children at the heart of the budget

"I want to see an end to child poverty to rid children of the stigma and discrimination they experience directly as a result - no one deserves to be told they can't achieve what they want in their life because of finances", young person with lived experience of poverty.

Our society knows what a good childhood looks like. We place enormous value on children growing up fulfilled, happy, healthy and safe. But the worst recession in 100 years has had a devastating impact on family finances, unleashing a wave of despair that may take decades to overcome. Even before the onset of the crisis, child poverty in the UK was far too high, disproportionately affecting some, and leaving many families horribly adrift as they entered the pandemic's storm. Now we risk a whole new generation of children being exposed to the cruel realities of poverty.

Growing up in poverty means not being able to afford the basics like food, school uniforms or internet access. It puts a barrier in the way of children being able to participate fully in school and pursue activities they love. With poverty comes shame and isolation leaving children more likely to develop a range of physical and mental health problems and to leave school with fewer qualifications than their better off peers. But rising levels of child poverty are not inevitable, and there is still time to limit the damage of the pandemic.

We urge the UK Government to use the forthcoming budget to set out a plan to end child poverty with a serious and immediate commitment to put more money in the pockets of hard-pressed families. A crucial first step along this road must be to keep - and extend to legacy benefits - the £20-a-week uplift in Universal Credit and to commit to increasing child-related benefits in the near future. It also means putting services for children and young people at the heart of this year's Comprehensive Spending Review.

We know that we cannot fully protect children from the impact of the pandemic. Their educations have been disrupted and their futures clouded with uncertainty. But we can use this year's budget to put their future at the heart of our economic recovery. This generation face unprecedented threats to their childhoods and life chances. They deserve an unprecedented response.

Yours,



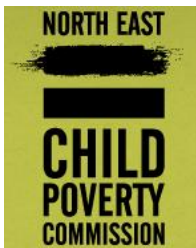
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**Save the
Children**



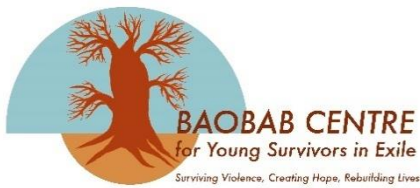




Centre for
Mental Health







+ Rachel

The Rt Reverend Rachel Treweek,
Lord Bishop of Gloucester and
Anglican Bishop for HM Prisons

+ Paul Incelm

The Rt Reverend Paul
Butler, Lord Bishop of
Durham

+ Libby Derby

The Rt Reverend
Libby Lane, Bishop of
Derby