

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to urge the UK government to honour the commitment made by the previous Prime Minister to uprate social security benefits in April 2023 in line with inflation, which was expected to be measured through the September 2022 CPI rate.

These are worrying times for many millions of people across the United Kingdom, but particularly for those living with long term health conditions, including those who are terminally ill.

We welcomed action taken by the UK government soon after your appointment as Prime Minister to put limits on the cost of energy, but it is still twice the price it was last winter.

In addition, food costs are spiralling as producers are affected by the ongoing war in Ukraine as well as other factors, leading many people across the UK to struggle to make ends meet.

In the UK, we already know that 90,000 people die in poverty at the end of life every year, equating to one in four working age people and one in six pensioners.

If the UK Government imposes a real terms cut to social security payments, many more people and families will fall into poverty and will be unable to afford rent, food and heating bills. There will also be those who are forced to cut back on additional treatments.

We draw your attention in particular to a survey carried out by Citizens Advice, which was published in May 2022, on “negative budgets”, where someone's monthly expenditure on essentials exceeds their income.

The survey found in the first quarter of 2022, almost one in two (47.8%) people living with long term health conditions approaching Citizens Advice for support have essential costs that exceeded their income, and concluded that “people with long term health conditions have consistently been the most impacted by negative budgets”. The 47.8% is a rise from 37.7% in the first quarter of 2019.

It is intolerable that people with long term health conditions and their unpaid carers continue to be unable to afford to pay for living essentials. The UK Government must do more to support people most at risk and must not turn its back on those most in need by making a real terms cut to lifeline social security benefits.

Mental health issues on top of an existing significant health burden must also be factored in.

The short and long term impact of not honouring the commitment of previous Ministers to the uplift aligned to inflation, would be nothing short of catastrophic.

We strongly urge you to take action by committing to increasing social security benefits at least in line with inflation and by ensuring there is further support for those most at risk.

This is a request we are also making of the Scottish Government around devolved social security benefits.

Yours sincerely,

*Age Scotland, ALLIANCE Scotland, Ataxia UK, Carers Scotland, Cerebral Palsy Scotland, Disability Equality Scotland, Epilepsy Scotland, Genetic Alliance, Marie Curie, ME Association, MND Scotland, MS Society, Muscular Dystrophy, Neurological Alliance of Scotland, The Oxygen Works, Parkinson's UK Scotland, Revive MS, Scottish Autism, Scottish Huntington's Association.*



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Citizens Advice survey

<https://public.flourish.studio/story/1243816>

Marie Curie and Loughborough University; Dying in Poverty at the End of Life

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/globalassets/media/documents/policy/dying-in-poverty/h420-dying-in-poverty-5th-pp.pdf>

MS Society; 'Breaking Point' report findings

[https://www.mssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/MS\\_REPORT2022\\_84pp\\_DIGITAL.pdf](https://www.mssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/MS_REPORT2022_84pp_DIGITAL.pdf)