

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

Today, children are already twice as likely to be poor as pensioners. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, child poverty is set to soar to 5.1 million children by 2022 – a 42 per cent rise over ten years.

Unless we tackle the underlying causes of poverty, more and more children will grow up without the essentials every child needs to thrive.

Child poverty costs the country around £30 billion a year. Making sure every child gets a fair chance in life is the right thing to do and the smartest investment the new government can make.

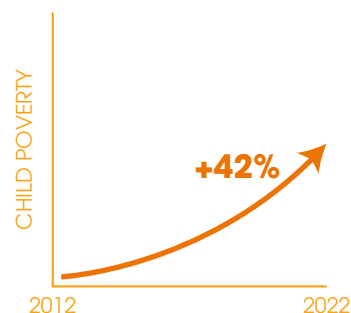
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

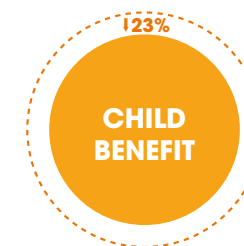
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CHILD
POVERTY
ACTION
GROUP



5.1 MILLION CHILDREN
IN POVERTY BY 2022



SET TO LOSE 23%
OF ITS VALUE THIS DECADE

1 MAKE CHILD POVERTY A NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PRIORITY

Child poverty is policy sensitive. When child poverty is prioritised across Whitehall, significant progress can be made. When it isn't, child poverty rises.

- Restore targets to end child poverty, as is happening in Scotland.
- Ensure all local authorities have a duty to end child poverty.

2 PROTECT FAMILIES FROM RISING LIVING COSTS

CPAG's Cost of a Child research shows even two parents working full time on the minimum wage fall £50 a week short of the income they need to meet the basic costs of raising a child. The squeeze on family incomes has been made worse by decisions to stop children's benefits keeping pace with living costs. Child benefit, a lifeline for families, is set to lose 23 per cent of its value this decade.

- Raise child benefit by £5 a week to help recover its 2010 value.
- Protect children's benefits with a triple lock - increasing them in line with earnings, inflation or 2.5 per cent, whichever is greater. This would reduce child poverty by 600,000.
- Ensure that benefits once again reflect need - a fundamental principle of the welfare state:
 - » Scrapping the benefit cap would reduce child poverty by 100,000.
 - » Ending the two-child limit on tax credits and universal credit would prevent child poverty rising by 200,000 - and save survivors of rape the trauma, indignity and loss of privacy of applying for the 'rape exemption'.



**AVERAGE LOSS FOR
SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES BY 2020
BECAUSE OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT CUTS**



**DEMAND FOR FOODBANKS
CAN BE PREVENTED**



**INCREASED BY 42%
BETWEEN 2008 AND 2014**

3 MAKE UNIVERSAL CREDIT FIT FOR WORKING FAMILIES

Two-thirds of poor children live in working families. Yet, analysis by CPAG in our 'Broken Promises' report shows families with children will be worse off by an average of £960 a year in 2020, compared with the income they could have expected in the absence of cuts to universal credit, and single parent families by a huge £2,380 on average.

- Restore work allowances for low paid workers in universal credit. This would reduce child poverty by 300,000.
- Establish a work allowance for second earners to boost work incentives. This would reduce child poverty by 100,000.
- Lower the taper to 55 per cent - the rate in universal credit at which benefits are withdrawn as earnings rise. This would reduce child poverty by 200,000.
- Raise the universal credit childcare ceiling so it's not limited to two children and pays a higher rate for disabled children.
- Reduce the current six week wait for a first payment to two weeks.
- Ensure the Department for Work and Pensions listens and acts on early warnings about problems in the universal credit roll-out.

4 FIX SANCTIONS AND DELAYS TO PREVENT DEMAND FOR FOODBANKS

'Emergency Use Only', a ground-breaking research report by CPAG and other NGOs, found the immediate trigger for a foodbank referral is often an unfair sanctions decision, or administrative delay or error in the benefits system.

- Cut demand for foodbanks by improving access to benefit advances, hardship payments and decent local welfare assistance.
- Ensure sanctions are only used as a last resort, and with a genuine 'yellow card' system to ensure inadvertent mistakes don't lead to families going hungry.
- Invest in advice services so benefit problems are fixed without having to go to a food bank.
- Support universal free school meals, including in extended schools and school holidays to avoid the need for 'child feeding' projects.

5 DEVELOP A VISIONARY NATIONAL CHILDCARE STRATEGY

Helping families into work is a crucial part of ending child poverty, but childcare - which enables many into work - is the single most expensive item in the budgets of many families with small children. CPAG's Cost of a Child research found that the cost of childcare jumped by 42 per cent between 2008 and 2014, over twice the official inflation rate.

The government should develop and fund a national childcare strategy, including measures to:

- Fully fund a high quality model of the 30-hour free entitlement.
- Scrap the work rule for the extra 15 hours so more disadvantaged children can benefit from the policy.
- Make two-year-old places universal.
- Increase support for children's centres.
- Develop comprehensive, 8am-6pm out-of-school and holiday childcare through extended schools.