

14 September 2021

Dear Councillor

As you will no doubt be aware, the UK Government is currently planning to bring the £20 uplift in Universal Credit to an end in October. I am writing to you today to ask for your support for our campaign to make this uplift permanent.

This proposed cut will mean that claimants lose up to £1040 per year from their Universal Credit payments. Nationally, this will pull a further 2.3 million people into debt and will damage the finances of the sick and vulnerable. Locally, this cut will have a strong impact on all groups within our local community.

In Swale, 42% of Universal Credit claimants have children, meaning that this cut will take vital support away from the children of Swale just when they need every ounce of support to help them catch-up this year from school closures caused by the pandemic. Additionally, 35% of Universal Credit claimants in Swale are already in work. Often, we are told that the best solution to these problems is to encourage claimants into work. However, this cannot be the case as a large proportion of claimants are already in work and will still lose over £1000 a year.

As such, it is clear that this proposed cut in Universal Credit will not only impact the unemployed and the sick, but will take money from the hands of the working people of Swale and will negatively impact the development of our children. But, for claimants, the financial struggle does not end there. The proposed cut in Universal Credit coincides with the end of the furlough scheme, the increase in the energy price cap, the beginning of winter which always necessitates higher fuel expenditure and, in just a few months, an increase in national insurance. All of this, combined, will hit the people of Swale extremely hard.

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It is not, however, just Universal Credit claimants that will feel the effects of this policy. Every pound that is taken from claimants is a pound that is not being spent in the local area. Whether it is from local supermarkets, cafés, restaurants, or the local market, this policy is taking hundreds of thousands of pounds from the local economy. It is, therefore, clear that this national policy has very real local ramifications, which will be felt by each and every one of your constituents in the short-to-medium term.

As a local charity, Citizens Advice Swale cares deeply about the issues that are facing the people of Swale and that is why we have launched our very first local campaign in order to gather local support in opposition to this proposed cut. Over the coming weeks, we will be conducting radio interviews, publishing newspaper articles and working with the local community to raise awareness about this policy and to campaign for its reversal. We would really appreciate your support.

As a local councillor, you can support us in many ways. Firstly, you can speak with your constituents to ensure that they are aware of the proposed cut and the impact that it will have on Swale. Secondly, you can engage with your fellow councillors to declare your opposition to this cut. Thirdly, you can sign the open letter that we will be writing to our local MPs, calling on them to oppose the proposed cut.

Should you choose to publicly support our campaign, you can rest assured that you will be doing the right thing for your constituents and every member of the local community.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Ethan Dighton
Trustee and Research & Campaigns Champion

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