**Template letter/email to MP**

*Adapt this text with your own personal views, experiences, anecdotes and writing style. A more personalised letter is likely to have a greater impact and get a response from your MP.*

Dear [Insert name of your MP] MP,

I am writing to you to ask for your support in calling on the UK Government to end the ‘young parent penalty’ in Universal Credit and reinstate the exemption to the lower rate of standard allowance for under 25s who are single parents.

Under the legacy benefits system, there was an exemption for young people who are single parents, in recognition of the cost of caring for a child alone. Under Universal Credit, this has changed – but the circumstances of young single parents and the needs of their children have not.

Young parents still have the same costs as parents aged 25 and over, and their children still deserve the same standard of living and the same chance in life as any other child.

Children don’t deserve to be penalised based on the age of their parents, and young single parent families don’t deserve to be placed at greater risk of poverty due to an arbitrary inequality in the social security system.

* Young single parents are up to £66.13 worse off per month on average under Universal Credit compared with the legacy system.
* Young single parents have been hit especially hard by the switch from the legacy system to Universal Credit. [Research from the Resolution Foundation](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/a-fraying-net/) in 2019 found that young single parents were most likely to lose out financially as a result of the switch, with 67 per cent expected to end up with less money.
* For single parents, the costs of caring for a child make up a larger proportion of their household income.
* Children in single parent families (92% of which are headed by women) are already twice as likely to be living in poverty than other children. For children whose parents are under 25, this inequality in social security makes the picture even starker.
* Poverty affects children’s health and wellbeing and creates long-term social problems, meaning that addressing it is not only the right thing to do, but economically smart.

Investing in young single parent families by offering them the same support as any other family is an investment in the future of children.

I know that you will share my sense of urgency in ensuring that our social security system sends a strong message that no child is worth less than another.

I am asking you, with all of this in mind, to write to Prime Minister Boris Johnson to urge him to end the Young Parent Penalty and reinstate the exemption for young parents.

We know this kind of exemption is possible, because it worked under the old system.

Any help you can give in raising awareness of this issue among your colleagues and the general public would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert your name]

P.S. For more information, please see One Parent Families Scotland’s [End the Young Parent Penalty campaign](https://opfs.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/campaigns/end-the-young-parent-penalty/), which is supported by a range of organisations representing children, families and women in Scotland.