

Amendment to Opposition Motion in the name of Councillor Barry Rawlings 'Keep the £20 a Week Universal Credit Uplift

Amendment in the name of Councillor Sachin Rajput

Replace bullet points with numbers throughout

Replace "This Council notes":

- In April the Government plans to cut the benefit level for millions of claimants by ending the time limited increase to the basic rate of Universal Credit (and the tax credit equivalent) announced by the Chancellor on 20th March as part of his pandemic response package.
- The £20 a week boost reflected the reality that the level of benefits were not adequate to protect the swiftly increasing number of households relying on them as the crisis hit. Exactly because that increase was a very significant and welcome move to bolster low- and middle-income families' living standards, its removal will be a huge loss.
- Pressing ahead would see the level of unemployment support fall to its lowest real-terms level since 1990-91, and its lowest ever relative to average earnings. Indeed, the basic level of out-of-work support prior to the March boost was – at £73 a week (£3,800 a year) – less than half the absolute poverty line.

With

1. Announced on the 20th March 2020 as part of his pandemic response package, the Chancellor of the Exchequer created a time-limited increase to the basic rate of Universal Credit (and the tax credit equivalent). This gave millions of people across the UK extra money to help them through the expected period of financial hardship brought on by the Covid pandemic.
2. The Government's time-limited increase to the Universal Credit is due to expire in April.
3. The £20 a week boost reflected the reality that the level of benefits were not adequate to protect the swiftly increasing number of households relying on them as the crisis hit. This was a very significant and welcome move to bolster low- and middle-income families' living standards.

Add:

This Council believes:

1. Covid pandemic relief must not be used as an ideological excuse to increase future reliance on the welfare state.

Replace “Council revolves to”:

- Write to the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak and to the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson demanding that the £20 increase to Universal Credit is made permanent and extended to claimants on legacy benefits.
- Work with other local government organisations to form a coalition to pressure the Government to make the £20 increase to Universal Credit permanent.

With

1. Write to the Chancellor to request that he considers extending the period in which the uplift is granted if Covid challenges continue for longer than expected at the introduction of the benefit.

Motion should now read:

Opposition Motion in the name of Councillor Barry Rawlings
Amended by Councillor Sachin Rajput

Keep the £20 a Week Universal Credit Uplift

This Council notes:

1. Announced on the 20th March 2020 as part of his pandemic response package, the Chancellor of the Exchequer created a time-limited increase to the basic rate of Universal Credit (and the tax credit equivalent). This gave millions of people across the UK extra money to help them through the expected period of financial hardship brought on by the Covid pandemic.
2. The Government’s time-limited increase to the Universal Credit is due to expire in April.
3. The £20 a week boost reflected the reality that the level of benefits were not adequate to protect the swiftly increasing number of households relying on them as the crisis hit. This was a very significant and welcome move to bolster low- and middle-income families' living standards.
4. The increase in benefits has had a positive effect on the lives of thousands of local claimants who are better able to pay for life’s essentials such as food, clothing and utilities.
5. It must be recognised that these are exceptional measures, which will have to be phased out at the appropriate time.

This Council believes:

1. Covid pandemic relief must not be used as an ideological excuse to increase future reliance on the welfare state.

Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Chancellor to request that he considers extending the period in which the uplift is granted if Covid challenges continue for longer than expected at the introduction of the benefit.

Under Full Council Procedure Rule 17.17: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting, I ask that it be voted upon at the Council meeting.