



Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

20 November 2023

Dear Chancellor,

RE: Supporting working parents and carers in the Autumn Statement 2023

Working Families is a charity which exists because there are still barriers that people with caring responsibilities face in the workplace. Our work will be done when these barriers no longer exist.

We have been delighted recently to work with stakeholders from across the political spectrum to help your government deliver legislation to improve access to flexible workingⁱ, to give workers the right to a more predictable working scheduleⁱⁱ, and to achieve a huge leap forward in introducing neonatal care leave and payⁱⁱⁱ. These changes help us in our goal and we have been delighted that your government has backed them, although we believe there is still more you could do in these areas.

We are also a member of the Department for Business and Trade Flexible Working Taskforce and work with the taskforce to promote our Happy to Talk Flexible Working logo.

For your Autumn Statement, we are writing to ask you to continue your support for working families with the rising cost-of-living. With the ONS predicting a UK budget deficit of £1.7bn below the estimate from the OBR^{iv}, the Government is in a position ensure that there is sufficient childcare provision for parents to engage in work or boost their hours, and that lower income working parents and carers are able to cope with the inflationary pressures on their household budgets.

To this end we are asking that you:

- Create a plan to address the £1.82bn shortfall in childcare funding to prevent the closure of further childcare settings and to ensure that the sector is in a position to deliver on your new childcare proposals.

workingfamilies.org.uk

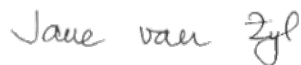
Working Families, c/o Buzzacott LLP, 130 Wood Street, London, EC2V 6DL
☎ 020 3833 2050 ✉ office@workingfamilies.org.uk 🌐 workingfamilies.org.uk

- Continue to raise benefits in line with inflation, which on current rates of inflation would be a 7% rise.
- Bring forward to April 2024 the neonatal leave and pay provisions by accelerating the funding to do so.
- We would also encourage the Treasury to review and increase the rates of Statutory Maternity, Paternity, and Shared Parental Leave Pay, and the DWP to exclude Maternity Allowance payments from their Universal Credit calculations.

These measures, in combination with the Prime Minister's Conference announcement on increasing the National Living Minimum Wage, will not only provide direct support to parents and carers, but will also help drive productivity and boost tax receipts for the Treasury.

We look forward to continuing to engage in a productive and meaningful way. To help further this, I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our suggestions with you, so please do let us know when you would like to meet by emailing our Parliamentary & Stakeholder Engagement Manager at kyle.green@workingfamilies.org.uk.

Yours faithfully,



Jane van Zyl
Chief Executive

ⁱ <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3198>

ⁱⁱ <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3237>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3190>

^{iv}

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/july2023>