

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

17<sup>th</sup> August 2020

LONDON SW1A 0AA

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE & UNIVERSAL CREDIT.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of providing support for young people suffering from economic hardship and Universal Credit; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

It is clear that young people have been significantly impacted as a result of Coronavirus, particularly its economic toll, and face great challenges. Universal Credit (UC) was designed to simplify the benefits system with a focus on helping people into work and supporting their in-work progression. Differential rates are paid according to peoples' individual circumstances and age, although I would emphasise that the Department for Work & Pensions has increased the standard allowance in UC for all claimants. I would also add that additional amounts which provide for specific needs, such as children or disability, are paid at a standard rate, in addition to the standard allowance, irrespective of age.

Universal Credit claimants can also get support with housing costs which can help to pay private landlords, local authorities, or interest payments on a mortgage. In response to COVID-19, the Local Housing Allowance rates for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit claimants have been increased to the 30th percentile of local rents, providing additional financial support for private renters. If people need further support with rent, Discretionary Housing Payments are available, while a £500 million Hardship Fund provides Council Tax relief to vulnerable people in England.

That being said, I share your concern to ensure that young people are supported through the Coronavirus emergency. Benefits, however, are only one part of that support. I know my colleagues in the Government have been working hard to protect jobs by helping businesses to open safely, while the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme have helped to keep people in their roles throughout what has been an incredibly uncertain and turbulent time. I hope the new Job Retention Bonus will also add to this. Keeping young people in jobs and close to the labour market must be our key priority moving forward.

I hope this reassures you that supporting young people in the coming months and years is at the heart of the Government's agenda and is certainly something I will continue to press hard on.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**