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Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer

March 13<sup>th</sup> 2023

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to you ahead of this week's budget to represent the views of my constituents on the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, and to urge you to take action to support people across Scotland.

In my constituency, Glasgow South, recent polling by 38 Degrees indicates that the impact of the cost of living crisis is astounding:

- 73% think that Rishi Sunak and the Tory Government do not understand the impact the cost of living crisis is having on people;
- 47% believe their mental health has been affected because of the cost of living crisis;
- 56% are worried about not being able to pay energy bills;
- 39% are worried about not being able to pay their rent or mortgage;
- 38% have not been able to afford to turn on the heating when they have felt cold in the past month.

It is clear that the people of Glasgow South are continuing to struggle with the exorbitant costs of basic necessities, and it is totally unacceptable that 43% of my constituents couldn't afford to turn on their heating in the last month.

One of my constituents had to turn off all heating except one panel and they do not do a regular food shop anymore. They are "scared" energy bills will rise so much they won't be able to keep up.

The Tories cannot continue to hammer household incomes. The number one priority for the UK Government's Spring Budget must be to put money back into people's pockets.

Another of my constituents said they were "very worried all the time" and is "trying all the time to live on less," describing the rising cost of basic necessities as "stressful" and "frightening".

With the Spring Statement this week, now is the perfect opportunity to remedy the concerns of my constituents, and of people across these islands, about the rising cost-of-living.

I am therefore calling on you to implement a comprehensive package to boost household incomes and economic growth.



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The UK Government must cut the Energy Price Guarantee to £2,000 and continue the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme until the summer.

It is also vital that public sector pay, and benefits, are increased in line with CPI and that plans to raise the pension age to 68 are scrapped, with the Triple Lock reinstated.

The UK must rejoin the European Single Market to boost economic growth and halt the long-term damage being caused by Brexit, and invest in sustainable growth by competing with EU and US subsidies to attract green investment.

The headroom identified by the IFS and the billions of pounds saved as the wholesale price of gas continues to fall means that the UK Government should reform the tax system by scrapping non-dom tax status and tax share buy backs; and expanding the windfall tax.

These changes would raise billions more to fund cost of living support for people across Scotland, such as a recently retired social worker from Glasgow who told me "I'm scared to use my gas and electricity. I'm not booking holidays because I'm worried about the future. I've never felt so concerned about the country."

As Chancellor I am asking you to do everything within your power to support people across these isles amid the increasing cost of living crisis.

Yours sincerely,

**Stewart McDonald MP**  
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