



The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

Dear Chancellor,

We are writing to you regarding the impact the cost of living crisis is having on families with a child with a vision impairment.

Families with a child with a vision impairment are being hit particularly hard by the cost of living crisis. Higher costs arise from being forced to use their car more frequently, using more energy at home and buying specialist equipment. Many of the pressures on household incomes are exacerbated by their child's needs not being fully met by local health and education agencies, and local transport not being accessible. Only a fifth of families told Guide Dogs their benefits are sufficient to cover the extra costs associated with their child's disability.

Guide Dogs undertook research to understand the impact that the cost of living crisis is having on families with a child with vision impairment. In December 2022 a survey compared the impact of the crisis on families with a vision impaired child to those families with non-disabled children. The survey found that:

- The majority of British families face some levels of difficulties to make ends meet and families with a vision impaired child are even more affected, with 80% claiming they have less disposable income than a year ago.
- 4 out of 5 (79%) families with a vision impaired child are concerned about their ability to pay energy and utility bills.
- 58% of families with a vision impaired child are concerned about being able to put food on the table.

Many families are having to make tough decisions about where to save money. Parents and guardians of a child with a vision impairment reported that they are cutting back on spend which relates to their health and wellbeing. Parents with a vision impaired child are more worried about NHS waiting times and

paying their bills. As a result, parents with a vision impaired child are significantly more likely to have experienced mental health conditions in the past year and they are significantly more likely to say their mental health is worse than a year ago.

Due to these findings, we are asking you to increase support by £15 per month, on top of the CPI-linked uplift due to come into force in April 2023, for families with a disabled child receiving Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit to ensure families can meet the additional costs that are going above and beyond the benefits they're receiving.

This small increase will help families with the extra costs of having a disabled child.

Yours sincerely,

Guide Dogs