Dear **[your MP’s name – you can find your MP here** [**https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP**](https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP)**]**

I am writing to you as a constituent who is concerned about the affordability of childcare.

Before Covid, there was a crisis in both the affordability and supply of childcare. **The pandemic has exacerbated this crisis.**

New data from Ofsted shows that **in the six months up to March 2021, there were 14,385 fewer childcare places and 3,292 fewer providers in England**. This is a worrying consequence of the pandemic and will reduce capacity for when parents are expected to go back to the office.

For under-2-year-olds in Great Britain, full-time **childcare costs absorb half (49%) of women’s median earnings while part-time childcare takes up nearly a third (63%) of women’s salaries.**

State support in the form of free-entitlement hours only starts for most children once they reach three. But even with childcare state support, **childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds is still between a fifth and a quarter of women’s salaries** with women spending on average 24% of their earnings on part-time childcare.

**We know what happens when childcare is unaffordable and inaccessible**. Our evidence suggests that it is **mothers’ jobs and earnings potential that are more likely to be sacrificed in order to meet childcaring needs**.

This year in the Queen’s Speech, **the Prime Minister promised to ‘bring forward measures to ensure that children have the best start to life’**. The Government can make good on this commitment, and stop women being locked out of paid work by:

1. ***Urgently and fully funding the free entitlement hours to cover the full costs of provision.***
2. ***Commissioning a full and independent review of the financial and funding situation of the sector to establish what the Government needs to do for the childcare system in the UK to better serve children, families and the economy.***
3. ***In the longer-term, introducing a free, universal childcare provision year-round and on a full-time basis, from the age of six months onwards. Research from the Women’s Budget Group has shown the initial investment costs are nearly fully recouped in increased employment rates, tax revenues and savings on social security benefits.***

Will you support our recommendations on childcare?

Awaiting your response,

**[INSERT YOUR NAME]**

**[INSERT YOUR ADDRESS AND POSTCODE]**