

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2021

Dear Constituents

Thank you for your email about child poverty in the North East.

I can assure you that eradicating child poverty is an absolute priority. I proudly stood on a manifesto that pledged to continue efforts through the tax and benefits system to reduce poverty, including child poverty. I firmly believe that children should grow up in an environment with no limits to their potential and I am pleased the Government is making it a priority to put more money in the pockets of low-paid workers in Darlington to help eradicate child poverty.

The way we measured child poverty in the past, based on median income, was deeply flawed. For example, by this measure the number of children in poverty went down significantly during the last economic recession. That is why new measures have been introduced to focus on the root causes of poverty, chief among them being educational attainment and levels of work within a family.

I am encouraged by the Prime Minister's clear commitment to do whatever it takes to support people during the Coronavirus crisis, and I welcome that this has included a number of measures to protect children and ensure no child goes hungry.

Due to the pandemic, I know that many children and parents in Darlington faced an entirely unprecedented situation. To reflect this, additional funding was provided for a 'Covid Summer Food Fund' which enabled children who are eligible for free school meals to receive food vouchers covering the summer holiday period while the national COVID Winter Action Grant made £170 million available to support some of the country's most vulnerable families over last winter.

This is part of the wider support available for children and families at this challenging time. I am delighted that an additional £63 million has been distributed to local authorities in England to help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials. In addition, Universal Credit and Working Tax were increased by £20 uplift to September 2021, removed the minimum income floor and extended the housing element by almost £1 billion – an injection of over £9.3 billion into the welfare system.

Member of Parliament for Darlington

Constituency Office: 34 Duke Street, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 7AQ Telephone: 01325 711711

Email: peter.gibson.mp@parliament.uk Website: www.petergibson.org

    @gibbo4darlo

I warmly welcomed all these measures that have protected thousands of children in Darlington from poverty and food hardship. I will of course be keeping a close watch on this issue throughout my time in Parliament and will do all I can to ensure our children are protected from poverty.

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

Yours Sincerely
Peter Gibson

PETER GIBSON MP