

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Single-Parent Families

Minutes: Meeting on Childcare and Universal Credit

Tuesday 21 October 2025 | Room T, Portcullis House

Apologies:

Dr Ellie Chowns MP; Desmond Swayne MP; Jo Morrissey MP; Alex McIntyre MP; Baroness Steadman-Scott; Rushanara Ali MP; Paul Kohler MP; Lord Balfe

In attendance:

Dr Rupa Huq MP– Chair; Michelle Welsh MP; Baroness Lister; Stella Creasy MP; Ben Lake MP

External speakers:

Vaila McClure (Head of Communications and External Affairs, Gingerbread); Dr Rita Griffiths (Research Fellow, Institute for Policy Research, University of Bath and co-author of '*A big, vast, grey area: Exploring the lived experiences of childcare for parents on Universal Credit*'); Thea (Lived Experience Expert); Nicola (Lived Experience Expert)

Meeting notes:

- Dr Rupa Huq MP gave an overview of the focus of the meeting and introduced the speakers.
- Vaila McClure provided an overview of the issues Gingerbread has identified with the Childcare Element of Universal Credit and the application of the Flexible Support Fund for covering upfront childcare costs. She also spoke about the *Support Not Punish* campaign.
- Dr Rita Griffiths presented an overview of the findings and recommendations of the report *A big, vast, grey area: Exploring the lived experiences of childcare for parents on Universal Credit*.
- Thea gave an overview of her lived experience with the Childcare Element of Universal Credit, the challenges she has faced, and the policy changes she'd like to see.
- Nicola gave an overview of her lived experience with the Childcare Element of Universal Credit and its interaction with the 30 hours of government funded childcare policy, alongside the policy changes she'd like to see.
- A short question and answer segment took place.