



Gerald Jones MP

Merthyr Tydfil & Aberdare

Councillor Andrew Morgan OBE
Leader
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Cabinet Office
2 Llys Cadwyn
Taff Street
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Our Ref: GJ28804

5 September 2025

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 5 August following the Notice of Motion passed at Full Council.

Nobody in the UK should have to beg for food. Mass dependence on emergency food parcels is a moral scar on our society and it must be ended.

I agree that Universal Credit (UC) has a crucial role to play in tackling poverty, and I back an above-inflation increase to the UC standard allowance. This will benefit over four million low-income households with a forecasted cash increase of £725 per year for a single person aged over 25 by 2030. It is also right that UC, and other benefits, have risen in line with inflation this year.

I stood on a manifesto pledge to review UC, so that it makes work pay, drives up living standards and tackles poverty. This remains a top priority, and it has already begun with the introduction of the Fair Repayment Rate. This has reduced the level of debt repayments that can be taken from a household's UC payment each month. Thanks to this change, 1.2 million of the poorest households will keep around £420 more of their award annually.

I am also proud of the financial support that the Welsh Government and local government makes available to low-income households. I pay tribute to the work Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has undertaken; particularly through the Food Support Fund and RCT Together. I know that these are making a difference to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people across Wales.

I also welcome the Welsh Government's continued support for foodbanks. The overall funding to tackling food poverty across Wales for this year is nearly £4.5 million. This is vital support for community food organisations to purchase additional supplies of good quality food, and other essential goods, boosting their capacity to meet the needs of the people who use them. However, I share its overall vision for a Wales where foodbanks are no longer needed.

Continued...

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Moreover, I know that good work can prevent people falling into poverty in the first place, and that is why I supported the Employment Rights Bill in Parliament. The Bill will give more people protection in the workplace. I also support the living wage increasing by £1,400 and the minimum wage being boosted for three million of the lowest-paid full-time workers.

I know that levels of food poverty and insecurity, inherited from the previous Government, are too high. I am determined to support people struggling the most, to tackle poverty and drive-up living standards. The UK Government and Welsh Government's action so far meets this ambition.

Thank you again for contacting me about this important issue and I will continue to support the council's efforts locally.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gerald Jones', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare