**Text for Email to accompany Template Letter:**

Thank you for joining the *Crushed by the Cost-of-Living* event in Stormont on Wednesday 21st September in Stormont. The strength of feeling and support for the event was undeniable, and we’re asking for your help in making sure MLAs return to the Assembly and implement the asks.

You can write to your local MLAs to ask them to take action on the Cost of Living Crisis by implementing the four key asks you heard about at the *Crushed by the Cost-of-Living* event.

We have attached a template letter setting out the four key asks and expressing your desire for your local MLAs to take action to protect people in Northern Ireland from the impact of this Crisis. We would encourage you to send this to all five MLAs that represent your constituency.

**Note—**you will need to include your home address as MLAs are only able to act on behalf of their constituents so they will need your address to ensure you are a constituent.

Please feel free to edit this template letter, particularly if you wish to add any details you think are relevant for you personally and to address the unique challenges which are being experienced in your local area. Once you have competed the letter, you can send it to your local MLAs by email or post. You can find their email information and constituency address on the Assembly website by using the search functions below.

To find your local MLAs are you can search for them here, searching by ‘constituency’ in the drop down menu: <http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/mlas/search.aspx>

If you don’t know the name of your constituency, you can search for it here by entering your postcode: <https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons>

**[Insert your home address here]**

**[Insert date]**

Dear **[insert MLA’s name]**

As your constituent I am growing increasingly concerned about the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on people in Northern Ireland and particularly on those living on the lowest incomes. Those on the lowest incomes spend more of their household budgets on essential items such as food and energy bills, the cost of which has increased so steeply. The increases in the costs of the most basic items are causing financial hardship, foodbank use and debt as well as significant stress and anxiety over making ends meet.

**[Insert the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on you personally if you wish]**

**[Include any detail of the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis that you see in your local area if you wish]**

I have recently attended the *Crushed by the Cost-of-Living* event at Stormont and heard both the lived experience of those impacted by the Crisis as well as organisations’ concerns for the people they represent. I support the four key emergency responses outlined at this event to help those most impacted by this crisis through the coming winter months, as outlined below:

* **PAUSE SOCIAL SECURITY DEBT FOR SIX MONTHS**

Stop social security debt deductions from low-income households to maximise monthly income.

* **RE-INSTATE THE £20 UPLIFT TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND EXTEND TO LEGACY BENEFIT**

Target more cash to working and non-working households to give families the dignity of affording basic essentials.

* **A ONE-OFF PAYMENT OF £500 TO THOSE ENTITLED TO DISABILITY BENEFIT OR CARERS ALLOWANCE**

Those entitled to Child DLA, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance and Carer’s Allowance should receive a £500 payment to recognise additional costs.

* **REMOVE THE TWO-CHILD LIMIT FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND CHILD TAX CREDIT**

All children in a family should receive benefit entitlement to ensure that no child goes hungry.

It is crucial the Northern Ireland Assembly focuses on these emergency responses to ensure that those on the lowest incomes are able to survive this crisis and live dignified, healthy lives this winter. In addition to these emergency responses, we need to see longer-term measures put in place to provide adequate protection against financial hardship and poverty including the delivery and implementation of an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland.

I urge you to support these asks and push for the reformation of a Northern Ireland Executive. With the exception of pausing social security debt for six months, without an Executive delivery of the asks will not be possible. I also encourage you to call on the government at Westminster to protect those who will be most severely impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

**[insert your full name]**