**End Child Poverty**

**For immediate release**

**Monday 4 December 2023**

**New data reveals number of children hit by two-child limit in every Westminster constituency and Scottish local authority**

* **strong correlation between two-child limit and high rates of child poverty**
* **campaigners call for all political leaders to abolish at source, and in Scotland to act now to mitigate impact.**

New local data obtained by the [End Child Poverty](https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/two_child_limit/) coalition shows that the areas hit hardest by the UK government’s two-child limit are also areas with high rates of child poverty. Across Scotland the proportion of children affected ranges from 13% in Glasgow, where nearly one in three children live in poverty, to 4% in East Dunbartonshire, which has a child poverty rate of 15%.  Another four Scottish local authority areas – Dundee, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire - have more than one in ten children affected by the two-child limit.

A similar pattern is clear across the UK, with around 1.5 million children now living in households subject to the policy – equivalent to one in 10 (note 1).

In Scotland over 87 000 (9%) children are affected. Across the UK nations, the figure is 11% for both England and Wales and in Northern Ireland it is 10%

The two-child limit denies child allowances in universal credit and tax credits worth up to £3,235 per year to third or subsequent children born after April 2017.

The policy is one of the biggest drivers of rising child poverty across the UK – up from 3.6 million children below the poverty line in 2010/11 to 4.2 million in 2021/22.  In Scotland levels of child poverty have stabilised and Holyrood government policies, including the Scottish child payment, are expected to reduce child poverty further. Yet a quarter of a million children in Scotland are still living in poverty.

Research suggests that scrapping the two-child limit is one of the most cost-effective ways of addressing child poverty. Across the UK ending the policy would lift 250,000 children out of poverty at a cost of £1.3bn (note 2). In Scotland alone 15 000 fewer children would be living in poverty if the limit was scrapped.

Responding to the new figures John Dickie, Director of the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland, a member of the End Child Poverty coalition, said:

“We wouldn’t deny a third child NHS care or an education – how can it be right to deny children financial support because of the number of brothers or sisters they have? The UK government’s two-child limit is one of the most brutal policies of our times. All it does is push children into poverty and deeper poverty. It’s high time all Westminster party leaders committed to scrapping the policy before more children are harmed. In the meantime, we urge the Scottish Government to mitigate it through additional payments of the Scottish child payment before it does more damage to children and to family life.”

Joseph Howes, Chair of the End Child Poverty Coalition and CEO of Buttle UK said:

“Imagine saying to a child who turned up at school – sorry you can’t gain access, we won’t fund your education – only your two older siblings qualify. Or turning a child away from hospital when they need treatment, as they are the third child in a family. Yet this is exactly what the unfair two-child limit to benefit payments does, it denies families the support they need, at a time when they need it the most.

“As a parent I want to be able to provide for my children, especially at a magical time like Christmas. But we know from speaking with families impacted by the two-child limit that this time of year is anything but joyful. Instead, they worry about heating their homes, and providing even basic food over the Christmas period.

“If political parties seriously want to tackle child poverty, they need to start by scrapping the two-child limit to benefit payments.”

**Ends**

**Notes to editors**

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| **Local Authority** | **number of children affected by two child limit** | **% of children affected by the two child limit** | **number of children living in poverty** | **Local child poverty rate 2021/22** |
| Aberdeen City | 2600 | 7% | 7994 | 20.5% |
| Aberdeenshire | 2800 | 5% | 8799 | 16.0% |
| Angus | 1800 | 9% | 5067 | 24.2% |
| Argyll and Bute | 1100 | 8% | 3062 | 21.7% |
| City of Edinburgh | 5440 | 6% | 17339 | 19.5% |
| Clackmannanshire | 1010 | 10% | 2764 | 28.3% |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 2580 | 10% | 6751 | 26.0% |
| Dundee City | 3010 | 11% | 7208 | 27.1% |
| East Ayrshire | 2530 | 11% | 6314 | 27.2% |
| East Dunbartonshire | 820 | 4% | 3367 | 14.9% |
| East Lothian | 1600 | 7% | 4765 | 21.1% |
| East Renfrewshire | 970 | 4% | 3288 | 14.4% |
| Falkirk | 2530 | 8% | 7771 | 25.3% |
| Fife | 6760 | 9% | 18602 | 26.1% |
| Glasgow City | 14460 | 13% | 35891 | 32.0% |
| Highland | 3400 | 8% | 9799 | 22.8% |
| Inverclyde | 1290 | 9% | 3427 | 24.4% |
| Midlothian | 1830 | 9% | 4590 | 22.7% |
| Moray | 1490 | 8% | 4228 | 24.1% |
| Na h-Eileanan Siar | 280 | 6% | 913 | 19.8% |
| North Ayrshire | 2680 | 11% | 7141 | 29.0% |
| North Lanarkshire | 6610 | 10% | 18252 | 26.6% |
| Orkney Islands | 250 | 6% | 824 | 20.1% |
| Perth and Kinross | 1970 | 7% | 5914 | 21.9% |
| Renfrewshire | 2550 | 8% | 7840 | 23.3% |
| Scottish Borders | 1650 | 8% | 4963 | 23.4% |
| Shetland Islands | 260 | 6% | 700 | 15.4% |
| South Ayrshire | 1620 | 8% | 4807 | 24.4% |
| South Lanarkshire | 5100 | 8% | 14292 | 22.8% |
| Stirling | 1000 | 6% | 3529 | 20.8% |
| West Dunbartonshire | 1950 | 11% | 4696 | 27.6% |
| West Lothian | 3170 | 8% | 9364 | 23.9% |

**Breakdown by Westminster constituency can be found at** [**https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/**](https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/)

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| **UK nations** | **Children affected by 2CL** | **% of children affected by 2CL** | **Local child poverty rates 21/21** |
| England | 1335080 | 11% | 31% |
| Wales | 69520 | 11% | 28% |
| Northern Ireland | 44950 | 10% | 22% |
| Scotland | 87160 | 9% | 24% |

**About the data**

The data on the two-child limit was obtained via Freedom of Information requests to the Department of Work and Pensions, HMRC and the Department for Communities Northern Ireland. You can download the full spreadsheet of data here: [https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/](https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/" \t "_blank)

The Local Child Poverty data is calculated each year by Loughborough University, for the End Child Poverty Coalition, and can be found here: <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty/>.

**Notes:**

1. From Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit claimants: statistics related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of 2 children, April 2022:  <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-and-child-tax-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2022/universal-credit-and-child-tax-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2022#main-stories>
2. Child Poverty Action Group, [Budget submission 2023](https://cpag.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/briefing/budget-submission-2023), 2023

**About the End Child Poverty Coalition**

The End Child Poverty Coalition is made up of over 100 organisations including child welfare groups, social justice groups, faith groups, trade unions and others. Together with a group of Youth Ambassadors we all believe that no child growing up in the UK should live in poverty. Together we ask that this and future governments commit to end child poverty.