



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Regional campaigners call for end to ‘two-child limit’ affecting almost 90,000 Greater Manchester kids

The End Child Poverty Coalition has produced figures on the number of children who are impacted by the two-child limit to benefit payments in Greater Manchester, ahead of a debate in parliament on the issue.

Greater Manchester Poverty Action has joined forces with MPs and fellow End Child Poverty coalition members across the country to call for an end to the ‘two-child limit’ to social security payments, ahead of a debate in Parliament on this issue.

This Tuesday (11 July), MPs will call for the ‘ineffective and cruel’ two-child cap to be abolished in a debate led by the MP for Liverpool Riverside, Kim Johnson.

Research by the End Child Poverty coalition has found that, by 2022, 89,270 babies and children across Greater Manchester were directly impacted by the policy which means that – since its introduction in April 2017 – almost all families having a third or subsequent child are no longer entitled to receive support for those children through Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit.

And the new analysis of data published today has found that the Greater Manchester Parliamentary constituencies worst impacted by the two-child limit include Blackley and Broughton (where more than one in four of all children are hit by the policy), Bolton South East, Manchester Central, Manchester Gorton, Oldham West and Royton, Rochdale, and Oldham East and Saddleworth.

Recent research has shown that abolishing the two-child limit would be the most cost-effective way of reducing child poverty. If implemented, this would immediately lift 250,000 children out of poverty across the country – and a further 850,000 children would be raised out of deep poverty, at a cost of just £1.3 billion.

The Government’s original – and continued – rationale for the policy is that parents who receive support from the social security system should make the ‘same financial choices’ about having children as those supporting themselves solely through work. However, the majority of families caught by the two-child limit across the country – 58% – are in work, with the policy creating a hole in their budgets that simply cannot be plugged by working additional hours.

Many others will have their children at a time when they are able to support themselves solely through work, but may need to turn to the social security system at some point in the future – for example, as a result of redundancy, bereavement, ill health or the breakdown of a relationship.

Graham Whitham, End Child Poverty Coalition spokesperson and CEO of Greater Manchester Poverty Action said:

“The two-child limit on benefits is one of the most pernicious welfare policies ever seen in this country - it’s time for it to be scrapped. It forces parents into horrible choices and denies families the support they need from our social security system.

“This new data serves to show the extremely damaging effect this policy is having in Greater Manchester and across the country. The government must lift the two-child limit so that all children can thrive.”

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

“The benefits system should be there to help us all. Any family could fall on hard times - from losing a partner, being unable to obtain secure properly paid employment, or not being able to keep up with the increase in the cost of living. Poorer families who rely on benefit payments are denied the money they need for their children as payments are capped at the second child.”

“There is one policy change that we know would make a direct and immediate difference, and that is to scrap the two-child limit. The policy is unfair in the indiscriminate impact it has on children, and there is no evidence it has achieved its aims. Abolishing the two-child limit would immediately lift 250,000 children out of poverty, and the government could make this change now.”

Kim Johnson, MP for Liverpool Riverside said:

“The two-child cap on benefits payments is as cruel as it is ineffective. Larger families are punished, leaving them struggling. Lifting the cap would immediately lift a quarter of a million children out of poverty – making it the single most effective intervention to tackle child poverty.

“The evidence is there for all to see. Punishing families for having more than two children doesn’t push parents back into work – it only drives more children into poverty.

“Tory austerity cuts were nothing less than an ideological drive to rig the economy in favour of the few at the expense of the many. And children in my constituency and across the country are now paying the price. The impact of growing up in poverty can be lifelong. We cannot wait for a new government to provide these children with a future, the government must listen now and lift the two-child cap.”

NOTES

1. [Greater Manchester Poverty Action \(GMPA\)](#) is a member of the national [End Child Poverty](#) coalition, which is made up of 106 organisations including child welfare groups, social justice groups, faith groups, trade unions and others. Together with a group of Youth Ambassadors, members campaign for a UK free of child poverty.
2. The data on the number of children affected by the two-child limit by region and constituency was obtained by the End Child Poverty Coalition under the Freedom of Information Act and covers the period up until 2 April 2022.
3. The following table shows the number and percentage of children affected by the two-child limit in each Parliamentary constituency in Greater Manchester, alongside the (after housing costs) child poverty rate for that constituency ([based on End Child Poverty data published in June 2023](#))

Constituency	Number of children impacted by the 2 child limit	Total Children in this constituency	% of children impacted by the 2 child limit in constituency	Child Poverty Rate for constituency

Blackley and Broughton	10,560	37,978	28%	49%
Bolton South East	5,730	29,021	20%	51%
Manchester Central	6,160	31,667	19%	48%
Manchester, Gorton	5,730	30,811	19%	51%
Oldham West and Royton	5,250	29,774	18%	51%
Rochdale	5,080	30,495	17%	45%
Oldham East and Saddleworth	4,260	27,020	16%	49%
Bolton North East	3,740	24,184	15%	46%
Ashton-under-Lyne	3,170	21,317	15%	42%
Bury South	3,360	24,171	14%	31%
Wythenshawe and Sale East	3,450	27,376	13%	36%
Heywood and Middleton	3,120	24,856	13%	33%
Worsley and Eccles South	3,210	25,817	12%	35%
Salford and Eccles	2,760	23,218	12%	37%
Stalybridge and Hyde	2,600	22,098	12%	35%
Bury North	2,330	20,306	11%	36%
Denton and Reddish	2,030	18,905	11%	32%
Wigan	2,270	22,374	10%	33%
Stockport	2,050	21,604	9%	32%
Manchester, Withington	1,920	20,272	9%	34%
Stretford and Urmston	2,300	25,037	9%	31%
Leigh	2,080	23,012	9%	31%
Bolton West	1,810	21,353	8%	31%
Makerfield	1,740	21,163	8%	28%
Hazel Grove	1,060	16,770	6%	24%
Cheadle	770	22,356	3%	17%
Altrincham and Sale West	730	26,100	3%	13%