

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**4 DECEMBER 2023**

## New data reveals North West as hotspot for children hit by two-child limit on benefits

- **North West among regions with the highest percentage of households hit by the two-child limit**
- **13% of children in the North West impacted**
- **Half of the 20 UK local authority areas with the highest percentage of affected families are in the North West region.**

Children in the North West are more likely to be hit by the two-child limit on benefits than in almost any other region in the UK, new data reveals.

The West Midlands (14%), the North West (13%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (13%) have the highest percentage of households affected by the two-child limit across the UK. The data also reveals a strong correlation between the two-child limit and areas with high rates of child poverty.

New local data obtained by the **End Child Poverty Coalition**, of which local nonprofit Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) is a steering group member, shows that half of the 20 UK local authority areas with the highest percentage of affected families are in the North West of England.

The two-child limit affects families entitled to benefits who have had a third or subsequent child after 6 April 2017. These parents are denied £3,235 per year per child compared with families who have a third or subsequent child born before that date.

Research suggests that scrapping the two-child limit is one of the most cost-effective ways of addressing child poverty. Ending the policy would lift 250,000 children out of poverty at a cost of £1.3bn (1).

The local authorities in the region with the highest percentage of children living in households affected by the limit are Manchester and Salford, at 20%. In Pendle the figure is 19%, and in Hyndburn, Burnley and Oldham it is 18%.

The new data also confirms the North West parliamentary seats most impacted by the two-child

limit – which are Blackley and Broughton (32% of children affected), Bolton South East (23%), Manchester Central (22%) and Manchester, Gorton (22%).

There are around 1.5 million children in the UK living in households subject to the two-child limit on benefit payments – equivalent to one in 10 (2). Areas most affected by the two-child limit are those with the highest child poverty rates (3).

Research has shown that the two-child limit has limited impact (4) on increasing the number of parents who enter employment. In fact, the majority (58%) of families affected by the policy are already in work (5).

**Graham Whitham, CEO of GMPA said:**

“The two-child limit is having an extremely damaging effect in the North West, with this new research indicating that 208,680 babies and children in our region are directly impacted by this policy. It’s not right that children with two or more siblings are more likely to be growing up in poverty.

“This policy forces parents into horrible choices and denies families the support they need from our social security system. Abolishing it would immediately lift 250,000 children out of poverty across the country and help our children to thrive.”

**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. I 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.”

**Case study:**

Cheveli lives in Salford with her husband and three children – aged 15, eight and six.

Cheveli’s third child was born in late 2017 – just months after the two-child limit on benefits came in, meaning she is around £270 a month worse off.

“Sometimes the kids want to go out and play more, but I can’t afford to take them out every day or even every week – it’s just sometimes. Food shopping and energy bills are higher and we need to keep the bills up to date.

“I feel bad as a parent. I can’t work because I need to care for my son, who is autistic, so I’m kind of stuck to be honest.

“If the two-child limit were scrapped it would make a big difference. It would help towards the energy bill and food shopping, and mean I could take the kids out more and do more sensory activities so they can feel happier. It would be such a big help for us.”

**Ends.**

**Notes to editor:**

**English regions ranked by percentage of children affected by two child limit.**

English region	Number of children affected by 2CL	% of children affected by 2CL	Local child poverty rates 21/22
West Midlands	183030	14%	38%
<b>North West</b>	<b>208680</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>34%</b>
Yorkshire and the Humber	150920	13%	31%
North East	65460	12%	35%
London	231470	11%	33%
East Midlands	109630	11%	33%
East of England	125810	9%	24%
South West	97530	9%	27%
South East	162550	8%	25%

**Top 20 UK local authorities ranked by percentage of children affected by two child limit.**

Local authority	Nation/ region	Number of children affected by 2CL	% of children affected by 2CL	Local child poverty rates 21/11
Hackney	London	14510	23%	43.4%
Manchester	North West	26530	20%	44.7%
Salford	North West	11870	20%	37.4%
Birmingham	West Midlands	58930	20%	46.4%
Tower Hamlets	London	13940	19%	47.5%
Pendle	North West	4500	19%	42.5%
Middlesbrough	North East	6280	18%	40.6%
Nottingham	East Midlands	12340	18%	41.0%
Hyndburn	North West	3470	18%	41.6%
Burnley	North West	4030	18%	40.7%
Oldham	North West	11340	18%	43.6%
Stoke-on-Trent	West Midlands	10280	17%	43.5%
Bradford	Yorkshire and The Humber	25650	17%	39.3%
Blackburn with Darwen	North West	7170	17%	42.2%
Blackpool	North West	4900	17%	38.6%
Walsall	West Midlands	12090	17%	43.3%
Bolton	North West	12480	17%	41.6%
Rochdale	North West	9590	17%	40.5%
Sandwell	West Midlands	14500	17%	44.6%
Wolverhampton	West Midlands	10380	16%	43.3%

**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/>

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/>.

### References:

- 1 – Child Poverty Action Group, [Budget submission 2023](#), 2023
- 2 – 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>
- 3 – 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/>.
- 4 – From Benefit Changes & Larger families, 2022: <https://largerfamilies.study/publications/the-two-child-limit-and-choices-over-family-size/>
- 5 – 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#overall-numbers-of-households-affected-by-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-two-children>

### 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.

### About Greater Manchester Poverty Action

Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) is a recognised leader on poverty in the UK and exists to end poverty in Greater Manchester and beyond.

We deliver independent, evidence-based activities to address socio-economic disadvantage. These focus on maximising the financial resources available to households, amplifying the voices of people with lived experience, and working with our network to achieve meaningful change.

We won't stop until our city-region is free from poverty.

**Work includes:**

- [Local anti-poverty strategies: good practice and effective approaches](#)
- [Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign](#)
- [Money Advice Referral Tools](#), supporting people to access advice and maximise their income
- [Money Matters programme](#), providing debt and benefit advice in schools
- [Fortnightly newsletters](#)

Further information can be found by visiting <https://www.gmpovertyaction.org/>.

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Interviews available with Graham Whitham.