

COUNCIL MOTION

14 September 2023

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Lloyd-Johnson

SECONDED BY: Councillor Pugh

TITLE: Two Child Benefits Cap

We read with great sadness that Government figures for 2020-21 show that in Sefton 9501 (16%) of children and young people aged 0-19 were living in relative poverty¹. Relative poverty is defined by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as, “where households have less than 60% of contemporary median income².”

The Department for Work and Pensions puts the 60% figure at just £202 per week for a lone parent with one child or £367 per week for a couple with 2 children³.

We believe that this situation is unsustainable, particularly as economic turmoil continues in the United Kingdom. We are in a cost-of-living crisis and the Government should be acting to protect those in society who are most vulnerable. There can be few more vulnerable than children born into homes who simply do not have enough income to pay for the most basic items and services.

The two-child benefit cap prevents parents from claiming child tax credit or universal credit for any third or subsequent child born after April 2017⁴. It has affected an estimated 1.5 million children⁵.

We believe the two-child benefit cap is economically misguided, societally damaging and immoral.

This Council notes;

House of Commons Library data shows that if the cap was removed it would lift 270,000 households out of poverty at a cost of £1.4 billion⁶.

Poverty in childhood has been strongly linked to detrimental effects in later life. Those born into poverty are proportionally more likely to suffer homelessness, addiction issues and family breakdown⁷.

This Council resolves to;

Put on record its support for the removal of the two-child benefit cap.

¹ <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/6096/childhood-poverty-strategy-2022.pdf>

² <https://www.jrf.org.uk/about-us/what-is-poverty>

³ <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/data/poverty-thresholds/>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jul/16/two-child-benefit-cap-explainer>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jul/16/two-child-benefit-cap-explainer>

⁶ <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/61220/the-twochild-benefit-cap>

⁷ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/about-us/what-is-poverty>

Ask the Council's Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor and Shadow Chancellor expressing these views and making them aware of the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy.

Ask the Council's Chief Executive to write to each of the Members of Parliament representing areas within the borough, expressing the Council's support for the scrapping of the two-child benefit cap.

Release, through the Council's existing press mechanisms, a public statement that makes clear that councillors have resolved that they support the removal of the two-child benefit cap.