



NORTH TYNESIDE  
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To:

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**Chronicle Live**

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## 2 child benefit cap

The King's speech, from our new Labour government, set out some welcome changes to our legislative process. The New Deal for workers and the Child Well bill is both positive. However, there was almost nothing on social security. The cruel two-child benefit cap stays.

This cap restricts universal credit or child tax-credit payments to the first two children as from April 2017. It applies to families whether in or out of work. There are some exceptions. The policy brought in by George Osborne was meant to incentivise those claiming benefit to move into work or take more hours. The statistics show this has not been the case in fact, it has become one of the main drivers of poverty. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies it affects 2 million children, one in nine children, and will encompass another 700,000 more by the end of this Parliament. .

The new government has set up a task force to develop a strategy to tackle child poverty. This is to be welcomed. But do we need a task force to tell us what appears to be glaringly obvious. The impact of the two-child limit is having a devastating effect on many families. Lifting it would be an instant win for Labour and those who are struggling.

It is estimated it would cost £2.5 billion a year to lift the cap. However, Labour has stated it cannot commit to removing the cap due to the state of the public finances. Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Darren Jones, has said Labour does not have a spare £3 billion a year to abolish it. Yet there appears to be a spare £3 billion to give to the war in the Ukraine every year 'for as long as it takes.' This reinforces the message that children in poverty don't count and state finances are better directed elsewhere abroad.



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The UK is one of the very few countries in Europe where help for children is reliant on the actions of their parents. This should not be. Child poverty shouldn't be about politics. All children should matter. We need to allow children to have happy and fulfilled childhoods. The new Pensions Secretary has called child poverty "a stain on our society". We need to ensure this stain is removed. Our children are our future.

There have been four amendments put to the King's speech. Some are cross party. The SNP has tabled a motion to end the limit. Let's hope this is successful. The children in poverty can't wait any longer.

**Sincerely,**

**Cathy Davis**

North Tyneside Community Independent



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