# UK's Two-Child Benefit Cap Sparks Controversy and Criticism



The two-child benefit cap, a policy limiting child tax credits and universal credits to the first two children in most households, has sparked significant debate in the UK. Introduced in April 2017, the cap denies more than £3,000 annually to families with a third or subsequent child born after this date.

On May 21, 2024, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, criticized the policy as "cruel," deeming it neither moral nor necessary. Welby argued that it contradicts societal values and negatively impacts children's long-term health, wellbeing, and education. His comments received support from shadow health secretary Wes Streeting but criticism from Tory MPs, who objected to church leaders interfering in politics.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has committed to maintaining the cap if the Conservative party remains in power, while Labour leader Keir Starmer has resisted calls to abolish it, despite pressure from within his party and other political figures like Gordon Brown.

The policy has been under scrutiny from various charities and experts, who argue it exacerbates child poverty. Official figures show approximately 24,000 households claim child benefits for six or more children at a yearly taxpayer cost of £150 million. The policy faces calls for reform due to its perceived harsh impact on large families.