# Kemi Badenoch defends two-child benefit cap amid Labour’s push to abolish it



Kemi Badenoch has issued a staunch defence of the two-child benefit cap, adamantly opposing proposals to abolish it. In her remarks, Badenoch characterised the cap as a necessary measure amidst escalating welfare spending, stating that it is "right and fair" for taxpayers not to bear the financial burden of families that exceed what they can afford. Speaking on the BBC's *Sunday With Laura Kuenssberg*, she dismissed promises from political opponents to remove the cap as "nonsense," illustrating her frustration with a political discourse that seems disconnected from fiscal reality.

Badenoch’s comments arise as Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer confronts significant internal pressure to reconsider the cap. Starmer has instructed officials to explore its removal, a move purportedly aimed at alleviating child poverty, but one that is fraught with troubling fiscal implications. Divisions within Labour are apparent, as some MPs demand a rollback on welfare cuts that could negatively affect 80,000 individuals reliant on disability benefits. The ongoing negotiations showcase a troubling tension between addressing social concerns and the economic dangers of irresponsible policymaking.

While some may view efforts to expand welfare as progressive, they risk undermining vital economic principles. Proposals aimed at reinstating winter fuel payments for affluent pensioners could cost around £5 billion, which raises questions about prioritising the working-class families desperately seeking genuine support amid Labour's wavering commitments. Badenoch cautions that such an expansive agenda could "bankrupt" the country, emphasising the need for the government to manage public finances with integrity and discipline.

The implications of potential changes to the two-child cap resonate deeply within the current socio-economic landscape of Britain. Introduced by the Conservatives in 2017 as part of austerity measures, the cap has drawn heavy fire for potentially exacerbating child poverty. Experts warn that maintaining the cap could lead to 4.8 million children living in poverty by 2029-30. Conversely, reports suggest that removing the cap would lift 500,000 children out of poverty, increasing pressure on Labour to take decisive action for child welfare, which could lead to dangerous overextensions of their fiscal commitments.

The debate over the cap serves as a microcosm of broader concerns regarding fiscal responsibility and the sustainability of welfare commitments in an era of economic uncertainty. With welfare expenditures projected to skyrocket to approximately £316 billion for the 2025/26 financial year—£174.9 billion earmarked for pensioners alone—the ongoing struggle to balance support for vulnerable demographics with economic viability is stark. Badenoch insisted that while a supportive welfare system is essential, it must also be sustainable. She affirmed, "The two-child benefit cap is reasonable; it's the right thing to do," underscoring a position that prioritises economic stability over superficial welfare expansion.

As the political landscape shifts ahead of the next election, both the Conservative and Labour parties find themselves at a critical juncture, grappling with how to navigate the treacherous waters of welfare reform amid fiscal constraints. The outcomes of these discussions will profoundly affect millions of families across the UK, highlighting the urgent need for responsible governance that prioritises genuine support over political posturing in an increasingly challenging economic climate.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14748733/Kemis-warning-Dont-lots-babies-you-afford-Tory-leader-throws-gauntlet-Farage-Starmer-insists-two-child-benefit-cap-fair.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/5b951d4f-1cd5-4b7a-bd2d-ef4b820de9bf> - Nigel Farage, leader of Reform UK, has pledged to lift the two-child benefit cap and fully reinstate winter fuel payments, a move estimated to cost up to £5 billion. This proposal has intensified tensions within the Labour government, with Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Chancellor Rachel Reeves cautiously considering these policies. While Starmer acknowledges the importance of supporting pensioners and addressing child poverty, there is uncertainty about the implementation timeline. Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner suggests raising taxes on the wealthy to offset costs and asserts unity within the cabinet, despite internal disagreements. Farage aims to position Reform UK as the voice of working people and capitalize on mounting dissatisfaction with Labour. Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch supports winter fuel payments in principle but opposes universal distribution to the wealthy, as her party faces declining poll numbers. The debate highlights deep divisions and fiscal constraints across political lines ahead of the next election.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/948a4d12-1543-4d1a-b288-97433f74a01d> - UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer is considering abolishing the two-child benefit cap, a move that could cost the government £3 billion and significantly impact the upcoming autumn Budget. The proposal aims to address growing concerns about child poverty and placate Labour MPs discontented with ongoing welfare reforms. Senior ministers, including Work and Pensions Minister Liz Kendall and Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson, reportedly support the idea. However, the delay in releasing the government’s child poverty strategy indicates fiscal caution, especially as Chancellor Rachel Reeves faces mounting pressure to manage public spending amid rising government borrowing. Labour's proposed welfare cuts, set for a parliamentary vote next month, may strip 80,000 people of disability benefits and have sparked internal party rebellion by over 160 MPs. Starmer is attempting to balance appeasing critics with maintaining his rightward political strategy to counter threats from Reform UK. Additionally, he has signaled a partial reversal on the plan to end winter fuel payments for 10 million pensioners, initially expected to save £1.5 billion. Experts predict 4.8 million children will be in poverty by 2029-30 if the benefit cap remains, intensifying calls within Labour to act decisively on child welfare.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/133cc588-523e-4674-bc3b-f2fb8497ac57> - Kemi Badenoch, a contender for the Tory leadership, has sparked controversy by suggesting that the UK's statutory maternity pay is 'excessive'. Her comments were opposed by rivals Robert Jenrick, James Cleverly, and Tom Tugendhat, who voiced their support for the current system. Badenoch also claimed that cultural values are not all 'equally valid', specifically criticizing recent immigrants hostile to Israel. Following backlash, she softened her stance on maternity pay, emphasizing the need to address business regulation burdens. The debate occurs amid the Conservatives' annual conference in Birmingham, with Badenoch contesting to succeed Rishi Sunak as party leader. Jenrick, considered the frontrunner, has prioritized immigration reforms and the NHS in his campaign. The leadership contest will see the Tory MPs shortlist two candidates, with the final selection made by party members, and the result announced on November 2. The conference will also feature appearances by Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, both former premiers.
5. <https://news.sky.com/story/angela-rayner-wont-speculate-over-possible-changes-to-two-child-benefit-cap-13317525> - Angela Rayner, Deputy Prime Minister, has declined to speculate on reports that the government is considering exempting children under five from the two-child benefit cap. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is reportedly exploring this change, along with other potential adjustments such as exempting parents of disabled children and increasing child benefit payments for parents of young children. Rayner acknowledged the high levels of child poverty under the Conservatives and stated that the government is committed to reducing it. However, she refused to comment on specific measures, emphasizing the need to look at the evidence and deliver where a real impact can be made. The two-child cap, introduced in 2015 as part of austerity measures, restricts parents from claiming tax credits or Universal Credit for their third and subsequent children.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/08/14/starmer-may-be-ready-end-two-child-benefit-cap/> - The UK government has opened the door to scrapping the two-child benefit cap following the first meeting of its child poverty taskforce. The taskforce, led by Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall and Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson, will consider potential social security reforms to alleviate poverty, including abolishing the two-child limit. This development comes amid pressure from left-wing MPs and campaigners who argue that removing the cap would be the most cost-effective way to reduce child poverty in the UK. The two-child limit, introduced in 2017, prevents parents from claiming child tax credit or universal credit for their third and subsequent children. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer had previously ruled out scrapping the cap due to economic implications but is now facing internal and external pressure to reconsider.
7. <https://news.sky.com/story/treasury-warns-of-economic-fallout-as-demands-grow-to-ditch-two-child-benefit-cap-13182782> - A Treasury minister has warned of the economic fallout from unfunded spending commitments as demands grow to ditch the two-child benefit cap. Speaking on Sky News, James Murray emphasized the importance of fiscal responsibility, highlighting the market turmoil triggered by Liz Truss's 2022 mini-budget. Some rebel Labour MPs are preparing to move an amendment to the King's Speech calling for the controversial policy to be scrapped. The two-child cap, introduced by the Conservatives in 2017, restricts child tax credit and universal credit to the first two children in most households. Critics argue it contributes to rising levels of child poverty, with larger families unable to claim about £3,200 a year per extra child. The Save the Children charity estimates abolishing the cap would take half a million children out of relative poverty.