



reading in the House of Lords on Friday, March 24. The Bishop of
s the limit on the benefit's scope should be removed.

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Paul Butler

On April 6, 2017, the two-child limit came into effect. This means that any family receiving Universal Credit no longer gets any additional payments for third or subsequent children born after that date.

By April 2022, the policy had impacted 359,000 households with three or more children and became the greatest contributor to families and children being pushed into poverty.

As more children are born into families which already have two children, this statistic is only increasing, with the Resolution Foundation predicting that a majority of families with three or more children will be in poverty by 2026/27.

Falling into poverty is so often unexpected. Life is unpredictable, and one does not know what obstacles lie ahead. Losing a job, falling ill, or experiencing the impact of a pandemic can happen to anyone. This can result in families relying on the safety net of Universal Credit to catch them.

However, the two-child limit means that for many families this safety net has been pulled from under them, denying them the support they need to climb out of poverty and get back on their feet.

The impact of this policy is not only being felt in the present but will have lifelong consequences. Those who experience poverty in childhood are more likely to have lower educational outcomes, and suffer from poorer mental and physical health.

They are less likely to have a high-paid job and pay tax in adulthood. They are more likely to need support from public services, making the cost of this policy far greater than any financial savings the Government make in the short-term.

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society, and it is vital that they are properly nurtured. They deserve to be equally valued and to have the best start in life – one that is free from poverty. It is simply an injustice that because of the number of children in their family, a child's future opportunities and life chances will be limited.

Every child matters, and is of equal worth in God's eyes. Jesus both welcomed children and warned us against causing them harm.

After almost a year since it was first introduced in the House of Lords, my Private Member's Bill to remove the two-child limit now has its third reading, before going forward for debate in the House of Commons.

My hope is that this Bill will bring an end to what is an immoral policy. Through the abolition of the two-child limit, children will no longer be reduced to a number; instead they will be helped to experience a childhood that allows them to flourish, giving them the foundations for a life free from poverty.

More information

- The Child Poverty Action Group has [published new research](#) into the cost of child poverty to the country, coinciding with publication today of the DWP's annual poverty statistics.
- See our [press release on the Bill's third reading](#) in the House of Lords.
- Find out more about [the Bill](#).
- Learn more about [the Church of England's work in Parliament](#).

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