

The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP  
Leader of the Labour Party and HM Official Opposition  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

18<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Dear Sir Keir,

At Aberlour, our mission is to work together to beat poverty and discrimination. I believe we share the same values of equality and social justice and the ambition to see an end to child poverty. So, I am compelled to reach out to you to urge you to think again on the two-child limit. I ask you to look at the evidence and hear the voices of those furthest away from power and privilege about the difference ending this policy would make to our poorest children and families.

Evidence published just this week by the Nuffield Foundation shows that this policy has directly contributed to rising child poverty over the last decade. The Poverty Alliance say that it represents *"the worst of the welfare reforms of the last 13 years"*. Many of your own MPs, MSPs and party members agree and have called for it to be scrapped by the next Labour government.

It is clear that the only thing the two-child limit has achieved is to push families deeper into poverty. We see the dreadful impact of this policy every day in our work with families and in communities across Scotland. We hear it in the stories of those we help through our Urgent Assistance Fund, where we support families in financial crisis with nowhere left to turn.

Families affected by the two-child limit tell us about the ever-increasing financial pressure they are under and the hardship they face. We witness the effect it has on children's physical health, on parents' mental health and the hopelessness that families feel.

Parents like Caroline\*, whose son has had bronchitis twice in a year due to poor health, who prioritises her children and makes sure they are fed as she survives on their leftovers at meal times. Caroline says: *"It makes you feel like a crap mum. I should be able to provide for my kids."*

Quite simply the two-child policy has pushed families to breaking point. This in turn only serves to exacerbate the additional challenges in families' lives and creates more pressure and demand on our social work, housing and health services.

The majority of families affected by the two-child limit have a parent either in work, who is disabled or is caring for younger children. The effect of ending the two-child limit would be to put more money in families' pockets. Families would be less reliant on food banks and charities. It would bring economic and social benefit.

Any investment in social security is, in effect, an investment in our communities, in our citizens and in our children. We know that more money in people's pockets means more money in local

economies. This is not a binary choice between ending poverty or driving growth. We can do both at the same time.

It shouldn't be controversial. In fact, this should be one of the easier choices as Prime Minister if you are committed to championing equality and social justice. The truth is poverty is a political choice. Children do not choose to grow up in poverty; but governments make choices that either improve people's lives or don't. What will you choose to do?

As Prime Minister you can choose to undo those policies which have created ever greater misery for the poorest in our society. You can choose to create policies which will make life better for the millions of families living in poverty across the UK, traumatised by more than a decade of austerity. Or you can choose to keep families trapped in poverty.

I firmly believe, like many of your colleagues, a Labour government committed to tackling child poverty must end the two-child limit. At Aberlour, we are committed to 'Be Brave' for children and families we work with. My challenge to you is to be brave for our poorest children and families across the UK. Make the bold and necessary choices that will improve the lives of families and lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty.

I believe this must begin by bringing an end to the two-child limit.

I would be pleased to meet with you and your team to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,



SallyAnn Kelly OBE

Chief Executive

\*Name has been changed