

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 17 JULY 2024

LATE QUESTION WITH RESPONSE

1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) recently released statistics showing a record 1.6 million children are affected by the cruel 2 child benefit cap, introduced by the Conservatives in 2017. 2,300 households in Southwark are affected.

The Liberal Democrats have consistently advocated for its abolition, locally and nationally. Last year we submitted an amendment to a motion which would have committed the council to also advocating for its abolition, but the Labour group unanimously voted against it.

With a new government and growing calls across the political spectrum to end this policy, will the leader now join me in calling for the Government to scrap the two child benefit cap?

RESPONSE

I welcome the new Labour government under Sir Keir Starmer and the speed with which it is unpicking 14 years of Conservative and Liberal Democrat failure. In its first few days this Labour government has scrapped the disgraceful Rwanda scheme, lifted the absurd ban on onshore wind power, re-introduced vital targets for new homes, announced a new sovereign wealth fund and reset the relationship with the NHS to end the junior doctors' strike. There is clearly much more to do. The scale of failure by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments over the last fourteen years is unprecedented and it will inevitably take time to rebuild our national economy and public services.

The dismantling of our national social security system by the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives in government has been one of their worst and most harmful failings. I look forward to working with this Labour government to undo that damage and rebuild a fair system.