Scottish Fiscal Commission

Mitigating the two-child limit and the Scottish Budget

January 2025

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Foreword

The Scottish Fiscal Commission is the independent fiscal institution for Scotland. Our statutory duty is to provide independent and official forecasts of Scottish GDP, devolved tax revenues, and devolved social security spending to inform the Scottish Budget.

Our forecasts represent the collective view of the Scottish Fiscal Commission, comprising the four Commissioners. We take full responsibility for the judgements that underpin them.

This report presents our forecast for the cost of mitigating the Universal Credit two-child limit in Scotland. This policy was announced as part of the Scottish Government's Budget on 4 December 2024 but it was not included in our Budget forecasts as we were informed too late in the process. We are publishing this report now to assist the Scottish Parliament with its scrutiny of the Budget.

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7 January 2025

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Mitigating the two-child limit and the Scottish Budget

Introduction and Summary

1 The Scottish Government's Budget statement on 4 December 2024 included the announcement of a policy to mitigate the two-child limit in Universal Credit. This was not included in our forecasts prepared for the Budget. We would have liked to include a costing in our forecasts but the Scottish Government did not inform us of the policy until 28 November 2024. This was very late in the Budget process and a week and a day after the deadline for final policy measures. At this point it was too late for us to produce a full costing that took account of behavioural responses and other factors. Our forecast and spending tables did not include the cost of this policy.

2 In our forecast publication we did provide illustrative estimates and highlighted the policy as a fiscal risk which would further increase the share of resource spending allocated to social security. This report presents a more detailed costing, and updated figures showing the effect of the policy on overall social security spending and the impact it has on the Budget.

3 The Scottish Government has announced that it plans to implement mitigation in 2026 but will "seek to accelerate the timetable if at all possible".[1] Our costing assumes that mitigation will be paid from April 2026, with full-year costs for 2026-27. The Scottish Government has committed £3 million for systems development in 2025-26, but there is no effect on the forecasts we prepared for the budget year, as our forecasts do not include administration or development costs.[2]

Figure 1: Two-child limit mitigation costing and updated effect of social security on the Scottish Budget

£ million	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Cost of two-child limit mitigation	155	171	184	198
Original social security forecast	7,471	7,922	8,321	8,754
Updated social security forecast	7,626	8,093	8,506	8,952
Original effect of social security on the Budget [1]	-1,453	-1,475	-1,476	-1,463
Updated effect of social security on the Budget	-1,608	-1,646	-1,660	-1,661

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission.

[1] The 'effect on the Budget' is the difference between total devolved social security spending and the funding received through social security Block Grant Adjustments.

[1] Scottish Government (2024) Scottish Budget 2025 to 2026

[2] Scottish Government (2024) Scrapping the two-child limit

4 Assuming that the Scottish Government is able to implement its intention to make mitigation payments for all affected children, we now estimate that the cost would be £155 million in 2026-27. By 2029-30, mitigation payments would be being made for around 50,000 children at a cost of £198 million. The 2029-30 figure includes an additional £10 million to allow for potential behavioural responses, for example, higher take-up of Universal Credit by families with more than two children.

5 The estimated costs of the mitigation policy increase our forecast of total social security spending from £7.5 billion to £7.6 billion for 2026-27, and from £8.8 billion to £9.0 billion for 2029-30.

6 The gap between total social security spending and the associated Block Grant Adjustment (BGA) funding received from the UK Government can be considered as the net effect of social security on the Scottish Budget. The Scottish Government will not receive additional BGA funding for the mitigation of the two-child limit, so the total costs contribute to the net effect of social security on the Scottish Budget. In December 2024 we reported the gap between social security spending and the corresponding BGA funding as around £1.5 billion from 2026-27 onwards. With the addition of the new policy we now expect this to be £1.6 billion in 2026-27, rising to £1.7 billion in 2029-30.

7 By 2029-30 the additional spending on the proposed mitigation payments would account for 0.3 per cent of the Scottish Government's total resource funding. This would increase the share spent on social security to 14.9 per cent, with a corresponding reduction in the amount available to fund other public services. This reflects the Scottish Government's approach to disability payments and its priorities to use the devolved social security system to support those on low incomes and pensioners and tackle child poverty, but it does mean that spending in other areas is constrained.

Background

8 The two-child limit was introduced by the UK Government in April 2017, with the intention that families should only receive means-tested state support for their first two children. This was implemented as a limit on the number of child elements that can be included in the assessment of a household's Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit entitlement.

9 It has been phased in gradually, applying only where a family has three or more dependent children and one or more of these children were born after 6 April 2017.

10 This means that the scope of the two-child limit currently includes families where the youngest child is aged between seven and eight, but will have extended to children under nine by April 2026, and to children under 13 by the end of our five-year forecast horizon in March 2030.

11 In April 2024, 42,000 Scottish households with three or more dependent children were receiving Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit, of which 27,000 were in scope for the two-child limit due to having children born after 6 April 2017, with 26,000 households having had the limit applied to their award of Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit.[3]

12 The Scottish Government is proposing to identify the affected households and mitigate the two-child limit through payments equivalent to the value of a Universal Credit child element. At current 2024-25 rates, a child element has an annual value of around £3,500.

Costing

Costing structure

13 Our costing is presented in five steps:

- Our assumptions on the policy intent, design, timing and implementation
- Estimates of the number of children currently affected by the two-child limit
- Our forecast of how numbers will grow over time
- The amount of mitigation that will be paid for each child
- The potential additional spending resulting from behavioural responses.

Policy and implementation assumptions

14 The Scottish Government has announced that it plans to implement mitigation in 2026 but will "seek to accelerate the timetable if at all possible".[4] Our costing assumes that mitigation will be paid from April 2026, with full-year costs for 2026-27. If mitigation is implemented later in 2026 then costs in the first year will be lower, and if earlier implementation is achieved there will be some costs in 2025-26.

15 The Scottish Government is seeking the co-operation of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in implementing the mitigation policy.[5] We assume that there will be sufficient data sharing established to allow for identification of families eligible for a mitigation payment, and that relevant UK legislative steps will be taken to ensure that these payments are not treated as income in the reserved social security system. In particular, we assume mitigation payments will not be included in the assessment of whether a family is subject to the overall Benefit Cap.

[3] DWP and HMRC (2024) Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit claimants: statistics related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children, April 2024

[4] Scottish Government (2024) Scottish Budget 2025 to 2026

[5] Scottish Government (2024) Two-child limit: Letter to UK Government

16 We assume that the Scottish Government will be able to implement mitigation in a way that reaches all the affected families who are in receipt of Universal Credit. Almost all the affected families will be eligible for Scottish Child Payment (SCP), which we expect to have a take-up rate of over 95 per cent, so we do not expect that there will be significant barriers to achieving very high coverage, assuming that the relevant data sharing arrangements with DWP are put in place.

17 There will be some households who are affected by the two-child limit, but do not receive Universal Credit. This can happen where their income is too high to qualify when only two child elements are included their Universal Credit assessment, but where they would be eligible for a small award if their assessment included three child elements. We assume that mitigation will not be paid for these households.[6]

Numbers currently affected by the two-child limit

18 DWP and HMRC publish annual statistics showing the number of households affected by the two-child limit. The latest statistics show that in April 2024, 42,000 Scottish households with three or more dependent children were receiving Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit, of which 27,000 were in scope for the two-child limit due to having children born after 6 April 2017. Exemptions were applied for at least one child in 1,700 of these households, and 26,000 households had a child for whom the two-child limit had been applied.[7]

19 Some of these households will have four or more children, with more than one child in scope for the limit. Allowing for some families having more than one child in scope and for some children being exempt, we estimate that in April 2024 there were around 32,000 children in Scotland who would have been eligible for the proposed mitigation.

Forecast growth in numbers affected

20 The number of households and children will grow over time as the scope of the two-child limit extends. We forecast this using four assumptions.

21 Firstly, we assume that the total number of households with three or more dependent children receiving Universal Credit will fall by around 1 per cent each year, starting from the 42,000 households reported for April 2024, and falling to 38,000 by 2029-30. This is broadly in line with the projected fall in the child population in Scotland and with our forecasts for Scottish Child Payment, which assume that the recent downward trend in the proportion of children who are in households receiving Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit will level out.

[6] Note that these families could qualify for Universal Credit if their income was slightly lower, so they are a group for which a behavioural response to the mitigation policy could carry additional costs.

[7] DWP and HMRC (2024) Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit claimants: statistics related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children, April 2024

22 Secondly, we allow for an increasing proportion of these households to be in scope for the two-child limit due to having children born after 6 April 2017. At the start of April 2024, the two-child limit could apply to children aged up to seven, covering 64 per cent of the families with more than two children receiving Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit (27,000 out of 42,000).

23 We estimate that this coverage will rise from 64 per cent in April 2024 to 94 per cent in 2029-30, with faster growth in the early years of the forecast. By the end of 2029-30 the two-child limit will have extended to cover families where the youngest child is aged up to 13. This only covers around two thirds of the age range for dependent children, but a much higher proportion of households will be in scope. This is because by the time the youngest child reaches their teens it is likely that the eldest children will be reaching adulthood, reducing the number of dependent children in the household.

24 The growing scope of the two-child limit gives a forecast of 28,000 households affected in 2024-25, rising to 37,000 by 2029-30.

25 Thirdly we estimate the number of children in scope in each household. Where a family has four or more children, the two-child limit may be applied to more than one, but only where the child was born after 6 April 2017. We estimate that the average family size for Scottish households receiving Universal Credit, with three or more dependent children is around 3.4 children. This means the average number of children potentially affected in each household will reach 1.4 when the two-child limit is fully in place, but will be lower in the early years of the costing.[8] This gives an estimate of 35,000 children for 2024-25, rising to 51,000 by 2029-30.

26 Finally, we assume that an exemption from the two-child limit will apply in 6 per cent of households, in line with DWP and HMRC statistics. This reduces the estimated number of children to 34,000 in 2024-25 and to 49,000 in 2029-30.

27 Figure 2 presents a summary of our assumptions and forecast of the number of children affected by the two-child limit.

[8] For example, in 2024 if a family has four children aged 6, 8, 10 and 12, it could receive three child elements as only the youngest is in scope for the two-child limit, but by 2026 a family with children of the same ages would be restricted to only two child elements.

Figure 2: Forecast numbers of households and children affected by the two-child limit

Costing steps	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Households with three or more dependent children receiving Universal Credit (thousands)	42	41	41	40	40	40
Proportion of these households in scope for two-child limit (per cent)	68	75	81	86	90	94
Average number of children in scope per household	1.25	1.31	1.34	1.36	1.37	1.38
Exemptions per household	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Number of children eligible for mitigation (thousands)	34	39	42	45	47	49
Assumed coverage (per cent)	0	0	100	100	100	100
Number of children receiving mitigation (thousands)	0	0	42	45	47	49

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission.

Forecast value of mitigation payments

28 We assume that the mitigation payment for each child will match the value of the Universal Credit child element. This has a monthly value of £287.92 in 2024-25 and is uprated annually in line with CPI inflation.

Figure 3: Forecast value and uprating of Universal Credit child element

Inflation in:	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Benefit rates in:	**2024-25**	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**
CPI inflation forecast (per cent)	6.7	1.7	2.7	2.2	2.1	2.1
Monthly UC child element (£)	287.92	292.81	300.72	307.34	313.79	320.38
Annual value of UC child element (£)	3,455	3,514	3,609	3,688	3,765	3,845

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission.

29 We assume that mitigation payments will be made for 2026-27 onwards, at the same rate as the Universal Credit child element. This gives an estimated cost of £152 million for 2026-27, rising to £189 million in 2029-30.

Figure 4: Estimated cost of mitigation policy before behavioural adjustment

£ million	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Static costing	152	166	177	189

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission.

Behavioural response

30 The final stage of the costing is to make some allowance for potential behavioural responses to the introduction of mitigation payments.

31 There are several different ways people could respond which would increase the costs of the mitigation payment. Figure 5 sets out the details of different ways families could respond in the short term. In the longer term, beyond the scope of our five-year forecasts, there may also be wider benefits in terms of health, educational or employment outcomes for children and parents, but in the short term we focus on the immediate changes in the incentives around Universal Credit and Scottish Child Payment (SCP).

Figure 5: Potential behavioural effects

Title	Description
Higher UC take-up	Extra UC take-up from families who are already eligible but not claiming. These families would also become eligible for SCP.
Higher UC eligibility	Extra UC receipt for families who would not have been eligible, for example, choosing to work fewer hours and hence remaining eligible for UC. These families would also be eligible for SCP.
Higher SCP take-up	Extra SCP take-up from families who already claim UC. SCP take-up is already expected to be very high, so there is not much scope for a further increase.
More births	More families may choose to have three or more children. There is some academic evidence of a small downward impact on birth rates following the introduction of the two-child limit [1].
Living arrangements	Different living arrangements or family structure in response to mitigation. For example, where two lone parents are in a relationship and have two children each, the two-child limit may be a disincentive to forming a single-family unit.
Migration within the UK	Changes in moves in and out of Scotland. For example, where a family might otherwise have moved to England, or could make a move to Scotland, the mitigation payment would change the incentives.
Fewer exemptions	If a mitigation payment is available, some parents may choose not to apply to DWP for an exemption from the two-child limit or may not pursue further if an exemption request is initially rejected.

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission.

[1] Reader, Portes and Patrick (2022) Does Cutting Child Benefits Reduce Fertility in Larger Families? Evidence from the UK's Two-Child Limit

32 In assessing the potential impacts we are using our materiality threshold of £5 million, and making a holistic judgement on the potential for additional costs. We are not attaching precise values to specific responses.

33 The potential costs associated with each household are large. For example, if one additional household with three children receives Universal Credit in 2026-27 then the cost to the Scottish Government to cover a mitigation payment for one child and Scottish Child Payment for three children would be nearly £8,000. This means that it would only take a few hundred additional families to generate £5 million of costs.

34 This also means that the incentives are large. The benefit of having even a very small Universal Credit award would typically be around £8,000 a year for a three-child family, and conversely, a family receiving a small award would face a drop in income on a similar scale if they moved off Universal Credit.

35 In isolation this could suggest that a significant behavioural response is possible, but we also note that similar incentives and 'cliff-edges' already exist for these families due to the existence of Scottish Child Payment. A three-child family today, with an income just above or below the level where they qualify for Universal Credit would already face the gain or loss of Scottish Child Payment worth around £4,000 a year if they move on or off Universal Credit.

36 Therefore, we think it is likely that the proposed mitigation payments would not generate large behavioural responses over and above the ways that families may already have adapted to the Scottish Child Payment. We also note that recent Scottish Government analysis did not find evidence of a large labour market response to the introduction and expansion of Scottish Child Payment in recent years.[9]

37 As the financial incentives facing the families potentially receiving a mitigation payment are large, and could generate material costs even if only a small number of families are involved, we have still made a small behavioural adjustment to the costing. We assume that by 2029-30 an additional 1,000 families will receive mitigation payments over and above the numbers in the static costing, and that each of these families will also receive Scottish Child Payment for three children. This is assumed to build up gradually from 2026-27 to 2029-30.

38 This adds £2 million in 2026-27, rising to £10 million in 2029-30, and increases our forecast of the total number of children receiving mitigation payments to 50,000.

Figure 6: Number of children receiving mitigation payments

Thousands	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Static costing	42	45	47	49
Including behavioural response	43	46	48	50

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission.

[9] Scottish Government (2024) Scottish Child Payment and the labour market

39 Adding in the behavioural adjustment increases the number of children receiving a payment to 50,000 in 2029-30 and the estimated costs in 2029-30 rise to £198 million. Figure 7 shows the final estimated costs and an updated forecast of total devolved social security spending, which now reaches £9.0 billion in 2029-30 once the costs of mitigating the two-child limit are included.

Figure 7: Costing with behavioural response and updated total social security forecast

£ million	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Static costing	152	166	177	189
Behavioural response	2	5	7	10
Costing including behavioural response	155	171	184	198
Original December 2024 forecast of total social security spending	7,471	7,922	8,321	8,754
Updated forecast of total social security spending	7,626	8,093	8,506	8,952

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission.

Figures may not sum because of rounding.

Uncertainty

40 While we do have a robust starting point for the number of families involved and can have some confidence in the eventual number of children per family, there is still some uncertainty about the number of children (as opposed to number of families) affected in the short term.

41 There is also potential for variation in the total number of large families on Universal Credit. We assume that this will fall roughly in line with the population. This is broadly consistent with our Scottish Child Payment forecasts, which assume a levelling out of the proportion of children who are in families receiving Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit. Our eligibility forecasts have previously proved to be too high, and if this continues to be the case, there may be fewer families with more than two children receiving Universal Credit, resulting in lower costs.

42 Conversely, there is also scope for larger behavioural responses than we have assumed, which would increase the costs.

43 The forecast is also subject to the usual economic risks around inflation and unemployment which affect the Scottish Child Payment forecast. With the mitigation payment in place, the exposure to these risks is increased by around 40 per cent compared to the current Scottish Child Payment position, as the mitigation costs are roughly 40 per cent of forecast Scottish Child Payment costs and are exposed to economic variance in similar ways.

Impact on the Scottish Budget

45 Social security spending is taking up a growing share of the Scottish Government's budget. As a result of the introduction of new payments, such as Scottish Child Payment, and the policy and delivery changes introduced for disability payments, overall social security spending exceeds the social security Block Grant Adjustment (BGA) funding received from the UK Government. The gap between spending and funding can be considered as the net effect of social security on the Scottish Budget.

46 The Scottish Government will not receive any additional BGA funding for the mitigation of the two-child limit, so the total costs contribute to the net effect of social security on the Scottish Budget. Figure 8 shows that in 2029-30, devolved social security is projected to cost £1.7 billion more than the corresponding BGA funding. This has increased from the £1.5 billion we reported in December 2024 before we accounted for this policy.

Figure 8: Effect of social security spending on the Budget

£ million	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Original effect of social security on the Budget	-1,042	-1,334	-1,453	-1,475	-1,476	-1,463
Updated effect on the Budget, of which:	-1,042	-1,334	-1,608	-1,646	-1,660	-1,661
Social security net position [1]	-263	-529	-619	-616	-601	-568
Payments unique to Scotland [2]	-618	-644	-829	-868	-898	-931
Other social security spending [3]	-162	-161	-160	-161	-162	-163

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission.

[1] The difference between spending on disability payments, Carer Support Payment, winter heating payments for adults and Employment Injury Assistance, as forecast in December 2024, and their BGAs based on the OBR's October 2024 forecasts.

[2] Scottish Child Payment, Carer's Allowance Supplement, Child Winter Heating Payment, Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment, and Best Start Grant School Age Payment, and from 2026-27, the mitigation of the two-child limit in Universal Credit. We also include spending through Discretionary Housing Payments on bedroom tax mitigation and the extra costs of the commitment to mitigating Benefit Cap deductions.

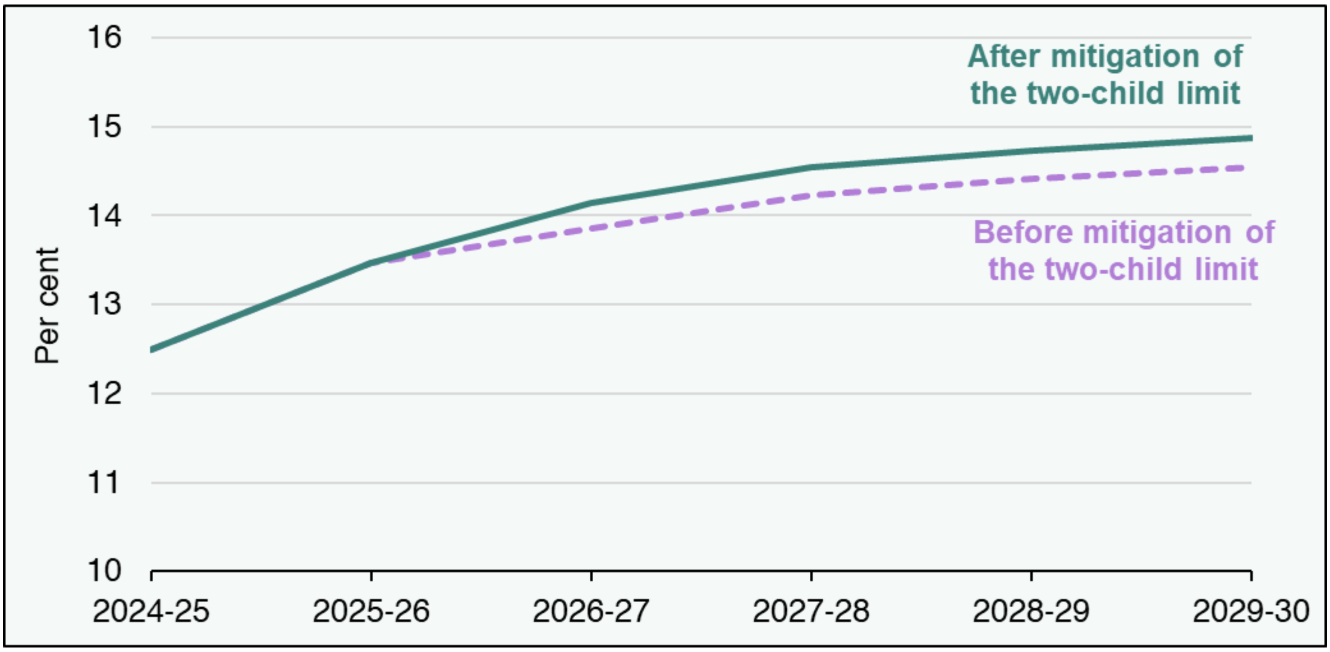
[3] Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment, Best Start Foods, Discretionary Housing Payments, Funeral Support Payment, Employability Services, and Scottish Welfare Fund. Funding for these payments comes through the general Block Grant and it is not possible to provide an estimate of funding received for individual payments.

47 In December 2024 we forecast resource funding to grow steadily both in nominal and real terms over the forecast horizon. By 2029-30, resource funding is forecast to be 21 per cent higher in nominal terms and 9 per cent higher in real terms than the latest position for 2024-25. However, after accounting for social security spending, we expected 2025-26 would see funding for public services fall by 0.3 per cent in real terms compared to the previous year.[10]

48 In December 2024 we forecast the Scottish Government would spend £7.5 billion on devolved social security in 2026-27. Therefore, the additional £155 million for mitigating the two-child limit leads to a relatively small increase of 2 per cent in overall social security spending. However, it contributes to the trend of social security spending taking up an increasing share of the resource budget, leaving less to fund public services.

Figure 9: Devolved social security as a share of resource funding, 2024-25 to 2029-30

Social security is a growing share of the resource budget, and even more so with the mitigation of the two-child limit



Description of Figure 9: Line chart showing devolved social security spending as a share of resource funding, from 2024-25 to 2029-30, before and after accounting for the mitigation of the two-child limit. Both lines have a positive slope, showing the share rises over time, but flattening towards the end. From 2026-27 the lines diverge, and by 2029-30 social security represents a share of resource funding 0.3 percentage points greater than without mitigation of the two-child limit.

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission.

49 Resource funding is forecast to grow over the next five years. This policy will have to be funded fully from within the Scottish Budget as it is a Scottish Government decision to take a different approach in Scotland to the rest of the UK. Figure 10 shows that after taking account of this policy, resource funding for public services is forecast to grow more slowly than we expected in December 2024, particularly in 2026-27, when the payment is introduced.

[10] See Figure 4 in Scottish Fiscal Commission (2024) Scotland’s Economic and Fiscal Forecasts

50 Figure 10 also shows that the level of funding for public services is lower from 2026-27 onwards as a result of the policy, but the real-terms growth rate after 2027-28 is broadly similar both before and after the policy introduction.

Figure 10: Funding impacts of the mitigation of the two-child limit, 2024-25 to 2029-30

£ million unless specified	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Resource funding	49,813	51,429	53,921	55,645	57,740	60,178
Forecast social security spending	blank	blank	blank	blank	blank	blank
Before two-child limit mitigation	6,224	6,930	7,471	7,922	8,321	8,754
After two-child limit mitigation	6,224	6,930	7,626	8,093	8,506	8,952
Resource funding for public services	blank	blank	blank	blank	blank	blank
Before two-child limit mitigation	43,589	44,499	46,450	47,724	49,418	51,424
After two-child limit mitigation	43,589	44,499	46,296	47,553	49,234	51,225
Resource funding for public services (2024-25 prices)	blank	blank	blank	blank	blank	blank
Before two-child limit mitigation	43,589	43,462	44,491	44,833	45,528	46,459
After two-child limit mitigation	43,589	43,462	44,343	44,672	45,358	46,280
Real terms growth (per cent)	blank	blank	blank	blank	blank	blank
Before two-child limit mitigation	blank	-0.3	2.4	0.8	1.5	2.0
After two-child limit mitigation	blank	-0.3	2.0	0.7	1.5	2.0

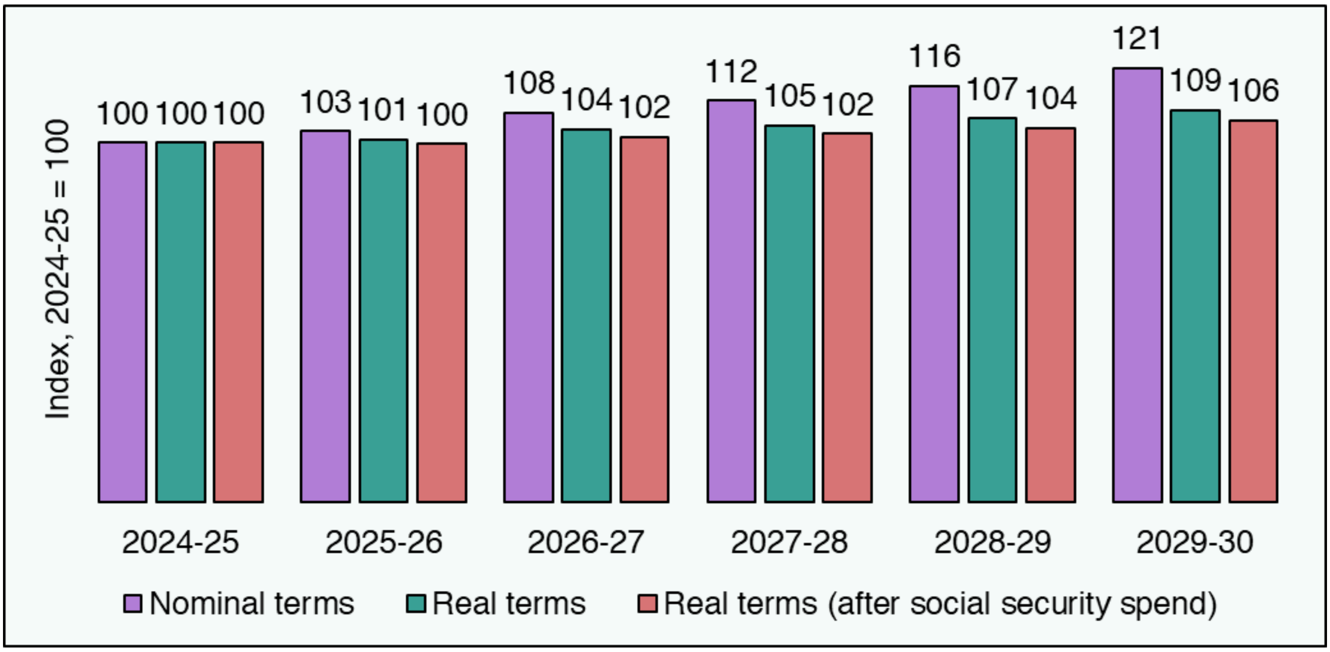
Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission, Scottish Government.

Real-terms amounts are calculated using the forecast growth in the GDP deflators from the OBR's October 2024 forecasts.

51 Figure 11 updates the analysis presented in Figure 2.11 of our December 2024 report to include the policy to mitigate the two-child limit. Including it means that, comparing funding to 2024-25 levels, we are now seeing growth in resource funding for public services that is 0.4 percentage points lower by 2029-30 than we expected in December 2024.

Figure 11: Resource funding outlook, 2024-25 to 2029-30

Resource funding will increase in the next five years, but less so after social security



Description of Figure 11: Column chart showing resource funding until 2029-30, in nominal and real terms, and in real terms after social security spend, indexed to the latest funding position of 2024-25. It will grow by 21 per cent in nominal terms in the next five years, but only 9 per cent in real terms. Resource funding for public services excluding social security falls slightly in 2025-26 in real terms before increasing more slowly in the next four years.

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission, Scottish Government.

Real-terms amounts are calculated using the forecast growth in the GDP deflators from the OBR's October 2024 forecasts.

Additional information

Abbreviations

BGA	Block Grant Adjustment
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HMRC	His Majesty's Revenue and Customs
OBR	Office for Budget Responsibility
SCP	Scottish Child Payment
SFC	Scottish Fiscal Commission
UC	Universal Credit

A full glossary of terms is available on our website: Glossary | Scottish Fiscal Commission.

Professional standards

The SFC is committed to fulfilling our role as an Independent Fiscal Institution, in line with the principles set out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).[11]

The SFC also seeks to adhere to the highest possible standards for analysis. While we do not produce official statistics, we voluntarily comply as far as possible with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics. Further details and our statement of voluntary compliance can be found on our website.[12]

Correspondence and enquiries

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All charts and tables in this publication have also been made available in spreadsheet form on our website. For technical enquiries about the analysis and data presented in this paper please contact the responsible analyst:

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[11] OECD (2014) Recommendation of the Council on Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions

[12] Scottish Fiscal Commission (2022) Statement of Voluntary Compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics and Error Policy

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