The Government’s view is that providing support for a maximum of two children or qualifying young persons in Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit ensures fairness between claimants on the one hand and, on the other, those who support themselves solely through work.

In recognition that some claimants are not able to make the same choices about the number of children in their family, the Government has put in place exceptions for certain groups.

We fully recognise that the exception for non-consensual conception is a very sensitive issue. The Government has always been clear that this should be, and is, delivered in the most effective, compassionate way, with the right safeguards in place.

The Government released statistics related to the operation of the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children on 28 June 2018. These statistics can be found at the following link:


The above publication does not contain any information relating to those who have applied for an exception but have not met the criteria to qualify. The definition of an application is problematic for a number of reasons. Claimants to both Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit (in which this policy also applies) can make enquiries about their potential eligibility for an exception and it is not clear at what stage such an enquiry would be considered as a potential application or not. Also, within Child Tax Credit, some exceptions for multiple births are determined automatically by the Tax Credit system rather than requiring claimants to make contact with HMRC.

There are no circumstances in which a claimant would be refused an exception where they meet the conditions and have provided relevant evidence to support their request.
The Government has committed to publishing statistics related to the operation of this policy on an annual basis; we will therefore publish the next iteration of the above release in the summer of 2019.

Best wishes,

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS