

The Family Cap and the Rape Clause: where now?

Media Release
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On Thursday the 13th of April we launched a petition alongside Engender and Rape Crisis Scotland, calling for the now notorious Family Cap and Rape Clause Policy to be scrapped. 100,000 signatures would have all but guaranteed a debate in Westminster, but before we'd even hit 25,000 a snap General Election had been called for June 8th and our hopes of securing a debate faded fast.

No-one saw this coming. It is unprecedented, so much so that even the ever helpful staff at Westminster didn't have the answers we needed off hand. A return phone call later in the day confirmed that rather than the policy, it is the petition – and as a result the debate – that is likely to be scrapped.

When the committee who deal with petitions at Westminster are re-elected (probably in July) they may choose that there are some petitions they want to carry forward, but they might well wipe the slate clean and start again. We don't know for certain, but we think the second option is more likely.

Does this mean we are giving up? In a word: no.

The Family Cap will undoubtedly push women and children into poverty. These new limitations to child tax credits are widely recognised as an assault on the poor, falling hardest on those who already bear the brunt of austerity cuts and 'welfare reform.'

The so called 'compassionate' exemption for women who've been raped that requires they fill out a form declaring their child was born of 'non-consensual conception' and take it to a third party for verification. Let us be clear, this is not compassionate, nor can it ever be made to be so.

Today (25th April 2017) MSPs will debate a motion put forward by the Scottish Government in opposition to both the two child limit and the associated rape clause. You can watch from roughly 2pm by clicking [here](#).

Our opposition and resistance to this policy is not going anywhere, nor – we suspect – is that of the Scottish public, poverty organisations, children's organisations and our sister organisations working to end violence against women and children.

This is a red line; watch this space.