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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TWO CHILD LIMIT AND RAPE CLAUSE ARE 'SHAMEFUL' SAY LOCAL MP & MSP

Ayr, Carrick & Cumnock MP Corri Wilson has reacted to the introduction of a two child limit and rape clause for tax credits which came into force at the start of April. Ms Wilson said that the new rules will be devastating for families who are already struggling to make ends meet and that survivors of rape are being treated with shocking disrespect.

In July 2015, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, announced in his summer budget plans to slash child tax credit payments to just two children per family and implement a 'non-consensual sex exemption', dubbed the rape clause.

The new policy requires tax credit claimants, whose third or subsequent child was conceived as a result of rape, to prove this to social workers and health professionals in order to qualify for the exemption.

Faith leaders, women's welfare groups, trade unions and child poverty campaigners have all condemned the policy, with many sexual violence support charities refusing to act as third party verifiers for the Government.

Ms Wilson said:

"These latest raft of cuts to social security mark yet another new low from this austerity-obsessed Tory government. Frankly, I am disgusted by a government that puts survivors of rape in this distressing position where they are forced to prove to the Department for Work and Pensions that their child is the product of rape in order to receive the support that they need. Theresa May should be ashamed of herself.

"The two child cap on child tax credits is a cruel and unhelpful measure which largely penalises families who are already in work. While the Tories constantly preach about the value of getting people into work, their actions show that this means nothing if they live in a country where low-earning families are deliberately targeted. This is a move driven by ideology and cruelty – nothing more.

"We now know, from independent analysis, that more than 200,000 children will be plunged into poverty across the UK as a direct result of this policy. I cannot understand how anyone, of any political persuasion, could stand by and watch as a government intentionally, with full knowledge of the results, forces innocent children into poverty.

"The rape clause gives an exemption to this two child limit where a woman can prove that her third child was conceived by rape. Forcing rape victims to relive their ordeals in front of untrained assessors, all in the name of saving the government some money, is just shameful.

"Governments should protect and support their people, not deliberately force children into poverty and cause untold suffering to survivors of rape. I therefore continue to urge the government to show some humanity and end this awful policy immediately."

Jeane Freeman, MSP for Carrick, Cumnock & Doon Valley said:

“It is barbaric that the UK Government is seeking to restrict social security support to just the first two children in a family. None of us know the day when a sudden change in personal circumstances might lead to us needing support, and families should not face poverty simply because of the size of their family. However, this is made worse by the ‘rape clause exemption’, where women will have to complete an eight page form about matters which are private and difficult. The UK Tory government shows no understanding of either poverty or violence against women. I worry about the children who will be stigmatised by this.”

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