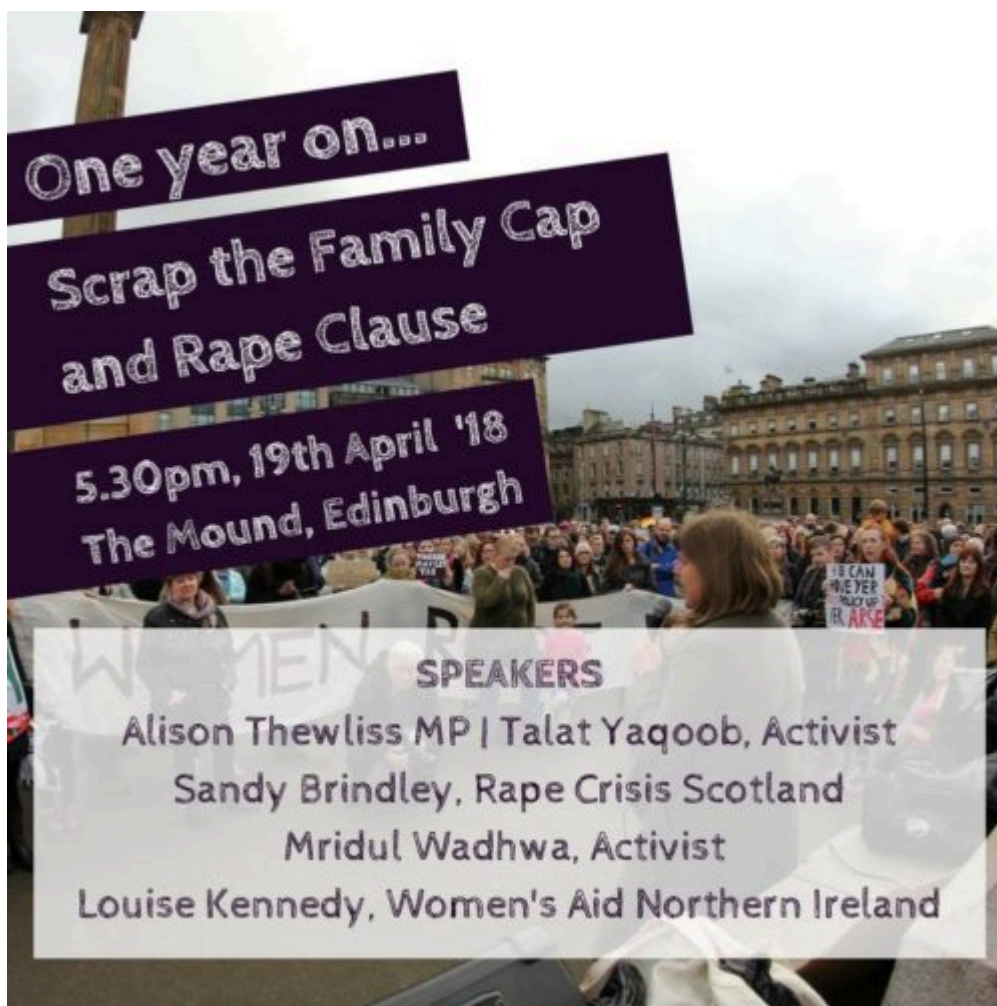


Scrap the Family Cap Demonstration planned for Thursday

A demonstration is planned for Thursday evening at 5.30pm at The Mound, demanding that the UK government changes its policy on family tax credit.



A year after the legislation introduced the family cap and associated rape clause protesters will highlight the policy which they say is widely condemned.

The policy limits the number of children that parents may claim tax credits for to just two. There is an exemption if the third or subsequent child is born as a result of rape. But

the campaigners point out that the mother must then complete an 8-page form verified by a third party to allow her to claim any benefits.

Both Rape Crisis and Scottish Women's Aid expressed their concerns about such a policy last year and said that they would not act as third party verifiers. The Royal College of Nursing also said they would do the same and that it was not appropriate for a nurse or midwife to judge whether or not a woman had been raped.



Photo from the 2017 demonstration

The organisers of the protest, who ran a similar event last year, released a statement saying : "We are determined not to let the DWP sweep this policy under the carpet, though they are making every effort to.

"The UK Government have deliberately disengaged with every bit of evidence, first-hand knowledge and opposition to this policy and it is, quite frankly, shameful.

"The two-child cap is an attack on the very concept of social security as a safety net that is supposed to be ready to catch each and every one of us if we fall. This is a policy blames the poor for their poverty and takes no account of the

unpredictability of life. People die. People leave. People lose their jobs. Any benefits system that requires you to accurately predict the details of your finances for 18 or more years, before you have a child, is unfeasible.

“And Esther McVey’s appearance in front of the Scottish Parliament’s Social Security Committee this week illustrated the alarming lack of understanding about the complexities and reality of sexual violence. Worse still, the UK Government’s reluctance to listen to survivors and those experienced in supporting survivors about the potential impact of this Policy is shameful. No woman should be forced to choose between disclosing rape possibly for the first time ever and poverty. It is a disgrace.

“We cannot get rid of the rape clause without getting rid of the entire two-child cap, so we are clear: they both must go.

“Last year, hundreds of people gathered in George Square to protest this callous UK Government policy. We told them then that our opposition was not going anywhere; a year on we invite you all to join us on Thursday 19 April at 5.30pm, on The Mound, Edinburgh to show them.”



Rt Hon Esther McVey MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, UK Government appeared

before the Scottish parliament's Social Security Committee to give evidence on welfare reform. 19 April 2018. Pic – Andrew Cowan/Scottish Parliament

During the Holyrood session on 19 April local MSP Ben Macpherson put several questions to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. You can watch an excerpt from that parliamentary session (interrupted by shouts from the public gallery) below :

Alison Thewliss MP who will speak at the event said: “We are now more than a year down the line since the introduction of the two child policy and rape clause, and still the Government is steadfast in its support of this abhorrent piece of legislation. Charities and other agencies have warned that these measures will push thousands into poverty, and be hugely damaging to women.

“During the last 12 months I have continued to ask questions of Ministers, but have been given little by way of reassurance or explanation as to how this policy can be justified.

“There remains an overwhelming amount of opposition to the two

child policy and rape clause – clearly demonstrated by the number of people due to attend Thursday’s upcoming protest in Edinburgh – which the UK Government cannot continue to ignore. Concessions have already been made in other areas, and it would be good if the two-child cap were to follow as the next U-turn”.

Sandy Brindley, Chief Executive of Rape Crisis Scotland, said: “This time last year we, alongside Scottish Women’s Aid and Engender spoke out against the two-child cap and rape clause and our opposition to these policies now is as fierce as it was back then. We maintain that hinging benefits on proving trauma isn’t a choice, it’s a disgrace and one which may well re-traumatise women.

“That the DWP have rolled out this now notorious policy in the face of widespread criticism and the refusal of any organisation in Scotland to collude as third-party verifiers is unacceptable. Our priority is and has always been survivors of sexual violence and we are deeply concerned that this policy violates their human rights, and puts their wellbeing at risk; we will therefore continue to speak out against and support all efforts to revoke the two-child cap and rape clause as a matter of urgency.”