

KEZ CALLS ON RUTH DAVIDSON TO END 'RAPE CLAUSE' SILENCE

11 April 2017

Below is Kezia Dugdale's [Daily Record column](#) calling on Ruth Davidson to end her shameful silence on the Tories' disgusting 'rape clause':

“SHE is different to other Tories”.

It's a familiar refrain when people talk about Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson.

But if that really is the case, why hasn't Ruth spoken out against the disgusting 'rape clause' her Westminster colleagues have introduced to the tax credit system?

In a barbaric move that should shame and anger the Scottish Tory leader and every single Conservative MSP, victims of rape now must fill out an eight page form if they have a child conceived through such a sexual assault.

It's a policy that would have caused anger and astonishment if Margaret Thatcher had introduced it in the 1980s. But here in 2017, in an era when the fight for women's rights has made real strides, we have a female Prime Minister content to press ahead with a horrifically cruel and uncaring policy.

Months have passed since SNP MP Alison Thewliss first stunned us all by uncovering the details of the 'rape clause'.

As part of plans to restrict tax credits to families of just two children, the UK Government decided to force women to provide evidence of exceptional circumstances, such as rape, to claim the social security payment for a third child.

So now women who have been raped – possibly by their husbands – but who have perhaps not reported it to the police will have to sign a document saying their child is the product of rape.

Alison has led a powerful campaign against the heartless Tory government on this crucial issue, and has secured cross-party support. I have nothing but praise for her tireless campaigning, and she has and will continue to receive the support of Labour MSPs and MPs in the hope of forcing the Tories into a U-turn.

For Ruth Davidson has been silent on this issue. So today I make a direct plea to her: stand up for rape victims and tell Theresa May she is wrong.

You normally have the sharpest elbows when it comes to getting noticed, so don't remain silent when it comes to standing up to your own party.

Readers of this newspaper know just how keen the Tories are to attack our cherished welfare state.

The Daily Record has exposed time and again just how distressing the Conservative government's social security cuts can be.

The way to ensure that people's reliance on social security reduces is not to penalise the poorest but to ensure that work pays and living standards rise.

Labour is committed to rebalancing the UK's economy so that no one and no community is left behind, which is why Jeremy Corbyn has announced plans for a £10-an-hour minimum wage, which would benefit 430,000 workers in Scotland alone.

And we must also ensure that everyone claims the social security payments they are entitled to – with over £2 billion presently going unclaimed in Scotland.

The Vow delivered huge new powers for the Scottish Parliament, and an opportunity to radically reshape our country to be a fairer nation, and it's time to see real action on this.

[We need to create more opportunities for our young people](#)

9th April 2017

Youth employment levels in Scotland still haven't recovered from the global financial crash.

Before the full onset of the financial crisis the number of 16-24 year olds in employment stood at 365,000.

The latest figures show that youth employment has not recovered to pre-crisis levels and currently stands at 341,000.

What would Scottish Labour do?

We need to give our young people the skills they need to compete for the jobs of the future.

That means investing in education, not carrying on the cuts. It also means reforming the system so that it is fairer. Your chance to get on in life shouldn't be based on how much your parents earn but your own talent, ambition and work ethic.

We want to see better bursaries for the poorest students, and tailor our

apprenticeship schemes more closely to the jobs market.

We'd stimulate our economy with investment, bringing forward infrastructure spending with a specific focus on housebuilding.

Across Scotland, Labour has a plan that works for your community

In Glasgow, Labour will offer guaranteed job for every 18-to-24 year old

In North Lanarkshire, Labour will create 10,000 new jobs and guarantee one for our young people.

In West Dunbartonshire, Labour will create 3,000 new jobs and apprenticeships to help people back into work and grow the local economy

In Edinburgh, Labour will expand and fund training opportunities for adults and young people, working with colleges, to help them raise their skills and earnings.

In Aberdeen Labour has a City Centre Masterplan which will create more than 5,000 jobs and attract investment of around £1 billion.

Like our plans? [Then spread our message.](#)

[Our Child Benefit plan would help half a million families](#)

8th April 2017

Labour's plans to boost child benefit would help over half a millions Scottish families and nearly 1 million kids.

We want to see child benefit increased by **£240 by 2020**.

This move will lift thousands of children out of poverty and put money back into the pockets of working class families.

You can find out how many families in your local area would [be better off here](#).

We aren't the only people who want to see this happen. So do the [Child Poverty Action Group](#).

We want to see this plan in the Child Poverty Bill, which Holyrood will debate later this year.

Earlier this week new figures revealed that working poverty in Scotland is at

its highest point since the Scottish Parliament was established in 1999.

Scotland has huge new powers over social security. We can radically reshape our country to make it fairer.

Rather than focusing on dividing Scotland again with another referendum, SNP ministers should be working with Labour to put money back into the pockets of working class families and lifting children out of poverty.

Agree with our plan? Then help spread our message.

Scotland has a hidden jobs crisis

7th April 2017

Scotland has a hidden jobs crisis, with real unemployment standing at nearly 10 per cent.

Analysis from the independent Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) has revealed that real unemployment in Scotland between 2015 and 2016 stood at 322,000 – or 9.4 per cent of the labour market.

Why is real unemployment so much higher than the stats we normally see?

Real unemployment is calculated by combining the figure for unemployment people with those who are economically inactive but want a job.

People who are economically inactive but want a job make up 23.8% of those aged 16-64 who are defined as “Economically inactive”

That's an additional 190,000 people.

What do the experts say?

Professor Brian Ashcroft has written about economic inactivity before. He was warning about real unemployment [rising five years ago](#).

The STUC – Scotland's Trades union Congress – have raised concerns before that official stats [don't show the real condition of our jobs market](#):

“Understandably, the political debate revolves around the headline employment and unemployment rates and rarely addresses these other trends. The STUC has sought to highlight that the true level of demand for labour is not always reflected in the ILO and claimant count and has published regular labour market reports which have included the development of a measure of ‘Scotland’s Full-Time Employment Deficit.’”

And the respected think tank the Fraser of Allander Institute recently talked about [rising levels of inactivity](#):

"[inactivity rates] have increased over the past 18 months. What is interesting is that women account for much of the rise. The increase in female inactivity of over 50,000 (16-64) coincides with falling unemployment (-19,000) and employment (-32,000) (both 16+) over the past 18 months."

How would Labour fix this?

We would stimulate our economy by using the power of procurement to ensure high quality jobs and front load investment in housebuilding.

We'd make work pay and invest in skills so we can compete for the jobs of the future. Building our economy from the ground up and for the long term. [You can read more here.](#)

Agree with our plan? [Then help spread our message.](#)

We can make working poverty history

6 April 2017

Working poverty in Scotland is at its highest level since devolution.

Since 2007 the number of households in poverty where at least one adult works has increased by 150,000 to 420,000. That's a failure of the SNP in government, and a sign of a broken economy.

A job should be enough to keep people above the breadline. Here is what Labour would do to change that:

Use the social security powers

We'd increase Child Benefit by £240 by 2020 and ensure that £2 billion worth of unclaimed payments like tax credits and housing benefit go to the people who are entitled to them. Increasing Child Benefit would lift around tens of thousands of children out of poverty, according to expert groups like the Child Poverty Action Group.

Make work pay

While the SNP dishes out millions of pounds in taxpayer funded grants to companies like Amazon, Labour will ensure that no business receives a public contract or taxpayer grant without guaranteeing to pay the real living wage.

We'll work to extend the real living wage into the jobs where it needs to be: low paid industries like hospitality and retail.

Tackle the cost of living

A decade on from promising to scrap the council tax, all the SNP has done is scrap the council tax freeze.

Labour would abolish the council tax and replace it with a fairer system where 80% of households would pay less.

We would move towards more flexible childcare, starting with a breakfast club in every school.

And we would take back control of public transport, meaning we could freeze or even cut fares on our trains and buses.

Invest for the long term

We'll only end working poverty for good if we give our people the skills they need to compete for the jobs of the future.

That means investing in education with more resources in our schools and fairer bursaries for our students.

We would reform our schools system to tilt the balance away from the richest and towards the rest.

And we'll future proof our economy to take steps towards coding being as vital in our classrooms as literacy and numeracy.

Agree with our plan? [Then spread our message.](#)