

Tory benefits cap is an attack on single parents

In 2015, Labour MPs tabled amendments to exempt lone parents with young children from the Tories' benefits cap. The Conservatives refused to listen.

That cruel decision means thousands of families have been pushed into poverty as a result. Today, we can reveal the huge impact this has had.

Official analysis shows that two-thirds of capped claimants in Scotland are single parents – nearly all single mothers. That means of the 3,642 capped households in Scotland, 2,397 were single parents with at least one child dependant.

Proportion of capped claimants:	
Single, no children	10.10%
Couple, no children	0.25%
Lone parent	65.82%
Couple with children	24.05%

Gender of capped lone parents:	
Male	2.75%
Female	95.99%
Unknown	1.29%

As we repeatedly warned, the impact of this and the Tories' other social security cuts is pushing more children into poverty, punishing them for their parents' circumstances.

The Tory cap places an annual limit on the total amount of benefit that working-age households can claim. The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2015 reduced the cap from £26,000 to £20,000.

The UK Government's Impact Assessment estimates that up to 5,000 Scottish households could be affected by the cap, and the average reduction in benefit entitlement is estimated to be around £60 per week.

A High Court judgement on June 22 this year ruled that the benefit cap is unlawful and illegally discriminates against single parents with young

children under the age of two.

The UK Government must listen to the High Court's judgement that this policy is discriminatory and unlawful, marking another blow in its failing austerity agenda.

A Labour government would examine ways to remove the £20,000 limit as part of plans to reform and redesign Universal Credit, which would also include ending six-week delays in payment and abolishing the 'rape clause'.

A Labour government will transform the social security system so that, like the NHS, it is there for us all in our time of need.

Scottish Labour's summer campaign, For The Many, is this week focusing on tackling inequality. Read more about our campaign by clicking on the image below:

