

Yet Again, Women & Children Foot the Bill for Revenue Raising

Child benefit changes increase the dependency of women on men

More than 70% of the benefit changes announced by the Coalition Government in the Emergency Budget in June came from the pockets of women. Now, removing child benefit from families in which one earner pays higher rate tax impacts almost 100% on women, and indirectly on their children.

Claire Annesley, of the UK Women's Budget Group, explains:

At present child benefit is almost always paid to the women; an important boost to their often lower incomes. After 2013 if one person in a couple earns over £44k then the woman will lose her child benefit. If the man is the family's higher earner (likely given the gendered pay gap) he will not lose out, but the woman will be penalised by losing some or all of her income. Such effects are wholly unfair and increase the dependency of women on men. The removal of the child benefit is but one example of how the Government is happy to restore an out-dated 'male breadwinner, dependent female carer' model of family life

Alternatives have been quickly disregarded.

Sue Himmelweit, of The UK Women's Budget Group, states:

Ian Duncan Smith says that an alternative would have been to raise taxes, which people wouldn't have liked either. Has he forgotten that non-parents and men pay income tax too, so any such tax rise would be much smaller since spread more widely? A tax rise would not have impacted on those women looking after children full-time who have no other income of their own, while removing child benefit will leave most without any money of their own.

Our solution? The 'Maid Marion Tax'; a tax, levied on financial transactions, used to avoid measures detrimental to women. Even at the extremely low rate of 0.01percent, net revenues of £25 billion per year could easily be raised, enabling the government to avoid some of its most damaging spending measures on women and their children.

The UK Women's Budget Group is a network of over 200 academics and activists. For more information, please contact, Jillian Foster, the Coordinator of the UK Women's Budget Group. By email at info@wbg.org.uk or by phone at 075 7623 5554.