

Dear.....MP,

The Budget last Wednesday was another nail in the coffin for stay at home parents.

The narrative of 'childcare' was not focused on the needs of the child but on removing them 'as barriers to work'.

Where is the research to show that babies at 9 months are better off in childcare than with their mother or father?

This government has continued the trend of penalising parents who feel the right decision is to stay home. This option has been made consistently more unaffordable by policy which places a heavy tax burden on single earner families, removes child benefit from single earner families at half the household income than dual earner families and funds childcare for those who are in paid work.

In many cases it has become almost impossible for the main breadwinner to earn extra income. The marginal tax rate is 70% or over at many stages on the income scale particularly if you are on Universal Credit or if you are becoming a higher rate tax payer about to lose Child Benefit. That means that for every extra £1 earned we only bring home 30p. The only option is for mothers to go into paid work to plug the gap. But mothers ARE already working and it will cost the government billions to do our job well. Meanwhile we are forced to go out to paid work and pay someone else to do the job we want to do whilst missing out the precious years of our infant's life.

I ask you as our representative in Parliament to call on the government to stop adding insult to injury by calling stay at home parents 'economically inactive'. We are active and productive. If the value of raising children cannot be measured in GDP then we need to find a new measurement. GDP does not value the quality and continuity of care and the emotional well-being and resilience of the child and family.

Please also call on the government to make Child Benefit fair. It should be based on the household income and if fairness is not possible because of the structure of independent taxation then we call for reform of the taxation system to give families the option as in many other countries of being taxed as a household unit.

Subsidies for 'childcare' should not discriminate against parents at home and I ask that the £4billion in taxpayer money allotted for childcare should include the option for a parent to stay home which is a much cheaper option for the government. Babies need love and who better than the parent to give them that love and nurture.

Yours sincerely,

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