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If Ministers Want More Wedding Bells They Should Stop Penalising Couples

Commenting on Iain Duncan Smith's speech today at the launch of Marriage Week UK Family Action Head of Policy and Campaigns Rhian Beynon said:

"If Ministers want to hear more wedding bells – and in fact, many low income couples aspire to this just like everyone else – then putting financial obstacles and penalties in the way will not help families get down the aisle. It's a bit rich then for Iain Duncan Smith to claim that people on a low income are put off marriage and stay single because of the benefits they'll lose given his Government's welfare caps policy. Welfare caps will introduce a couple penalty which in some cases could see lone parents who move in together losing thousands of pounds, disincentivising the very institution IDS is championing."

Ends

Family Action is concerned about a number of measures the Government has introduced which will put extra pressure on couples and could lead to family breakdown.

- The Welfare cap will penalise couples who move in together. It will undo welfare reforms which are trying to promote stable family life and will disincentivise couple relationships amongst out of work households and could lead to families staying apart because it is more financially viable than getting together. For more information read our [The Cap Doesn't Fit](#) report on the impact of the Welfare Caps.
- The Government's measures on housing benefit will put pressure on families who may have to move multiple times as a result of Government plans to cap housing benefit and reduce the amount of housing support for families. For more information read our [Keep Moving](#) Report.
- Parents with mental health problems will be under increased pressure as a result of changes to Disability Living Allowance and other measures which will increase financial hardship and impact family finances.