

Do more on marriage, chief rabbi tells ministers



Chief Rabbi Sacks will be replaced by Ephraim Mirvis next month

Ministers must do more to encourage marriage and support stay-at-home mothers, the UK's chief rabbi has said.

Lord Sacks, who is about to step down from his post after 22 years, told the Times the government "should certainly recognise marriage in the tax system".

"It should certainly give more support to mothers who stay at home or for childcare provision," he added.

Chancellor George Osborne has already promised a tax break for married couples in his Autumn Statement.

But Mr Osborne's coalition partners the Liberal Democrats are opposed to the move.

"I think the government has not done enough," Lord Sacks said.

"Although I don't take a political stance... I don't think the government has done enough at all.

I have huge regard for mothers who want to stay at home and look after their children"

"The state has an interest in marriage because the cost of family breakdown and non-marriage, the last time I looked at it, was estimated at £9bn a year."

His words echo the views of some Conservative MPs who have expressed anger that a planned tax credit scheme worth up to £1,200 a child to help working parents with childcare costs will not benefit stay-at-home parents.

The government says the overall scheme will help 2.5 million families.

Earlier this month, Mr Osborne told BBC Radio 4's World at One programme: "I have huge regard for mothers who want to stay at home and look after their children.

"That's their lifestyle choice. I want to help those families too - I'm not trying to be exclusive.

"We have a proposal on married couples' tax breaks which I'm going to introduce in the Autumn Statement later this year... that will help stay-at-home mothers."

In his Times interview, Lord Sacks also said multi-culturalism had "had its day" and had led to "segregation and inward-looking communities".

He compared it to a hotel where "nobody is at home".

"It doesn't belong to anyone, we've each got our own room and so long as we don't disturb the neighbours we can do whatever we like," he added.

BBC