



**Commenting on Government plans to change the way child poverty is measured  
Family Action Head of Policy and Campaigns Rhian Beynon said:**

“This is another nail in the coffin of the life chances of a generation of children. Relative poverty counts – without these targets the poorest families and children will fall further and further behind, losing out on the goods and services that their peers and other families take for granted. Widening income inequality is bad for children - one of the clearest examples is the housing market where the inability to compete for decent housing effects access to good schools. Moving the goal posts on income poverty might help the Government balance the books but it will send the life chances of children into the red.”

“The idea that measures to reduce income poverty perpetuate problems for families is way off the mark. Only 4% of the families we support through our Building Bridges Service for families with multiple complex needs are referred because of problems of substance misuse. Most of these families helped through Building Bridges are desperate to be able to provide for their children and spend any extra cash they have on improving circumstances for their children. Families need a joined up approach of services and financial support if they are to lift themselves out of poverty and move towards employment. If the Government break their promise and ignore these poverty targets they will fail in their pledge to be the most family friendly.”

**Ends**

For further information please contact Anthony McCaul, Senior Media and Campaigns Officer for Family Action on 0207 241 7632 or 0781 309 2040 or email [anthony.mccaul@family-action.org.uk](mailto:anthony.mccaul@family-action.org.uk)

**Notes to Editors**

Evidence shows that low-income families use extra money in their pocket to buy crucial items for their children such as clothes and books.

Source: Gregg P Waldfogel J and Washbrook E (2006) ‘Family expenditure post-welfare reform in the UK: Are low-income families starting to catch up?’, Labour Economics, 13 (6), (pp.721-746) <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/CASEpaper99.pdf>

**In-work poverty**

Government statistics show over half (56 per cent) of children in relative poverty are actually from working households and in-work poverty will be exacerbated by the

freeze in Working Tax Credits announced in the Autumn Statement on Tuesday 29 November.

Source: DWP Households Below Average Income statistics 2009/10

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/hbai/hbai2010/excel\\_files/chapters/chapter\\_4\\_comp\\_hbai11.xls](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/hbai/hbai2010/excel_files/chapters/chapter_4_comp_hbai11.xls)

### **Poverty scars children**

DWP's own research with families living on a low income shows children are acutely aware of their parents' financial situations. Their descriptions of how parents might feel about having no money included sadness, anger, frustration and loneliness. Children themselves felt different, inferior, anxious and fearful of being bullied, isolated and left out – as well as sapping their self-esteem and confidence and undermining their faith in future wellbeing.

Children were sad about being 'poor', and described how the experience of poverty made them feel anxious, frightened, frustrated and angry.

Source: Ridge T (2009) Living With Poverty, DWP Research Report 594

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep594.pdf>

### **About Family Action**

Family Action has been a leading provider and services to disadvantaged and socially isolated families since 1869. We work with over 45,000 children and families a year by providing practical, emotional and financial support through over 100 services based in communities across England. A further 150,000 people benefit from our educational grants and information service.

