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**Family Action says benefit cap  
fails the Prime Minister's "family-friendly" test**

Rhian Beynon, Head of Policy and Campaigns, said:

"We welcome the Prime Minister's renewed commitment to early intervention in families in crisis and his pledge to halting a policy if it fails the "family friendly" test.

"Firstly, however it is right to recognise that many families struggle along with complex needs such as mental health difficulties and disabilities with little support from services and do not commit crime. They deserve help because of their needs. Already we are helping 4,000 fewer families this year because of the cuts.

"Secondly as the policy that overwhelmingly fails the family-friendly policy test is the benefit cap the Prime Minister should make it his priority to axe it. While more single-parented families will be affected, couple households and those with a large number of children will lose the most financially. It could actively discourage two adults from forming a stable household together and may encourage some households to split.

"The increased housing mobility that will also result from the welfare reforms like the benefit cap particularly in London will make it harder for those involved in protecting children to work effectively with their families and keep track of them; and is likely to put more pressure on housing and resources in the most vulnerable communities"

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Notes:

- Family Action specialises in supporting families with multiple complex needs through intensive home support such as its Building Bridges service. Read the latest evaluation published June at [www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)
- The Welfare Reform Bill including the benefit cap will be debated by the Lords from September
- Family Action's The Cap Doesn't Fit has found that a couple with four children and £400 per week rent could lose more than 77% of their disposable income as a result of the changes – leaving them with only £80 per week to live on. The welfare caps would affect Couples substantially more in money terms than Lone Parents. This would damage incentives to enter relationships and could break up families.

- The impact would be particularly great where two Lone Parents decide to move in together. Two Lone Parent households with 2 children each (with £200 rent) would be unaffected by the caps. However, if they move in together and get a slightly bigger property to share (£300 rent), the couple would lose £9000 per year compared to now.