



Government Must Try Harder on Pupil Premium, Warns Family Action

- *Support for Disadvantaged children in school welcome but welfare caps and housing benefits caps will hit family stability and damage children and families*

Charity Family Action today gave a guarded welcome to news of a £5 billion pupil premium. Family Action runs school support services bridging the gap between home and school to ensure vulnerable pupils are supported and parents focus on the priority of education and the importance of getting their children to school and to do homework. Pre-school services are vital for getting children school ready and Family Action warns that the pupil premium will be worth nothing unless the investment in Children Centres and nursery education opportunities for poor families are protected from the cuts.

Family Action is concerned that further disruption will be caused for thousands of families who may be affected by the changes to Housing benefit and welfare changes. Outcomes for children are hugely improved with an increase in family income and disruption to schooling through moving house adversely affects educational outcomes. Any investment in poorer pupils is welcome but concerns about the impact of welfare changes and the housing benefit and welfare cap could put this at risk because of the family instability this may cause.

Chief Executive Helen Dent said: "The Government may get an A for effort in terms of trying to support poorer children in school but they will fail if they don't back this up with support for families in the home. This is vital if we are going to ensure parents work effectively alongside teachers and school to ensure their children's behaviour and learning is excellent and the full value of the pupil premium is to be harvested. Without engagement of the most deprived parents through such support, the pupil premium will be the equivalent of pouring money down the drain. And of course changes to housing benefit and welfare caps which threaten homelessness for thousands of families in London and the South East, and the disruption this will cause to children will also make it more difficult to concentrate on schooling and build a stable family life."