



Responding to the Riots – Knee Jerk Policy is Rarely Good Policy Says Family Action Chief Executive

Commenting on Government plans to give courts powers to dock benefits Family Action Chief Executive Helen Dent said: "Knee jerk policy is rarely good policy and the Government's proposal for reducing or stopping child benefit for families may be a good example of how to get it wrong. Whilst we agree that those criminals caught and convicted during the riots should be dealt with effectively by the criminal justice system punitive measures which take child benefit or maintenance allowances away from children and families are not fair and are not the answer.

Cameron may have more success with his tough love proposal. Building on the FIPs and the evidence of what has worked in Westminster and beyond is not an easy option for families but builds on their strengths, makes sure children are safe and is tough on those family members who are 'going off the rails'. Our experience dealing with problem families shows that there are a range of issues which need to be dealt with holistically, working with families in their own homes to help them turn things around. Poverty and financial hardship play a part in piling the pressure on families – these measures could increase this and will not pass the Prime Minister's own family test."

Ends

For more information please contact Anthony McCaul, Senior Media and Campaigns Officer, Family Action on 0207 241 7632 or 0781 309 2040 or email anthony.mccaul@family-action.org.uk

Notes to Editors

About Family Action

Family Action has been a leading provider of 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.