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**This isn't the time for Iain Duncan Smith to be a have-a-go hero on welfare. He has got to get this right**

**Family Action Chief Executive Helen Dent warned:**

"Welfare reform could be a make-or-break time for the poor and disadvantaged families with children who use Family Action services. This isn't the time for Iain Duncan Smith to be a have-a-go hero on welfare. He has got to get this right if the reforms are not going to undermine the Coalition's promises to tackle disadvantage and improve social mobility."

As it stands, the risk is that while the Universal Credit will make work pay for some families but others will lose out. Changes to help with childcare costs could mean some low-income parents are likely to lose out if they return to work compared to the current system. That can not be right or sensible and simplifying the benefit system should not be at the expense of making work pay."

**Ends**

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact Anthony McCaul, our Senior Media and Campaigns Officer 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**

- 1) Some families can currently receive up to 97% of their childcare costs covered, and this could decrease substantially.
- 2) Family Action are also very concerned about proposals to move to monthly payments under the Universal Credit. As our recent [Cash Counts](#) report shows, many families with mental health problems struggle to budget over long periods. The option of weekly payments needs to be available, or these proposals could mean that many families end up in debt.
- 3) Other changes likely to appear in the bill will also hurt families. The replacement of Disability Living Allowance with the Personal Independence Payment will concern many - As our report Cash Counts shows, DLA is a vital lifeline for many of the families we work with, and these changes could threaten their ability to live active, independent lives, and to parent their children in the way they would wish.
- 4) On top of this, welfare caps will hurt children in large families and penalise couples. For the vulnerable families we work with council tax benefit, the Social Fund and local housing allowance are a lifeline when times are tough due to mental health difficulties, unemployment or family crisis. The wellbeing of children and the Governments commitment to ending child poverty should remain at the heart of the reforms.