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Families Who Struggle in Silence Need Support Too, Warns Family Action

Charity Family Action is warning Government that its new early intervention fund and community pilots should not just focus on families causing anti social behaviour. Speaking ahead of the National Adult and Children's Services Conference Family Action Chief Executive Helen Dent warned against a one-size fits all programme and called on Government to ensure that families who "suffer behind closed doors" also get the early intervention and support they need.

Family Action specialises in home based early intervention services working with vulnerable families with mental health or other difficulties. The families they work with are often close to breaking point. Family Action will be running a policy session at the NACS Conference on working effectively with high cost and hard to reach families. Family Action's work bridges the gap between Adult and Children's Services, providing whole family support to families with multiple complex needs.

Family Action are concerned that the early intervention grant will focus too heavily on tackling families with complex needs committing anti social behaviour at the expense of other families because their problems are more visible to local communities and agencies.

Family Action Chief Executive Helen Dent said: "Chaotic families committing anti social behaviour may be a very visible sign of the need for early intervention family support services but those who shout the loudest should not get the lion's share of this new fund. Many vulnerable families in crisis are struggling in silence. Trapped in their homes, socially excluded and mentally ill, these families with complex needs also need support and assistance through these early intervention funds and community pilots. Anti social behaviour should not be the only focus of this work."

Ends

Notes to Editors:

For further information please contact Anthony McCaul, Senior Media and Campaigns Officer on 020 7241 7632 or 0781 309 2040 or e-mail anthony.mccaul@family-action.org.uk

The session Family Action is running, jointly with iMPower and Croyden Council will focus on prevention rather than intervening at crisis point; engaging at a whole family level to understand issues and help break cycles of inter-generational deprivation, avoiding duplication (for organisations and families) and ultimately improving life chances for families and reducing costs for all partners. Family Action will share their knowledge and experience of working with people in their own homes and what it achieves.

Family Action has been a leading provider of services to disadvantaged and socially isolated families since 1869. We work with over 45,000 vulnerable families and children a year by providing practical, emotional and financial support through over 100 community-based services across England. Additionally in 2009-2010 we distributed 4,218 grants totalling over £1,104,883 to families and individuals in financial hardship throughout the UK. Family Action won the 2009 Charity Awards Foundation award for effectiveness and jointly with CAB, Gingerbread and our sponsors Barclaycard the 2010 Third Sector Award for best corporate partnership for Horizons, an integrated welfare advice, training and educational grants package for lone parents. Find Family Action on the Web at www.family-action.org.uk.