

## Press release

**Date:** 1 October 2015

### **Mentoring support for children and young people to increase across England as charities join forces**

The charities Family Action and Friendship Works are delighted to announce they will be formally merging on 1 October. Friendship Works will join the portfolio of services that Family Action provides to vulnerable children, young people and families across the UK.

Friendship Works offers mentoring support in Islington and Camden to improve the emotional well-being and life chances of children and young people aged 5-16 who face multiple disadvantages. By joining forces with Family Action, Friendship Works will be able to expand their reach on a national level, helping more children and young people access vital opportunities and have a better childhood, whilst exploring their potential, developing valuable life skills and building the resilience they need to cope with adversity and lead a fulfilling adult life.

Friendship Works started life in 1977 when the Family Welfare Association (now Family Action) launched the Big Friend/Little Friend befriending project in Islington. In 1983 the project became a charity in its own right and in 1991 Big Friend/Little Friend became Friends United Network (FUN), and then Friendship Works in 2009, a successful and impactful organisation.

This merger is a clear illustration of a charity, Friendship Works, making a forward thinking, strategic and timely decision to work within a larger, national charity in order to increase the number of children they are able to help. They have placed themselves in a strong position to continue with their present work and to safely grow and thrive in the future.

Iain Cassidy, Chief Executive, Friendship Works said:-

*"We are delighted that this merger allows us to extend the reach and impact of the Friendship Works unique model of mentoring through the national reach of Family Action. Friendship Works will continue to support vulnerable children and young people in Islington and Camden and are excited to work with Family Action to extend our work even further."*

David Holmes CBE, Chief Executive, Family Action said:-

*"We are thrilled that Friendship Works and its excellent staff are joining Family Action. Friendship Works brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in working effectively with young people and it is a fantastic addition to the Family Action 'family' of services. We look forward to working with everyone at Friendship Works to grow these wonderful services which make such a positive difference to young people."*

**ENDS**

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#### **Notes to Editors:-**

#### **About Family Action**

Family Action is a charity committed to building stronger families by delivering innovative and effective services and support that reaches out to many of the UK's most vulnerable people.

We seek to empower people and communities to address their issues and challenges through practical, financial and emotional help.

Our work is wide-ranging and includes help for parents-to-be, the provision of many Children's Centres in local communities, intensive family support, emotional health and wellbeing services, counselling, mediation and therapies, support in schools and financial grants programmes.

Registered Charity Number: 264 713

Website: [www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)

Twitter: @family\_action

Facebook: Family Action

#### **About Friendship Works**

- Established in 1977, Friendship Works was the first children's mentoring service in the UK. Friendship Works provides volunteer mentors to support children in London aged 5-16 who face multiple disadvantages.
- Friendship Works currently supports 151 friendships between children and their mentors. Volunteers meet with the child they support once a week for two years to give them something stable and secure in life, and to help them explore their potential for the future.
- Friendship Works has a rigorous volunteer recruitment process to ensure the safety of children and families. Volunteers are recruited, trained and supervised by a team of experienced childcare professionals.
- Friendship Works aims to expand services across London and eventually help to make mentoring a part of everyday life for communities across the UK.