Disadvantaged children bearing the brunt of cuts

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In response to the Autumn Statement, Lily Caprani, Director of Strategy and Policy at The Children's Society, said:

"Even in a time of austerity, the Government has choices about where to invest and where to cut. This Autumn Statement fails to support the most disadvantaged children in the country who have already suffered the brunt of cuts.

On child poverty and cost of living

"Universal Credit work allowances are vital for making sure that work pays for struggling families across the country. The majority of children in poverty are living in low-income working families. The freeze announced today will make it harder for parents to move into work and force them to make impossible choices about giving their children the basics. The Government can help by making sure all families with children in poverty get the Warm Home Discount and free school meals.

Local support crucial to protect children

"The Chancellor claims to be delivering a truly national recovery, but cuts to local government funding are putting the most vulnerable children's welfare at risk. At a time when the alarming scale of child abuse and exploitation is coming to light, services are already struggling to cope with demand. Councils need resources to keep children safe and support families, yet they're facing greater financial pressure than ever.

"It is also crucial that families do not lose the vital safety net provided by local government welfare assistance. If this fund is removed, families in crisis will be pushed into the hands of pay-day loan companies.

"If, as the Chancellor insists, 'we are all in this together', vulnerable children's needs must not be forgotten."

Media enquiries

For more information, call 020 7841 4422 or email media@childrenssociety.org.uk. For out-of-hours enquiries please call 07810 796 508.

Notes to editors

•3.7 million children in the UK are living in poverty today: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/households-below-average-income-hbai-199495-to-201213

•Six in 10 children living in poverty are in low-income working families: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/households-below-average-income-hbai-199495-to-201213

•With the extension of free school meals to all children in infant schools, 160,000 more children in poverty get this key support. But over 500,000 children in poverty continue to miss out. It is vital that all children in families receiving Universal Credit get this crucial help.

•By 2020, an estimated three quarters of a million more children will be living in poverty than today according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies: http://www.ifs.org.uk/comms/r78.pdf

•The Children's Society is supporting the first-ever Children's Commission on Poverty. The commissioners want the government to draw on children's actual experience – and not just the statistics -- when developing measures to tackle child poverty. The Children's Commission on Poverty is being supported by The Children's Society and led by a panel of 16 children and teenagers from across England, ranging in age from 12 to 19. They are leading an 18-month investigation into child poverty in the UK. It provides a crucial platform for children to speak out about what poverty is really like and reveal, through their own eyes, the day-to-day challenges they face and what needs to be done.

•The Children's Society has helped change children's stories for over a century. We expose injustice and address hard truths, tackling child poverty and neglect head-on. We fight for change based on the

experiences of every child we work with and the solid evidence we gather. Through our campaigning, commitment and care, we are determined to give every child in this country the greatest possible chance in life.

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