Government move gives children struggling in cold homes hope

Thursday 29 January, 2015

In response to the expansion of the Warm Home Discount, Lily Caprani, Director of Policy at The Children's Society, said:

"The Government's extension of the Warm Home Discount for another year is an important step for the huge numbers of families struggling to keep their children warm this winter.

"Nearly two million children in poverty are in families that are not getting this crucial support. Low income families with disabled children and those with children under five will benefit from the decision to standardise access to this discount across suppliers – action that The Children's Society has been campaigning for.

"But more needs to be done to give all families with children in poverty a lifeline to make sure they are able to heat their home. The Warm Home Discount — a £140 rebate on energy bills — can help families avoid getting caught in an energy debt trap and having to make hard choices between giving their children a balanced meal and turning the heating on.

"It is vital the Government makes the Warm Home Discount automatically available to all families with children who are living in poverty — no child should have to grow up in a cold home."

Ends

Media enquiries

For more information, please call The Children's Society media team on 020 7841 4422, 07775 812 357 or email media@childrenssociety.org.uk. For out-of-hours enquiries please call 07810 796 508.

Notes to editors

•See our UK-wide Warm Home Discount map which indicates the estimated number of children in poverty who missed out on the Warm Home Discount last winter

•The Warm Home Discount is a £140 rebate for low-income, vulnerable households. It is key to families not having to choose between heating their homes or feeding their children. Families living in poverty with children do not automatically get this key support. Many do not even know about it. And for others, even if they are in poverty, they may not qualify because they work or because their energy supplier's scheme is no longer available for that year. As a result, these children are being left to grow up in cold homes. For more information see Behind Cold Doors: The chilling reality for children in poverty.

•According to The Children's Society's latest research, almost a million children are living in families in energy debt and too often energy companies are not following their legal obligations to help these families. Energy companies are failing huge numbers of families struggling with energy debt, causing parents to feel intimidated and damaging children's health, see: Show Some Warmth: Exposing the damaging impact of energy debt on children

•A typical family with two children heating their home to the recommended 21 degrees Celsius, spends £1,403 a year on energy bills according to 2014 analysis from the Association for the Conservation of Energy produced for The Children's Society. For a family not in work, this is more than 10% of their income.

•3.7 million children in the UK are living in poverty.

•Six in 10 children living in poverty are in low-income working families.

•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.

•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

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