

5th September 2012

Poverty about more than income

The Centre for Social Justice responds to today's child poverty report from Save the Children:

Christian Guy, Managing Director of the CSJ, said: "Save the Children is right to highlight the difficulties facing many families across the UK. Many are experiencing significant financial hardship and need help. Child poverty is a tragic injustice and tackling it should be an urgent political priority.

"But we need a step change in our approach to fighting child poverty. Income matters, but having spent years working with families in the poorest parts of the country, the CSJ has seen that a lack of money can often be symptomatic of wider social problems and inadequate support.

"The current definition of child poverty is arbitrary, narrow and has often derailed efforts to give children the help they need.

"For too long politicians have tried to deal with child poverty by throwing a few extra pounds at families living below a 'so-called' poverty line – but in most cases this has done little to give them the tools to escape the poverty trap.

"We must recognise work is the route out of poverty, and what we need is a system that supports people into these opportunities – whether that be flexible working hours or effective childcare."

Mr Guy added: "The CSJ has travelled the length and breadth of the country working with charities that are on the frontline of tackling Britain's most acute social problems. When we ask these inspiring organisations we are always told that poverty is not just about money – it is about family breakdown, poor educational attainment, addiction, debt and many other factors."