

## **Family Justice Council response to ‘£90 million shortfall in the justice system’**

**5 September 2008**

Responding to the letter published yesterday from Lord Justice Leveson, warning of a £90 million shortfall in the budget for the justice system, Family Justice Council member and District Judge Nick Crichton said:

“The Family Justice Council has previously highlighted its concerns about the increase in court fees, as have others, and it welcomes Lord Justice Leveson’s letter for bringing the issue to wider attention.

“The Council believes that the substantial increase in fees for public family law cases, which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> May, is the wrong way to finance the family courts, especially with regards to care proceedings.

“We are concerned that children experiencing chronic neglect may have to wait longer before action is taken. Substantial court fees can act as a disincentive for local authorities to take care proceedings in a timely manner and will increase the incidence of cases where action is taken too slowly.

“Our view is that care proceedings should be exempt from the policy of full cost recovery. Local authorities initiate these proceedings for the protection of children as part of their public and statutory duties.”

### **Notes to editors:**

For more information or to arrange an interview with Nick Crichton or another Council member please contact Marysia McSperrin on 020 7700 6952 or email [Marysia@amazonpr.co.uk](mailto:Marysia@amazonpr.co.uk).

- The Family Justice Council is an interdisciplinary body made up of leading professionals from the legal, medical and social care worlds. It aims to promote better and quicker outcomes for families and children who use the family justice system.
- The Family Justice Council is well placed to comment on the following issues:
  - Public law family court fees
  - Openness in family courts
  - Child participation in family proceedings
  - Medical experts in family law cases
  - Domestic violence legislation
  - Forced marriages
  - Cohabitation

- Nick Crichton is a District Judge at the Inner London Family Proceedings Court and has many years of experience handling care proceedings. Nick has advised the Russian, Bulgarian, Georgian and Ethiopian governments on child protection and on the reform of their court proceedings involving children.