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**PRESS RELEASE FROM THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
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## **‘Writing off marriage and two parent families is not progressive’- says Gavin Poole, from the Centre for Social Justice**

Responding to the report from the Centre for Modern Families, Gavin Poole, Executive Director, of the think-tank said, “The Centre for the Modern Family’s headline finding that only 16 per cent of society say they fit the ‘traditional family stereotype’ hides the reality that over half of the people in their study support and aspire to marriage and raising children as a couple. Professor Cary Cooper of Lancaster University, one of the centre’s panel, points out that the findings on numbers of traditional families are due to the way the question was phrased ie in terms of 2.4 children. No one has 2.4 children, so what is perhaps most surprising is that 16 per cent of people do identify themselves with that model.

The last census showed 6 out of 7 couples were married, The 2010 figures on family structure published by the Office for National Statistics in April (from the ONS Labour Force Survey) show that 60 per cent of families with dependent children are headed by married parents and, if families without dependent children are counted, married families make up 68 per cent of the total.

The Centre for the Modern Family study divided the 3000 people into categories and unsurprisingly over half of those surveyed have not ditched marriage and parenting as a couple and have either already chosen it for themselves or support and aspire to it.

They also point out in their research that some people are in family forms through necessity not choice and say that fatherlessness is not ‘progressive’, even though it is highly prevalent and socially acceptable in some parts of society. ‘The idea that it is completely acceptable for men (or women) to walk out on their children is not progressive. The collapse of the two parent norm has hit the poorest communities the hardest.’

Research from the Centre for Social Justice confirms that children are more likely to grow up without their fathers in our poorest communities, greatly compounding other disadvantages.

This report does not correlate with the evidence that we have found over many years. The headline of this report is extremely misleading and our research shows that strong stable families, built around marriage, with a two parent structure offers the best environment for children to flourish. It is also the aspiration and hope for so many across society.”

Dr Samantha Callan, Family and Early Years expert at the Centre for Social Justice, who is also on the Centre for the Modern Family panel, emphasises that ‘Not conforming to a particular family structure is not the same thing as not wanting it. This is drawn out in the report. Marriage is a social justice issue because people aspire to it across the socioeconomic spectrum but the poorer you are, the greater the economic and cultural barriers you face. Rather than dismissing it as outdated, policy should support people’s aspirations and help them form stable committed relationships that provide the best environment for raising children.’

**ENDS**

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

**The Centre for Social Justice** is an independent think tank established, by Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP in 2004, to seek effective solutions to the poverty that blights parts of Britain.

In July 2007 the group published Breakthrough Britain. Ending the Costs of Social Breakdown. The paper presented over 190 policy proposals aimed at ending the growing social divide in Britain.

Subsequent reports have put forward proposals for reform of the police, prisons, social housing, the asylum system and family law. Other reports have dealt with street gangs and early intervention to help families with young children.