

## **P-05-728 Protect Families First Funding.**

This petition was submitted by Whitehead-Ross Education and UNISON Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Branch, which collected 24 signatures.

### **Text of the Petition**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to protect the Families First budget in order to protect the most vulnerable families across Wales, including in our own area of Neath Port Talbot (NPT).

Families First is a Welsh Government-funded innovation programme that promotes the development by local authority areas of effective multi-agency systems and support, with a clear emphasis on prevention and early intervention for families, particularly those living in poverty.

At the end of August, the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Communities issued a letter to local authorities about the future of Families First, which is due to end in March 2017. In his letter he outlined the future priorities to address identified gaps in service provision for parents and young people and link the work of the programme clearly with the prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

The Cabinet Secretary is expected to make a formal announcement on the future of the programme in the autumn and budgetary allocations for each local authority will not be known until late December 2016. With Communities First coming to an end in March 2017, this reinforces the need for Families First to be protected.

In its first full year of operation, NPT's 'Think Family' early intervention and prevention programme supported almost 100 families to make positive changes and tackle issues before they became critical. Based on Government estimates that one troubled family can cost the taxpayer in the region of £75,000 per year, this represents a return on investment of £3.32 for every £1 spent and more than £7.3 million savings to the economy.

The Welsh Government reduced the Families First Grant in NPT by £260,000 for 2016/17, with a grant of £1,964,194. 2,586 individuals accessed a Families First service during 2015-16 in NPT.

### **Assembly constituency and Region**

- Aberavon
- South Wales West