

## COUNTY COUNCIL

22 JUNE 2016

### PUBLIC QUESTION FROM MR CUNNINGHAM

#### Question

In view of The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies report on the 'Troubled Families' Programme, renamed 'Stronger Families' by DCC, the report detailing concerns that the claims for the programme are 'too good to be true' and 'do not stand up to scrutiny'; is the Council satisfied that the 4,000 families listed within the DCC Stronger Families update report are in fact 'turning around', turned around', 'engaged', 'doing better'; or just 'still very, very troubled'; despite the expenditure of over £2 millions?

#### Response

The Troubled Families Programme has been renamed Stronger Families in County Durham.

In Durham we were able to demonstrate that 1,320 families had met the success criteria for claiming payments. To achieve the target figure of 1,320, we worked with 1,695 families.

The success rate of the phase 1 programme is therefore 78%, a very impressive success rate, I'm sure you would agree.

In June 2013, the government announced plans to expand the national Troubled Families programme for a further 5 years from 2015. This will mean a target of 4,360 families in County Durham to be 'turned around' over the next 5 years.

In Durham, we are clear that we will only claim for results that can be proven. An audit programme is established to verify every claim in line with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance.

Both DCLG and Durham County Council auditors have verified the claims and provided substantial assurance.

The programme will not normally work with families who have already been on the programme unless there are changes in the composition of the family or the issues facing the family have changed.

The Stronger Families programme is part of a wider agenda to embed whole family, outcome focussed practice across the Children's Services and partner agencies.

Since 2012, the programme has brought significant and welcome additional funding into the council to support work with families.