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Friday 6 November, 2015

Despite 23% of the Welsh population living in poverty, many in Wales are missing out on services they are entitled to.

In Wales, 23% of the population live in poverty, and research by FamilyPoint Cymru shows that many low-income families struggle to access vital services. Reasons include not having a computer at home, low digital literacy, bad phone signal and websites being untrustworthy or hard to navigate or understand.

Lucy, a young Mum from Cardiff said, “When you have a newborn, you don't know where you can go with your baby – what's safe and what's not?”

Cardiff foster parents Keith and Joanne said, “What's important is being able to find what you need without having to trawl through page after page to get one bit of information... or having to be a Philadelphia lawyer to understand it.”

This month and for the first time, a central point for accessing all the information that families need has become available across Wales and includes parenting advice, childcare and where to find financial support.

The new service is called FamilyPoint Cymru / PwyntTeulu Cymru (FPTCymru) – a bilingual Welsh Government-funded service that exists to point families in Wales to essential support, information and news. Information ranges from how to appeal the bedroom tax to keeping your child safe online and local activities.

“In times of austerity, good information can be the difference between families having dinner on the table or not. There are real concerns families aren't getting essential information and FamilyPoint Cymru aims to help them.” Marco Gil-Cervantes – Chief Executive behind FPTCymru.

In an age where services are becoming increasingly only available online, FPTCymru has uncovered that only 65% are searching online for information, but the majority of families are still reliant on other sources.

Young Mum Rebecca from Aberaeron says, “When things are based only on the internet, I find it a real barrier because I don't have a main computer in my house, so I rely on just using my phone but the signal is absolutely dreadful.”

FPTCymru is a bilingual service with information available via the newly-developed and mobile-friendly website (www.familypoint.cymru), as well as via the Info Line - phone (0300 222 57 57), text (07860 052 905) and online chat.

The design and content of the service has been developed in Wales-wide consultation with diverse groups of families and feedback from professionals.

To continue to address families' needs, the service features a range of functions that enable families to interact directly – Agony Aunt, live online 'Q&A's with professionals, comment features, videos and FPTCymru news articles tailored around issues frequently raised on the Info Line.

Phone (local call rate), text (Standard Network Rate) and instant messaging (free) are available Monday to Thursday from 6pm to 10pm and Friday to Saturday from 10am to 2pm. The website is free and available 24/7.

Notes for Editors:

FPTCymru has families and staff available for interview (including radio/TV) in Welsh and English, upon request.

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FamilyPoint Cymru / PwyntTeulu Cymru (FPT Cymru) is a multi-platform hub that points families in Wales to information, services and news.

It is funded by the Welsh Government as part of its Tackling Poverty agenda and is delivered by ProMo-Cymru, a co-operative, communications charity.

Parents and anyone responsible for a child or young person can access FPTCymru for free, 24/7 via www.familypoint.cymru.

For those who require more guidance, they can contact the new Info Line - a phone (0300 222 57 57), text (07860 052 905) and instant messaging service (also at www.familypoint.cymru).

Phone (local call rate), text (Standard Network Rate) and instant messaging (free) are available Monday to Thursday from 6pm to 10pm and Friday to Saturday from 10am to 2pm.

For further information, contact FPTCymru Co-ordinator, Cindy Chen or Marketing and Communications Officer, Catherine Morgan via info@familypoint.cymru or on 029 2045 0442.

Poverty is calculated as the percentage of households earning 60% or less of average UK income – often referred to as “relative poverty”.

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