

REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	19 March 2013
Subject:	Families First - Troubled Families
Responsible Officer:	Leora Cruddas, Divisional Director - Quality Assurance, Commissioning & Schools
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Mitzi Green – Portfolio holder for Children, Schools & Families
Exempt:	No but with Part II Annex 3 Case Studies – by virtue of Paragraph 2 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 in contains information likely to reveal the identity of individual individuals
Enclosures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Criteria for identifying Troubled Families2. Payment by results criteria3. Families First Case Studies: Understanding Families, Assessing Impact (Exempt Case Studies)

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

The government's Troubled Families initiative is designed to turn around families who have a range of complex difficulties.

The government has calculated that nationally there are 120,000 such families who because of their complex needs, are of high cost to the public purse. Through calculations and data available from the child poverty index (CPI) and the multiple deprivation indices (MPI) the government has estimated that Harrow has at least 395 families who could be defined as 'troubled'.

Families First is Harrow's approach to the government's Troubled Families initiative. Families First must identify and work with 395 families during the project including 150 families in 2012/13 and up to 200 families in 2013/14.

Families are identified against 2 out of 3 criteria: school attendance; crime & ASB; worklessness

Families First

Families First aims to change the way we work with families:

- Move from individual to a whole family approach
- Ensure families have suitably experience and trained Key Worker
- Offer personalised support package

Current Situation

- Project commenced 3 September 2012
- Early Intervention Service is the main delivery arm of the project
- 120+ Families identified and allocated a Key Worker – target for 2012/13 is 150
- Positive feedback from the use of individual commissioning

Recommendations:

The Committee is invited to consider and comment on the report.

Section 2 – Report

1. Background

1.1 Following the London riots the Prime Minister identified 120,000 families most at risk (the top 2% most vulnerable) and set up the Troubled Families Unit in the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). All project work in this area was moved across from Department for Education and merged into the Troubled Families Programme that will run until 2015. Six government departments contributed funding to create a budget for the Prime Minister's new policy initiative.

1.2 The Top Families project, which started in Harrow in October 2011, was incorporated fully into Harrow's delivery of the Troubled Families Programme. The Top Families project aimed to analyse in detail a cohort of families and develop a considered and research based approach to developing a new model of delivery. It grew from the Community Budget and Total Place principles which are embedded in the Troubled Families initiative: principally to coordinate and integrate service delivery around complex families; to pool resources and make savings; to identify families at risk earlier.

1.3 The aim of the Troubled Families programme is, as defined by Government, to 'turn round' 120,000 families nationally. Harrow's share is 395 families.

1.4 A troubled family is a household where there is evidence of youth crime and / or anti social behaviour (ASB); unauthorised absence from school of more than 15% and / or exclusion from school; and a family member on benefits. (Please see Annexe 1 for full details)

2. What the government expects us to do

2.1. The government expects us to identify 150 families in the first year of the project (2012-13). We are expected to help these families change some of

their behaviours in order to make life better for their children. Specifically, we are expected to help families:

- Get their children back into school and reduce school exclusions;
- Reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Put the adults in the household on a path back to work.

2.2 The Government's approach is driven by the need to reduce costs to the public purse. Local authorities are invited to try innovative approaches to join up local services and deal with each family's problems as a whole rather than individually.

3. Identifying families

3.1 The Council has committed to work with 395 families during the life of the Families First project up until May 2015. The project must work with 150 families in 2012 /13 who meet the Troubled Families criteria.

3.2 The Government has invited local authorities to choose a fourth, discretionary criteria to identify families. We have focussed on those which enable us to develop a set of local outcomes that address family preservation and place particular emphasis on households where there is evidence of domestic violence.

3.3 The initial identification was completed in the summer of 2012. The total number of identified families in Harrow at this stage was 345. This number falls short of the indicative total provided by government but reflects the general pattern across other local authorities in London.

3.4 We expect to identify additional families who meet the criteria as the project progresses, and remain confident we will have worked with 395 families by the end date of the project in May 2015. We already identify families at the point of entry via the children's access team.

4. Families First

4.1 Families First is Harrow's approach to the Government's Troubled Families initiative. We will use the initiative as an opportunity to change the way we work with families. Our New Operating Model in the Children and Families Directorate means that we are well-placed to try evidence-based and innovative approaches to improve outcomes for vulnerable families.

4.2 Our Early Intervention Service was positively commented on by Ofsted during the recent inspection and this will become the key delivery agency of Families First.

4.3 In addition to focussing on the key criteria of the Troubled Families initiative, Families First will introduce a step change in service delivery from focussing on individual children to working with a whole family. The project will assign a budget holding key worker to each family, who will work intensively with them and have the power to purchase interventions to help turn their lives around.

4.4 There are four key building blocks to our approach:

Personalisation

- Each family will have a Key Worker to get to grips with their problems and identify their issues
- Each family will have access to an individual budget as part of the Families First support package
- The support package will address the personal needs of each family and the budget will support long term change and sustainable outcomes

Participation

- We will look to establish and make links with Parent Groups to act as stakeholder reference groups to advise us throughout the project
- We allocated resource from central funding to work with evaluation partner, to ensure we are responding to the needs of families and making a difference to their lives

Partnership

- We will use an invitational consent based model when working with families
- Develop strong partnerships with Police, Health and the third sector to work collaboratively with families

People

- We will ensure our workforce are trained and skilled in working differently with families

4.5 The underlying principle of the project will be a family partnership model. We will commit to working with families to find solutions in a respectful way that builds family preservation and resilience. Families will initially be invited to join the project, not coerced.

4.6 Evidence shows that appointing a single key worker to get to grips with each family's problems and work intensively with them helps families change for the long term. We want this key worker to fulfil a family support worker role. We will identify a key worker from an existing service (Early Intervention, PRU, YOT) for every family in the project. Their role will be to work intensively with families to get underneath the core issues that families have, and work in partnership with the family to resolve the issues.

4.7 As part of our innovation, we have already trialled an element of personalisation through budget-holding key workers who will work with each family to commission a programme of costed interventions. This is already producing results and positive feedback from both practitioners and families

5. Progress

5.1 Families First has made significant progress working with 120 families since September against a target of 150 in 2012/13 from DCLG. We will have to work with a further 198 families in 2013/14.

5.2 The main delivery agent is the Early Intervention Service (EIS) but there will be greater input from other teams in the Children & Families service as the project progresses.

5.3 There are positive early signs the project is having an impact on families and we expect this to increase as we embed whole family working across the directorate.

5.4 Following the Spring Term we will complete a large scale analysis of the impact on families against the government's criteria. This will be completed prior to our first claim for Payment by Results in July 2013.

5.5 The government criteria are an indicator of progress and bring some financial reward, but it is important to consider how we measure success beyond these criteria. In one example we know of a family where the children have improved their school attendance from 2% to 84%. This may not result in any payment but it is clearly a significant progress toward better outcomes for the family.

5.6 It is a substantial challenge to measure impact and ensure we are intervening effectively with families. We also need to get under the skin of the costs and financial benefits of intervening with families. Their needs are complex and fall across multiple areas of need, and consequently fall across a range of internal and external services. The coordinated whole family approach will have an impact on some of this need. This is very much work-in-progress but from it we can lay the foundations of financial cases for investment in new ways of working

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The project is funded by DCLG Troubled Families grant allocation and some LAA Reward funding.

6.2 DCLG will make available up to £4,000 for each eligible family as a combination of up-front attachment fees and PBR. The ratio of PBR increases in each year of the project:

2012/13 - £3,200 per family; maximum PBR £800 per family
2013/14 - £2,400 per family; maximum PBR £1600 per family
2014/15 - £1,600 per family; maximum PBR £2400 per family

(Please see Annexe 2 for description of PBR in 2012/13)

6.3 DCLG assumes we are making full use of the European Social Fund provision in Harrow. They consider around one-sixth of our 395 families will access this provision and consequently only fund five-sixths of our family cohort (329 families)

E.g. Year 1 funding in Harrow

Committed to work with 150 families in Year 1
DCLG will fund 125 families at £3,200 per family
Total funding in Year 1, 125 x £3,200 = £400,000

6.4 In addition, DCLG pay a further £75,000 which funds the salary of the Troubled Families coordinator.

7. Performance Issues

7.1 Harrow Council has committed to work with 395 families before the end of the Troubled Families initiative in May 2015.

7.2 The Council agreed to identify and work with 150 families in 2012/13 and before 1 April 2013. The project is currently on target to hit the commitment of working with 150 families before 1 April 2013, and has already passed the threshold of 75% set by DCLG to secure funding for Year 2.

7.3 DCLG expects local authorities to work with 50% (198) of their family cohort in 2013/14, and to have commenced work with 85% (335) of the total family cohort by April 2014.

8. Environmental Impact

There is no specific environmental impact associated with this report.

9. Risk Management Implications

The Troubled Families initiative has a number of inherent risks which are summarised below.

Reputational

9.1 Reputational risk to the council will if the project is not delivered with sufficient impact. There is significant pressure from DCLG to deliver the project and to provide evidence of the impact on the lives of 'troubled families'.

Financial

9.2 The project must demonstrate sufficient impact on families to claim payment by results. Many of the families who meet the criteria will have complex multiple needs and prove difficult to turn around.

9.3 The 'worklessness' element of the project, where families are expected to use existing provision as a pathway to work, is already raised as a significant risk due to the current poor delivery of the European Social Fund provision.

Operational

9.4 The project may fail to identify sufficient numbers of families who meet the government criteria.

9.5 Harrow must identify and work with 395 families who meet the government criteria. As stated earlier the initial data analysis in 2012 identified 340 families. This number falls short of the indicative total but reflects the general pattern of family identification across local authorities in London.

10. Equalities Implications

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is in progress and will reflect the impact on staff and on the users of the service. Equality data is being recorded and collated as part of the programme.

Section 3 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Kevin Bartholomew tel: 020 8424 1547

Background Papers: None