

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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**Date of Meeting:**

22 October 2013

**Subject:**

Families First - Troubled Families

**Responsible Officer:**

Wendy Beeton, Divisional Director – Early Intervention Services

Kevin Bartholomew, Families First Project Coordinator

**Scrutiny Lead  
Member area:**

Policy Lead – Children and Families (to be confirmed)

Councillor Victoria Silver – Performance Lead Children and Families

**Exempt:**

Public - with Exempt enclosure 1 by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that it contains information relating to an individual

**Enclosures:**

1. Families First: Case Study
2. Families First: Approach & Development Plan
3. Family Identification Criteria
4. Payment by Results

## **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. The government has indicated that Harrow has 395 families who are defined as 'troubled'.

The government has announced the Troubled Families project will continue after May 2015.

### **Families First**

Families First is Harrow's approach to the government's Troubled Families initiative. Families First is delivered by the Early Intervention Service and its work is overseen by an operational group and a strategy board.

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

Families First in Harrow must identify and work with 395 families over a 3 year period which includes 198 families in 2013/14. Families are identified against 2 out of 3 criteria: school attendance; crime & anti social behaviour; worklessness

### **Current Situation**

- Project commenced September 2012
- Early Intervention Service is the main delivery arm of the project
- 125 Families identified and allocated a Key Worker in 2012/13
- Payment by Result claim for 41 families completed in July.
- Improvement demonstrated in 70% families

### **Recommendations:**

The committee is invited to note progress and comment on the report.

### **Appendices:**

1. Families First: Approach & Development Plan; 2. Families First: Case Study
3. Family Identification Criteria; 4. Payment by Results

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **1. Progress**

1.1 Families First delivered by the Early Intervention Service made significant progress in 2012/13 working with 125 families. This met the government's target of working with 75% of families and secured full funding for 2013/14 where the project is expected to work with 198 families.

1.2 A further 143 families who meet the Troubled Families criteria have been identified and work has commenced with these families. Additional families will be identified against the government criteria throughout the second year of the project.

1.3 A large scale analysis of the impact on families against the government's criteria was completed following the spring term and the first claim for Payment by Results was submitted in July 2013.

1.4 The analysis shows a range of improvement in over 70% of families. This includes significant improvement in 41 families who are eligible payment by results. These families demonstrate school attendance of more than 85%, youth crime reduced by more than 33% and / or the family is off benefits and back into work. The first Payment by Results for turning around the lives of these families was received in September 2013.

1.5 A further claim for Payment by Results will be completed at the end of October 2013. Results claims will occur quarterly throughout the life of the project.

1.5 In addition to working closely with families the project works to ensure early intervention and preventive services are as effective and cost efficient as possible. Oxford Brookes University was appointed as the external evaluation partner to help explore more broadly how to use the total early intervention resources to improve outcomes for children and families.

1.6 The evaluation will help lay the foundations for future commissioning of services in Harrow and widen the scope of Families First and early intervention services from the government target of 395 families to 1000+ families with a spectrum of additional needs.

1.7 A case study in the appendix provides details of the effective work completed by Early Intervention and the positive impact on outcomes for children and families. (Please see Annexe 1)

1.8 A further document provides details of the project approach and outlines the development of the project during 2013/14 and beyond. (Please see Annexe 2)

## **2. Background**

2.1 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.

2.2 The Top Families project, which started in Harrow 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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;
- A family member on benefits. (Please see Annexe 3 for full details)

## **3. Government expectations**

3.1. The government expects us to identify 395 families during the life of the project (2012-15). 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.

3.2 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.

## **4. Identifying families**

4.1 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 198 families in 2013 /14 who meet the Troubled Families criteria.

4.2 The Government has invited each local authority 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.

4.3 268 families were identified (as of June 2013). This number reflects the general pattern across other local authorities in London and is short of the original target.

4.4 Additional families who meet the criteria will be identified as the project progresses, and there is continued confidence that 395 families will have been supported by this project by the end date of May 2015. Families in Harrow are identified at the earliest point via the children's access team.

## **5. Families First**

5.1 Families First is Harrow's approach to the Government's Troubled Families initiative. The initiative is being used as an opportunity to change the way families are worked with. The establishment of the Early Intervention Services means that evidence-based and innovative approaches to improve outcomes for vulnerable families can be tried and implemented.

5.2 In addition to focussing on the key criteria of the Troubled Families initiative, Families First are introducing a step change in service delivery from focussing on individual children to working with the whole family. The project assigns a budget holding key worker to each family, who works intensively with them and has the power to purchase interventions to help turn their lives around.

5.4 There are four key building blocks to the approach:

### Personalisation

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

### Participation

- Links with Parent Groups are being developed and further explored as part of the work of the evaluation partner. This work will advise us throughout the project
- Resources have been allocated from central funding to work with the evaluation partner, to ensure the project is responding to the needs of families and making a difference to their lives

### Partnership

- The model of delivery is an invitational consent based model. This model increases the likelihood of success with families who co-construct the solutions to their problems.

- strong partnerships with Police, Health and the third sector are being further developed to secure collaborative work with families

### People

- The workforce are trained and skilled in working differently with families

5.5 The underlying principle of the project is a family partnership model. Staff are committed to working with families to find solutions in a respectful way that builds family preservation and resilience. Families are initially invited to join the project, not coerced.

5.6 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. The key worker fulfils a family support worker role. A key worker is identified for every family in the project. Their role is 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.

5.7 Elements of personalisation supported by budget-holding key workers who work with each family to commission a programme of costed interventions have been trialled with good success.

## **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 £4000 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 - £3200 per family; maximum PBR £800 per family  
 2013/14 - £2400 per family; maximum PBR £1600 per family  
 2014/15 - £1600 per family; maximum PBR £2400 per family

(Please see Annexe 4 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 2 funding in Harrow*

Committed to work with 198 families in Year 2 (2013/2014)  
 DCLG will fund 165 families at £2400 per family  
 Total funding in Year 2, 165 x £2,400 = £396,000

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

6.5 The funding received from DCLG is used to support the teams in Early Intervention Services.

### **Payment by Results**

6.6 Payment by Results is awarded where we can demonstrate the following in identified families:

- The attendance of all children in the family is above 85% in the last 3 terms
- Fewer than 3 fixed term exclusions in the last 3 terms
- 60% reduction in Anti Social Behaviour in the last 6 months
- Offending by all young people in the family reduced by 33% in the last 6 months
- An adult in the family has volunteered for the work programme or European Social provision (currently provided by Reed in Harrow).

OR

- At least one adult in the family is off benefits and back in work

6.6 Payment by Results is claimed quarterly and is approved by Internal Audit.

6.7 As stated only five-sixths of families are funded by SCLG; therefore Payment by Results is paid minus one sixth:

- Harrow Results claimed in July 2013: 41
- Total number of results paid (minus one sixth): 34

## **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 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 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. The number of families identified 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 complete but a further update report is due in March 2014. 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