

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:

8 April 2014

Subject:

Families First - Troubled Families

Responsible Officer:

Wendy Beeton, Divisional Director – Early Intervention Services

Scrutiny Lead

Councillor Lynda Seymour – Children and Families Policy Lead

Member area:

Councillor Victoria Silver Children and Families Performance Lead

Exempt:

Part 1 with exempt Enclosures 1, 2 & 3 by virtue of paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that they contain information in relation to an individual

Enclosures:

1. IPC Evaluation Report
2. IPC Interviews with families
3. IPC Case Studies
4. Family Identification Criteria
5. 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 experienced and trained Key Worker
- Offer personalised support package

Families First in Harrow must identify and work with 395 families over a 3 year period. 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
- 80% of families identified and allocated a Key Worker
- Payment by Result claims for 135 families so far
- Independent evaluation outlines the quality of Early Intervention approach

Recommendations:

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

Section 2 – Report

1. Progress and next steps

1.1 Families First, delivered by the Early Intervention Service, made continued progress in 2013/14 and the project has now worked with 320 families since September 2012.

1.2 The project has made significant impact on 135 families for which the project made claims for Payment by Results from the Department of Communities and Local Government. Payment by Results are claimed for families who demonstrate improvements in: school attendance above 85%, youth crime reduced by more than 33% and / or the family is off benefits and back into work, or on a progress to work scheme.

1.3 A further claim for Payment by Results will be completed during May 2014. Results claims will occur quarterly throughout the life of the project.

1.4 The project appointed the Institute for Public Care (IPC) – Oxford Brookes University as an external evaluation partner. Their evaluation has identified a range of good practice including excellent initial contact and engagement with families. (Please see the annexe 1 for the report's findings)

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. In April 2014 IPC – Oxford Brookes University will publish a comprehensive cost benefit analysis of the Early Intervention Services and the Families First project.

1.6 The evaluation will help lay the foundations for future commissioning of services in Harrow and widen the scope of early intervention services and Families First from the government target of 395 families to 1,000+ families for the second phase of the government's Troubled Families programme.

1.7 A selection of case studies from the IPC report in the appendix provide details of the effective work completed by Early Intervention and the positive impact on outcomes for children and families. (Please see Annexe 2)

1.8 The government have agreed to extend the Troubled Families project extended and the 2nd phase will commence in 2015/16. The government have yet to publish the criteria for the second phase but they will include a much greater focus on Early Intervention and the early help offer.

The scope of the project includes:

- £200m investment for 2015/16 (1st of 5 years subject to next spending review) to work with additional 400,000 families.
- Aims to target families before they reach crisis point
- Average £1,800 available per family on Payment by Results

- Local services must provide plans setting out how they will join up, reform services and save the taxpayer money

While this draws on Total Place, Community Budgets etc. there are some key differences:

- First national public service transformation initiative and must secure actual reforms from all local agencies, not just those whole 'volunteer' to be involved
- Costs and areas of reform will cut across multiple public service areas – requiring an even greater level of buy-in from across the local public sector.
- Stronger focus on demonstrating savings to the tax payer

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.

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.

4.3 335 families were identified (as of 31 March 2014). This figure represents 85% of our total family cohort.

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.

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 Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Troubled Families grant allocation and some LAA (Local Area Agreement??)Reward funding.

The following table shows a summary of the funding over the 3 year programme

Families First DCLG Programme Budget

	Y1 2012-13	Y2 2013-14	Y3 2014-15
Number of families eligible for programme	150	198	47

Number of families eligible for attachment fees (5/6ths of total)	125	165	40
Attachment fee per family	£3,200	£2,400	£1,600
Total attachment fees for eligible families	£400,000	£396,000	£64,000
DCLG funding for Co-ordinator	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
LAA Reward Funding		£135,000	
Total Families First funding (excluding Payment by Results)	£475,000	£606,000	£139,000

6.2 DCLG will make available up to £4,000 for each eligible family as a combination of up-front attachment fees and Payment by Results (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 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)

6.4 In addition, DCLG pay a further £75,000 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

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

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 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 2014.

Section 3 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Kevin Bartholomew 020 8424 2547

Background Papers: Financial framework for the Troubled Families programme's payment-by-results scheme for local authorities, *Department of Communities & Local Government, March 2012*