

Briefing for Partnership Board

Putting families first - Harrow's approach to the Government's Troubled Families initiative

In Harrow, we want to use the opportunity of the Government's Troubled Families initiative 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 innovative approaches* to improve outcomes for vulnerable families.

We have the foundations of a Troubled Families approach in New Operating Model with an Early Intervention Service that has been positively commented on by Ofsted during the recent inspection. Therefore, our approach to Troubled Families will not be a separate initiative, but rather embedded in our New Operating Model as a way of working differently to achieve better outcomes. We will develop our approach to commissioning our Voluntary Sector providers such that staff work together in multi-agency teams to build our collective *system capacity* across the children's economy and enrich our practice.

1. What does the government expect us to do?

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

2. How are we identifying the families?

2.1 We are in the process of identifying the 150 families with whom we will work using the following datasets:

- Children who are persistently absent from school (attendance less than 85%) for the last three school terms and/or who have been subject to permanent exclusion or three or more fixed school exclusions in the last 3 terms; OR in a Pupil Referral Unit or alternative provision because they have previously been excluded;
- Households with one or more young person under 18-year-old with a proven offence in the last 12 months and/or households where one or more member has an anti-social behaviour order, anti-social behaviour injunction, anti-social behaviour contract, or where the family has been subject to a housing-related anti-social behaviour intervention in the last 12 months (such as a notice of seeking possession on anti-social behaviour grounds, a housing-related injunction, a demotion order, eviction from social housing on anti-social behaviour grounds);
- Once we have a list of families that meet either or both of the above criteria, Job Centre Plus will help us to identify members of the household on out-of-work benefits.

3. What outcomes are we aiming to achieve?

3.1 We have already committed through our New Operating Model and Commissioning Plan to using **Outcomes Based Accountability** – this is an approach to planning services that focuses attention on the outcomes the services are intended to achieve. This approach focuses on better outcomes for families and not on process and procedure.

- **Improve school attendance and reduce exclusions**

Each child in the family has had fewer than 3 fixed term exclusions and less than 15% percent unauthorised absence in the last 3 terms

- **Reduce offending and anti social behaviour**

A 60% reduction in anti-social behaviour across the family in the last 6 moths and offending rate reduced by at least 33% in the last 6 months

- **Help parents get back into work**

One adult in the family moves off benefits into work OR one adult in the family has volunteered for the Work Programme or European Social Fund provision.

4. What are we proposing to do?

4.1 The project aims to secure a step change in service delivery from focussing on individual children to working with a whole family. 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 be invited to join the project, not coerced.

4.2 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, third sector) 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.

4.3 As part of our innovation, we will build into the model an element of **personalisation** through budget-holding key workers who will work with each family to commission a programme of costed interventions.

4.4 In terms of innovation, we want to affect a paradigm shift from working with an individual to **working with the family as a unit**.

5. What training will staff receive to help them make this shift in their practice?

5.1 We will commission training in the family partnership approach for all staff who will be performing the key worker role. The training will be available to our own staff and third sector staff who are involved in the project.

5.2 The Family Partnership Model (FPM) is an innovative approach based upon an explicit model of the helping process that demonstrates how specific helper qualities and skills, when used in partnership, enable parents and families to overcome their difficulties, build strengths and resilience and fulfil their goals more effectively.

6. How will we know if we are making a difference?

6.1 We will develop a specification and go out to competitive tender for an evaluation partner. The evaluation partner will be commissioned as soon as possible in order that they can work with us from the earliest stages of the project to design the evaluation process and evaluation tools.

- 6.2 We will establish a **Parent Advisory Group (PAG)** as our Stakeholder Reference Group to advise us during the course of the project and to work with the evaluation partner to design the evaluation process.

The evaluation methodology we will adopt will be Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR is done *with* service users and *for* service users.

7. What about Top Families?

- 7.1 The Top Families project in Harrow was initiated in September 2011. This project seeks to identify families that are the highest consumers of public services and, through study of their previous involvement with these services, identify interventions that might have reduced their continuing demand.
- 7.2 The project has identified a cohort of 24 families for in depth study and analysis charting their interaction with public services. These interactions will be fully costed to offer a baseline against which to compare and justify the cost of future interventions. The baseline will enable future savings across all agencies to be quantified; this will be crucial to justify future expenditure on intervention programme
- 7.3 In terms of the approach to working with families, we propose not to make a distinction between our Top Families and the Government’s Troubled Families.

8. How will the project be financed?

- 8.1 A total of £135,000 of LAA Reward Grant Funding has been allocated to the Top Families Project.
- 8.2 The Troubled Families programme will run over three years and brings some up-front funding (‘attachment’ funding) as well as a payment-by-results scheme. In the first year of the project, the attachment funding that comes with each family is £3,200 per family with a Payment-by-Results element of £800 if we achieve the outcomes identified in 3.1 by 2015. This means that in 2012/13 we have received £400,000 in up front funding. Note that the attachment fee decreases year on year with the PBR element increasing.
- 8.3 Our Putting Families First project therefore has a total project budget is £535,000. We have set out a costed activity plan against this budget which includes personal budgets for each of our 150 families, commissioned evaluation and voluntary sector delivery partners, workforce training and enhancing our staffing in our early intervention service.

9. How does this all hang together?

We have developed a set of four building blocks. The building blocks describe how we intend to work with families.

Personalisation	Participation	Partnership	People
Families identify their key issues with their key workers and identify interventions/ solutions	Families are active co-constructors both in their own solutions and in the wider design and delivery of the project	The approach to working with families is invitational and uses a family partnership model	Our workforce are trained and skilled in working differently with the family as the unit, rather than the individual
How:	How:	How:	How:
Individual budgets held by Key Workers on behalf of families	Participatory Action Research Parent Advisory Group	Family Partnership approach Family Group Conferencing	Family Partnership Model (FPM) training FPM supervision