

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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MEDWAY ACTION FOR FAMILIES (TROUBLED FAMILIES AND EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PROGRAMME- PROGRESS UPDATE)

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Summary

This report provides an overview of the Troubled Families Programme (in Medway called Action for Families), which supports families with multiple and complex needs. The report also updates Members on how the programme has developed over the past year.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 In December 2010, the Prime Minister stated his commitment to turn around the lives of 120,000 of the country's most troubled families by the end of this parliament and, as part of this, the Government has set out a clear vision about what needs to change in these households: getting children into school, cutting crime and anti-social behaviour and putting adults on the path to work.
- 1.2 Each Local Authority and Council was assigned a target number of families berried in government data. In Medway we have 560 Families to be identified under this government programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Government pledged to invest an addition £448 million in the Troubled Families Programme, a programme designed to help and change these families; and established over 3 years a Troubled Families Team in the Department for Communities and Local Government, led by Louise Casey CB and overseen by the Secretary of State for Communities, the Rt. Hon Eric Pickles MP.
- 2.2 Funding is assigned to Local Authorities via an initial attachment fee and a further payment by results (PbR) outcome. The total for a family can not

exceed £4000 (payment given for only for 5 out of 6 families) and the PbR increase increases year by year.

- 2.3 In June 2012, the Troubled Families Team published *'Listening to Troubled Families'*² which described, often in the families' own language, the societal case for changing the way the families were worked with. In December 2012, the report *'Working with Troubled Families: A guide to the evidence and good practice'*³ outlined new reforms needed including the expansion of family intervention services, the streamlining of assessment processes and interventions into a single 'whole family' approach, and the better co-ordination of action needed to support troubled families across services.

- 2.4 Payment by results table below:

Result	Attachment fee	Results payment	Total
They achieve all 3 of the education and crime/ASB measures set out below where relevant: 1. Each child in the family has had fewer than 3 fixed exclusions and less than 15% of unauthorised absences in the last 3 school terms; and 2. A 60% reduction in anti-social behaviour across the family in the last 6 months; and 3. Offending rate by all minors in the family reduced by at least a 33% in the last 6 months.	£3,200 per family	£700 per family	£4,000 per family
If they do not enter work, but achieve the 'progress to work' (one adult in the family has either volunteered for the Work Programme or attached to the ESF provision in the last 6 months).		£100 per family	
OR			
At least one adult in the family has moved off out-of-work benefits into continuous employment in the last 6 months (and is not on the ESF Provision or Work Programme to avoid double-payment).	£3,200 per family	£800 per family	£4,000 per family

3. Medway approach

- 3.1 This report makes the case for all local agencies (local authorities, the police, health services and others) to examine what they spend on troubled families, how they spend it, and how effective that expenditure is in helping turn lives around and preventing the emergence of future troubled families. Public services cannot afford to spend their resources ineffectively when reacting to the social problems of these families. With the economic challenges that the country currently faces there is an even more powerful impetus to ensure this is not the case.
- 3.2 In the past government funded initiatives have let to the formation of new teams then are disbanded when the funding ends. In Medway we have sought to avoid this. Funding is being used to backfill skilled practitioners in key services to enable a multi agency approach to intensive 'team around the family' work.

- 3.3 There is a huge human cost of failing to intervene effectively with troubled families – and this has been set out in the two previous reports from the Troubled Families Team.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/listening-to-troubled-families>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-cost-of-troubled-families>

4. Principles:

- 4.1 Provide innovative family centred interventions designed to motivate and engage whole families with multiple needs to reduce crisis, enable them to gain greater control and stability in their lives and make informed choices about the health wellbeing and safety of children and families as a whole unit. Service is voluntary and families must agree to support and intervention being offered to them but consequences can and will be used against those that continue to show lack of engagement but continue to be a drain on the local authority and partners budget.

- 4.2 We have identified five areas of focus and an emerging process in working with families with multiple and complex issues. These five areas are:

1: Family costs: Building a representative catalogue of costed family case studies, demonstrating the reactive costs of these families prior to intervention and the savings which may be realised if progress is made.

2: Nailing down the unit costs: Working with partners across the criminal justice, housing, schools, health and voluntary sectors to secure a local consensus about the actual unit costs of different interventions and activities.

3: Projecting savings: Building on better cost data, local areas are developing new and improved processes to assess the potential financial benefits of the Troubled Families Programme in their locality.

4: Making the financial case for reform of services: Focusing on inefficiencies, duplications and gaps in provision to identify how services could be redesigned to deliver better value for money and better family outcomes.

5: Securing joint investment: Where areas have a strong grasp of their local costs data and buy-in from a range of the benefiting local public bodies, they have started to form 'joint investment agreements' – long-term funding arrangements where the benefits of better outcomes are reflected in the financial stake of different public bodies.

- 4.3 MAfF is an amalgamation and bringing together of previously separate workers both from internal and external getting to grips with the families that are the highest cost to the local authority then evidencing savings to ensure future investment exists from partners who see the benefit of intensive family work.

- 4.4 Access: services to be focused around the needs of children, young people and families, rather than institutional/agency boundaries.

- 4.5 Early intervention: effective early identification and assessment with appropriate intervention will reduce the need for more costly, and possibly less successful, provision later.
- 4.6 Reducing dependency: working with families at all levels of need to reduce dependency and promote self-reliance and resilience, therefore enabling problem solving within the family.
- 4.7 Shared responsibility and response: getting the best for children is everyone's business and services need to develop shared responsibility and response to children, young people and their families
- 4.8 Participation and involvement: children, young people and families should be active participants in designing, planning and reviewing the services they receive.
- 4.9 Equality of opportunity: services should continue to work together to remove the cultural, geographical and economic barriers to opportunity, which some children and young people face.
- 4.10 Services based on clear evidence: planning and delivery of services should be informed by robust data that evaluates what works and achieves the best outcomes for children and families.

Further information is available within the report guidance.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community. Using the following table this section should therefore consider any significant risks arising from your report.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Lack of engagement	Families not wanting to be supported	<p>Identify the right lead professional and agency to work with the family and ensure they are supported.</p> <p>This is not business as usual and these families will be challenged.</p>	D

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Both the Children's Trust and the Community Safety Partnership Senior Executive Group have been briefed of the development of Medway Action for Families.
- 6.2 In June 2012, the Troubled Families Team published '*Listening to Troubled Families*'² which described, often in the families' own language, the societal case for changing the way the families were worked with. In December 2012, the report '*Working with Troubled Families: A guide to the evidence and good practice*'³ outlined new reforms needed including the expansion of family intervention services, the streamlining of assessment processes and interventions into a single 'whole family' approach, and the better co-ordination of action needed to support troubled families across services.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 Below is table showing costings attached to 'upfront fee' and achieving full 'PbR'.

Targets	Contacts	Upfront	PBR	Total
August 2012- March 2013	180	£480'000	£120'000	£600'000
April 2013 - March 2014	257	£514'000	£342'666	£856'666
April 2014 - March 2015	123	£164'000	£246'000	£410'000
Total	560	£1'158'000	£708'666	£1'866'666

- 7.2 The government realised additional legislation to enable the sharing of data for the troubled families programme.
- 7.3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-troubled-families-programme-financial-framework>

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The committee is recommended to note the report.

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Background papers:

None