

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 DECEMBER 2021

SUPPORTING FAMILIES PROGRAMME

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Summary

This report provides an update on the progress and the achievements of the Supporting Families Programme (previously Troubled Families) in Medway during phase 2 (2015 to 2022). The Troubled Families Programme is a UK Government scheme that was launched in 2011 under the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The aim of the scheme is to support families to reach their potential, by developing resilience and overcoming difficulties they are facing, including improving systems and services to work with them. The team responsible for the programme in Medway is the Early Help Transformation Team. This report also shares the plans that are in place for the coming year.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The Ministry for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (MLUHC) set the budget and policy Framework for the Support Families programme. Implementation of the programme supports the Council Plan priority “supporting Medway’s people to realise their potential”, in particular to build “resilient families.”

2. Background

2.1 Medway Council has been responsible for the delivery of Medway’s Troubled Families (TF) now Supporting Families Programme since its launch in 2012. The programme involves cross government funding and support, and is based on a common ambition to:

- A) Transform the lives of this country’s most complex families
- B) Improve the services that work with them and
- C) Ensure more efficient and effective use of future public money

- 2.2 In March 2015, Medway finished as one of the top 10% performing authorities for Phase 1. An extended and more robust phase 2 programme was successfully met in March 2021 where Medway finished as the top performer in the Southeast (out of 17 authorities) and joint first nationally with three other local authorities.
- 2.3 £5,590,200 funding was received by Medway Council for the 2015-2021 element of phase 2.
- 2.4 Phase 2 was extended for a further year until March 2022, with new targets and associated pro rata funding. Medway's commitments for 2021/2022 are to:
- Engage with 206 families (£206,000 upfront fees)
 - Achieve measurable outcomes via payment by results (PBR) = 360 families (£288,000)
 - Integrate/transform public services embedding whole family working
 - Have sufficient analytical resource
 - Work within our revised SF (TF) Outcomes Plan previously signed off
 - Use the Early Help System Guide to inform Early Help strategies
 - Provide sufficient coordination and a separate senior officer to lead
- 2.5 We are also advised to expect a further spot check before March 2022.
- 2.6 A total maximum funding of £894,000 is available for 2021/22 to support the activities in section 2.4 above. Failure to deliver any element of the programme risks the Council having to repay some or all the funding.
- 2.7 The Medway Transformation Board has been the agreed governing structure for the remainder of the programme and to ensure that transformation across Medway is embedded.
- 2.8 Restructure - In August 2020, following a robust consultation process The Early Help Transformation Team restructured. It now comprises a programme manager; two project lead officers and six apprentices. Administrative support to other teams within Children's Services continues, with apprentices supporting this area on different days. When vacancies arise within the team, we look to recruit young people within the service into these roles, providing the opportunity to improve outcomes.
- 2.9 Since March 2021 the Early Help Transformation Team sits under the Head of Service for First Response and Targeted services, in Children's Services.

3. Current situation

- 3.1 Ultimately, the aim is for strong multi-agency local partnerships in every area, and mature local and national data systems, which enable partners to identify

families in need of extra help, target services more effectively and track family level outcomes over the long term.

3.2 Medway received notification on 5 August and 28 October for Q1 and Q2 2021/22 PBR that it will receive £120,800 and £74,400 respectively. The notifications identify we are performing better than expected and have met 67% of our overall target in the first two quarters.

3.3 Medway achieved its 100% target for 2020/21 in October 2020 and expect to be at 100% of PBR target for the current year by December 2021. This is due to well defined processes within the team and good support from partners.

4. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Engagement/PBR	The Council does not reach all or any of the engagement or PBR targets set	Quality case work in CSC/EH Timely and accurate reporting of new and closed cases in CSC/EH Sufficient PBR resource Quality assured claims Monitoring of progress	F/2
Early Help System Guide	EH System guide is not developed and embedded into future practice	Task Groups developed First draft of the EH systems guide has been circulated Monitoring of progress	D/2
Integrate/transform public services	Insufficient progress made with embedding whole family working	Engage leaders across organisations/services Consider gaps/needs Agree action plans Monitor progress	A/1
Sufficient analytical resource	Inability to secure appropriate analytical resource	Scope capacity Consider gaps/needs Recruit to gaps/needs Monitor progress	A/1

5. Financial implications

5.1 The direct financial implications are contained in sections 2 and 3 of this report.

5.2 Funding for this scheme is provided from the MLUHC and sits within the First Response and Targeted Support Service. A total maximum funding of £894,000 is available for the 2021/22 financial year across three funding strands:

- Transformation grant (£400,000).
- Engagement through initial upfront fees (£206,000 based on 206 families at £1,000 per family)
- Outcomes via payment by results (£288,000 based on 360 families at £800 per family).

5.3 The Council is on track to meet 100% of the targets to claim this funding.

5.4 The spending review confirmed this government scheme will continue to be funded until March 2025. However, we await the full terms and conditions of the grant to see how the scheme will be funded and operate over the next few years.

6. Legal implications

6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

7. Recommendations

7.1 The committee are recommended to note the progress made as detailed within the report.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Supporting Families - 2021/22 Q1 performance dashboard

Background papers

SF Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-families-programme-guidance-2021-to-2022>

Programme Narrative 2021/22 and Beyond <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-families-2021-to-2022-and-beyond>