

<b>15 July 2014</b>		<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Children's Services Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Troubled Families Programme</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Teresa Goulding, Service Manager, Troubled Families Co-ordinator		
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Nicky Pace, Interim Head of Care & Targeted Outcomes		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services		
<b>This report is Public</b>		

## **Executive Summary**

To give an overview and update of the Troubled Families Programme.

### **1. Recommendation(s)**

**1.1 That Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report.**

### **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 Thurrock Council, alongside 151 other authorities has signed up to the Troubled Families Agenda. The aim of the Troubled Families programme is to change the lives of families who have many problems and indeed cause many problems in their local area; these are families who, despite the best efforts of many of us over the years, in government, in local authorities, in the police, and others, have not been changed.
- 2.2 These families are characterised by there being no adult in the family working, children not being in school and family members being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 2.3 These families almost always have other often long-standing problems which can lead to their children repeating the cycle of disadvantage. One estimate shows that in over a third of the identified troubled families, there are child protection problems. Another estimate suggests that over half of all children who are permanently excluded from school in England come from these families, as do one-in-five young offenders.

- 2.4 Other problems such as domestic violence, relationship breakdown, mental and physical health problems and isolation make it incredibly hard for families to start unravelling their problems.
- 2.5 The cost of these families to the public purse is very significant – approximately £9 billion a year, the vast majority spent on reacting to their problems. Most importantly, most of the money being spent is not providing lasting results and changing lives.
- 2.6 This waste of human potential is not sustainable and therefore the Government has committed to a renewed drive to deal with troubled families. As part of the Troubled Families programme, it has put in resources to incentivise and encourage local authorities and their partners to grasp the nettle; to develop new ways of working with families, which focus on lasting change, recognising that these approaches are likely to incur extra costs but that they will result in a shift in the way we work with these families in the future – reducing costs and improving outcomes.
- 2.7 The results-based funding scheme provides an important financial incentive to get to grips with and deal with troubled families. However, the ambition here is greater. Through this programme we want to learn not only about changing the trajectory for families but also to change the way services are delivered to them. The payments by results claims for Thurrock are improving every time as we move through the programme.
- 2.8 Initially all authorities were provided with figures on the indicative numbers of troubled families in their area. This figure represents the number of families that we are being asked to target and turn around.
- 2.9 For Thurrock this was 360 within the three year period, if broken down this means 120 families in year one, 180 in year two and 60 in year three. This is to enable the team to ensure tracking is completed and that the very last claim for this 3 year's cohort payment by results will be May 2015, it is also representative of the reduction of funding. This government have extended the initial 3 year programme by 2 years; funding arrangements have not been confirmed as yet although payment by results will be a big part with initial attachment fees reducing.
- 2.10 The Troubled Families team are within the Early Offer of Help level of service and a Programme Manager will be based within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, this will enable us to identify the correct families at an early stage, and therefore prevent further locally authority intervention. Troubled Families have a very direct and honest approach with both professionals and families, ensuring that targets are kept to and our resources are productive.

## **Structure and Staffing**

- 2.11 The Troubles Families' team consists of one Service Manager, 3 Programme Managers, 1 family support worker and admin support. We are currently recruiting for a Parenting Outreach Worker to connect with schools and an apprentice. All staff are on time specific contracts or secondments so as not to add extra cost to the authority if there are any changes around Troubled Families.
- 2.12 The design of the local programme was very much along the strategic plan for early help to children and families and the Troubled Families team work by supporting the Lead Professional for each family. That is the Social Worker in the most serious cases but will more often be pastoral care members of staff from schools. In this way, the programme is an extension of existing work on early help and a pilot to our ambitions for the future.
- 2.13 Thurrock Council has also match funded Troubled Families, not in terms of direct money, but in resources including all services and staff supporting Troubled Families. One example of this is the Lead Professional role which is specific to services and their staff across the council

## **Funding**

- 2.14 Thurrock Council have received £605,000 start up and running costs from the government for 250 families so far that currently meet the payment-by-results criteria over the two year period, there is a further £225,000 for the Troubled Families Co-ordinator post for the 3 years. To date we have claimed just under £100,000 in payment by results claims with the next claim window closing August 2014.
- 2.15 Funding has enabled access to the Family Intervention programme which will have up to 30 cases at one time that are troubled families. Another example is the work we have undertaken with the voluntary sector to commission a consortium of voluntary services that gives priority to any of the troubled families; this will include services such as, MIND, Open door and Young People's Services. We have also linked with a number of local charities that offer white goods and furniture to the families at no cost to the authority or the family
- 2.16 Thurrock Troubled Families are not as prescriptive as other authorities by using one particular intervention for all families. The team look for innovative ways of working with the families on an individual basis to meet their specific needs. Existing high performing services such as the Family Intervention Programme and Coram for parenting are still used but cases are individually assessed on the family needs and Troubled Families put in place whatever is needed to improve some of the very basic measures that families cannot get support for elsewhere. The team are also currently using the Payment by Result monies to support Social Care cases; Social Workers can apply for small amounts of money for basic items and/or small commissioned pieces of

work for their families. This has shown that when some of the underlying home issues are resolved very quickly the family benefits and it helps them to move on and reduces cost to the local authority.

- 2.17 We have also trained two volunteers (who were originally known to Troubled Families and have now completed the programme) to help engage families and this is proving to work really well as families can see the real benefit of the programme from a service users perspective, this is one area of work that we want to expand and continue using.
- 2.18 Troubled Families have also recently received self referrals which we have not experienced before and this highlights the success of the programme and the good feedback from families already working with us.

### **Good News / Case Studies**

- 2.19 **Good News** – Troubled Families Family Support Worker involvement with a family has led to providing support in general household chores and organisation. The Family Support worker provided a 30 day plan which the family have taken on board and used daily. Previous concerns over the untidiness of the property internally and externally have now minimised and some unsightly items have been removed from the exterior of the property, thus reducing the possibility of anti social behaviour reports.
- 2.20 Some of these concerns were originally highlighted by the Housing department regarding new improvements scheme soon to take place in the area by Thurrock Council.
- 2.21 The Troubled Families programme has worked to support the parents to become more self sufficient and taking control of their own responsibilities. This is evident as the parents are dealing with issues, benefits claims and engaging with the Reed Family Programme (funded by the European Social Fund). The Troubled Families office was receiving daily calls from this family, this has now reduced greatly and instead we hear what they have been proactive in doing. Two members of the family have engaged in numeracy and literacy sessions offered by Troubled Families.
- 2.22 Troubled Families and Catch-22 have supported the older son with work and employability support and engagement in positive activities programmes, currently and for the future, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and options to participate in international programmes.
- 2.23 **Case Study** - Mr A and his daughter are on the Troubled Families Programme meeting national criteria by receiving out of work benefits and 15% unauthorised school attendance and meeting local criteria for substance misuse, child protection and looked after child (Care Order).
- 2.24 Although there is a Care Order in place Mr A does hold shared parental responsibility with the local authority.

- 2.25 There were issues around school attendance, unemployment and disorganised household and this includes rubbish/unwanted items in the garden. The Troubled Families programme were able to identify with Mr A that he needed support in developing his organisational skills and motivation in keeping the home environment clean and safe to enable his daughter to develop emotionally, physically and socially appropriately to her full capacity. Troubled Families provided a Family Support Worker who worked with Mr A on a weekly basis and managed to obtain a grant offered for items such as containers and cleaning materials to assist Mr A in achieving a more organised household.
- 2.26 Mr A and the Family Support Worker are working well together. School attendance has improved from 69% (9.78 unauthorised) to 94% (4.26 unauthorised).
- 2.27 Mr A and his daughter have accepted invitations to Troubled Families activities and took part in the recent Christmas celebrations and reports his daughter enjoyed the event. Mr A appears less frustrated/angry with services working with him and more eager to make changes with support offered. Mr A has made an application for council accommodation with assistance from the family support worker and is now on the bidding system. Mr A is currently in private accommodation. Mr A has now secured full-time employment

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 The Troubled Families team are currently working with services and schools to ensure that data is correct and we are now excepting nominations to the programme, this has helped with meeting our target and ensures the right families are getting the full support.
- 3.2 The process for this slightly changed as we are now also accepting nominations from services directly to see if families that are of concern meet the Troubled Families criteria, which gives us a much better process in indentifying the correct families.
- 3.3 Thurrock has previously sought clarification from the Troubled Families Team, which are part of the Department for Communities and Local Government, regarding transfers from other areas and transfers out of Thurrock. This is to clarify if there is also a transfer of funds if those families moving areas are on the Troubled Families Programme. As yet we have had no clarification.

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 For an information update.

### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 N/A

## **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 Although not a statutory agency, the success of Troubled Families will impact on the work and resources of other services and agencies and potentially significantly improve the quality of life for families and neighbourhoods.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: Kay Goodacre, Interim Finance Manager  
Telephone and email: 01375 652466  
kgoodacre@thurrock.gov.uk

The immediate financial implications of the programme are included in the main body of the report.

However, the programme has potential to bring about significant long term savings to the Council, by breaking the cycle of demand from troubled families who have major calls on many areas of council resources.

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: Christine Ifediora, Senior Solicitor  
Telephone and email: 01375 652041  
cifediora@thurrock.gov.uk

At present there are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: Teresa Evans Equality and Cohesion Officer  
Telephone and email: tevens@thurrock.gov.uk

This is an update report that refers to the council's Troubled Families support service and the provision provided for those families affected by domestic violence, relationship breakdown, mental and physical health problems and isolation. The Children's Services directorate maintains data on service users to date and notes no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this information.

### **7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)**

None

**8. Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Financial Framework for the Troubled Families Programme's payment-by-results scheme for local authorities.
- Troubled Families criteria and nomination details, finance details sent from DCLG.

**9. Appendices to the report**

- None

**Report Author:**

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